

René Jean-Paul Dewil

# The Family Vincius

# Luxemburg

## 1930- 1939

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## The Characters

### The Family Vincius:

Max Vincius	1820-1900	Married to Sara Benavicius in 1840.
Sara Benavicius	1823-1902	Married to Max Vincius.
Kurt Vincius	1840-1910	son of Max Vincius
Hannah Sonnenfeld	1845-1913	Married to Kurt Vincius
Max Vincius the Younger	1863-1939	Son of Kurt Vincius, married to Maria Rosenthal
Maria Rosenthal	1866-1930	Married to Max Vincius the Younger in 1882
Andreas Vincius	1864-1942	Son of Kurt Vincius, married to Lore Kremer
Lore Kremer	1865-1942	Married to Andreas Vincius in 1885
Julian Vincius	1866-1942	Son of Kurt Vincius, married to Hanne Altman
Hanne Altman	1870-1942	Married to Julian Vincius in 1886
Haim Vincius	1842-1920	Son of Max Vincius, married to Leah Goldstern
Leah Goldstern	1843-1910	Married to Haim Vincius in 1865
Avram Vincius	1866-1920	Son of Haim Vincius, married to Manyah Kalpern
Manyah Kalpern	1866-1930	Married to Avram Vincius in 1890
David Vincius	1868-1928	Son of Haim Vincius, married to Rosa Kalpern
Rosa Kalpern	1869-1935	Married to David Vincius in 1892
Mikhael Vincius	1843-1920	Son of Max Vincius, married to Fredia False
Fredia False	1845-1915	Married to Mikhael Vincius in 1870
Naomi Vincius	1871-1950	Daughter of Mikhael Vincius, married to Osyp Raisfeld in 1890
Osyp Raisfeld	1871-1955	Married to Naomi Vincius in 1890
Rivka Vincius	1873-1956	Daughter of Mikhael Vincius, married to Johann Handelsmann
Johann Handelsmann	1870-1946	Married to Rivka Vincius in 1890
Julian Vincius	1885-1952	Son of Andreas Vincius and Lore Kremer Married in 1915 to Charlotte Baraine
Malou Vincius	1917-2005	Daughter of Julian Vincius and Charlotte Baraine, married 1950 to Christian Damman (1915-1992)
Anton Vincius	1919-1995	Son of Julian Vincius and Charlotte Baraine,

		Married 1946 to Marie-Ange Drumont (1922-2010)
Maxim Vincius	1920-1990	Son of Julian Vincius and Charlotte Baraine, Married 1946 to France Neuville (1920-2012)
Mauve Vincius	1940-2018	Daughter of Julian Vincius and Charlotte Baraine, married in 1962 to Daniel Jonas (1939-2020)
Johann Vincius	1886-1942	Son of Andreas Vincius and Lore Kremer, Married to Adèle Lederer (1886-1942)
Jacob Vincius	1904-1942	Son of Johann Vincius, Married in 1924 to Deborah Bernstein (1908-1942)
Simion Vincius	1906-1942	Son of Johann Vincius, Married in 1925 to Abigail Hartog (1912-1942)
Matthias Vincius	1908-1942	Son of Johann Vincius, Married in 1928 to Yenta Bat Udel (1912-1942)

#### **The Kleinberger Family:**

Esther Kleinberger	1845-1917	Daughter of Fried and Anna Kleinberger, lover of Kurt Vincius
Richard Vincius	1867-1931	Son of Esther Kleinberger and Kurt Vincius Married in 1888 to Rosa Danemann (1875-1930)
Marlene Vincius	1869-1943	Daughter of Esther Kleinberger and Kurt Vincius married 1884 to Anders Lipinski
Peter Vincius	1894-1972	Son of Richard Vincius, married 1918 to Michaela Kohle (1897-1975)
Frieda Vincius	1896-1980	Daughter of Richard Vincius, married 1920 to Otto Markusa (1894-1976)
Ernst Vincius	1897-1978	Son of Richard Vincius, married 1921 to Eva Trakei (1898-1979)
Joseph Lipinski	1887-1965	Son of Marlene Vincius, married 1912 to Regina Schmied (1889-1940)



Erich Lipinski	1889-1970	Son of Marlene Vincius, married 1918 to Bettina Danksa (1891-1960)
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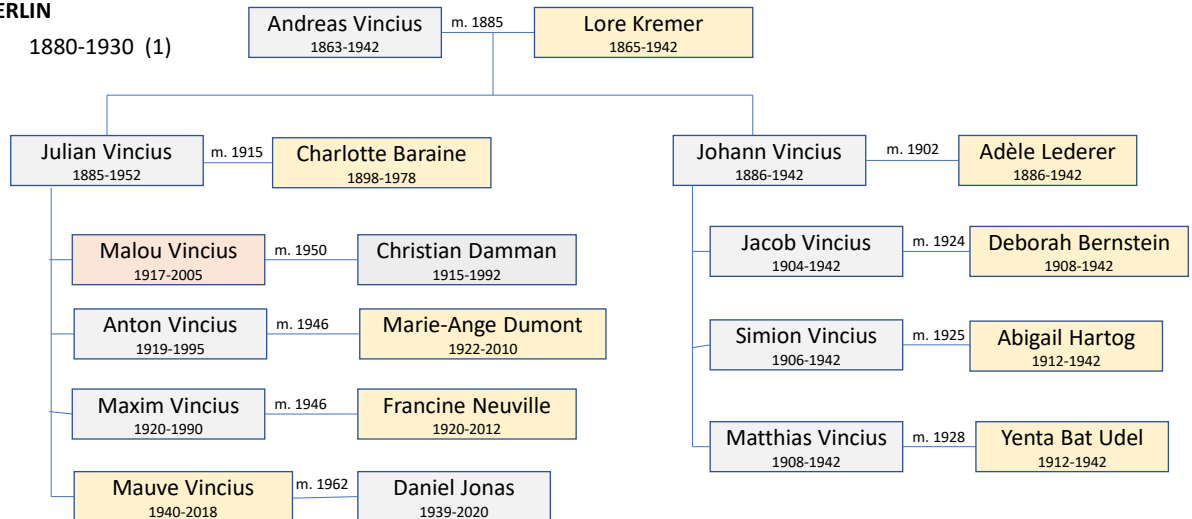
**The von Chrapitz Family:**

Leandra von Chrapitz	1825-1907	Second wife of Max Vincius, married in 1865
Julius von Chrapitz-Vincius	1865-1938	Son of Leandra von Chrapitz and Max Vincius, married in 1883 to Anna von Fiebris (1875-1930).
Maria von Chrapitz-Vincius	1867-1942	Daughter of Leandra von Chrapitz and Max Vincius, married in 1884 to Andrej von Gomolenski (1865-1942).
Philipp von Chrapitz	1884-1942	Son of Julius von Chrapitz-Vincius, married in 1908 to Charlotte Lisnewski (1880-1960).
Otto von Chrapitz	1886-1944	Son of Julius von Chrapitz-Vincius, married in 1906 to Elisabeth von Grabia (1883-1958).
Dorothea von Gomolenski	1887-1954	Daughter of Maria von Chrapitz-Vincius, married in 1913 to Albrecht von Papau (1870-1942).
Micol von Gomolenski	1889-1964	Daughter of Maria von Chrapitz-Vincius, married in 1906 to Rudolph von Witszke (1890-1942)

## The Vincius Families in Charts

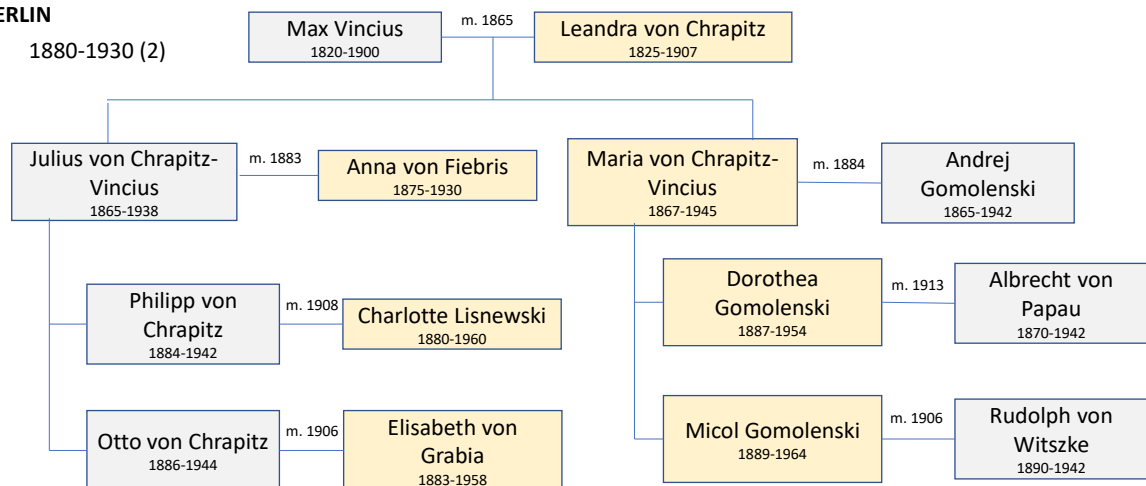
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1880-1930 (1)



## BERLIN

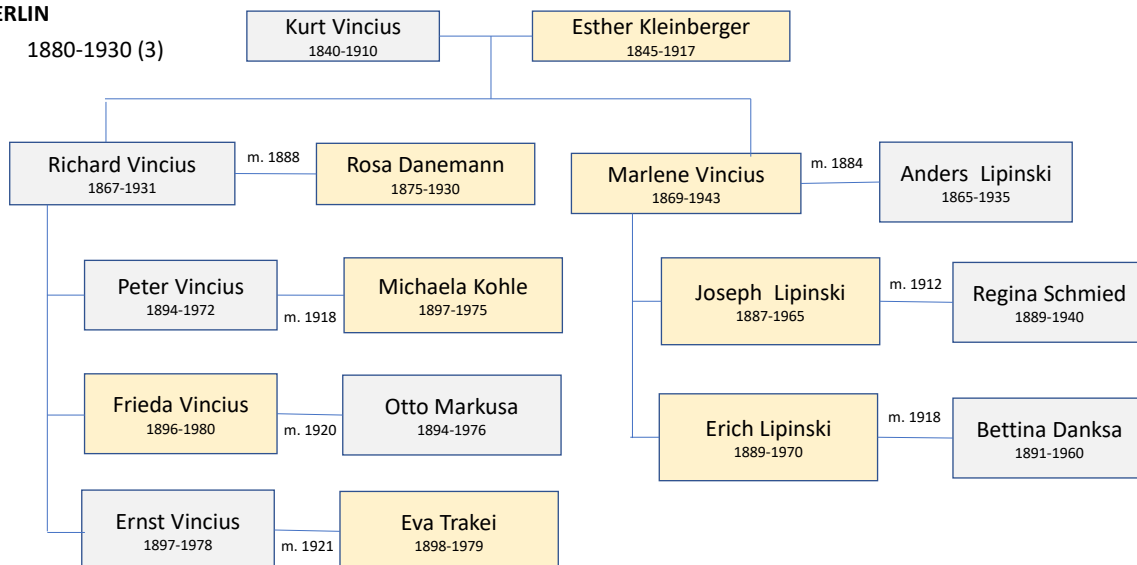
1880-1930 (2)



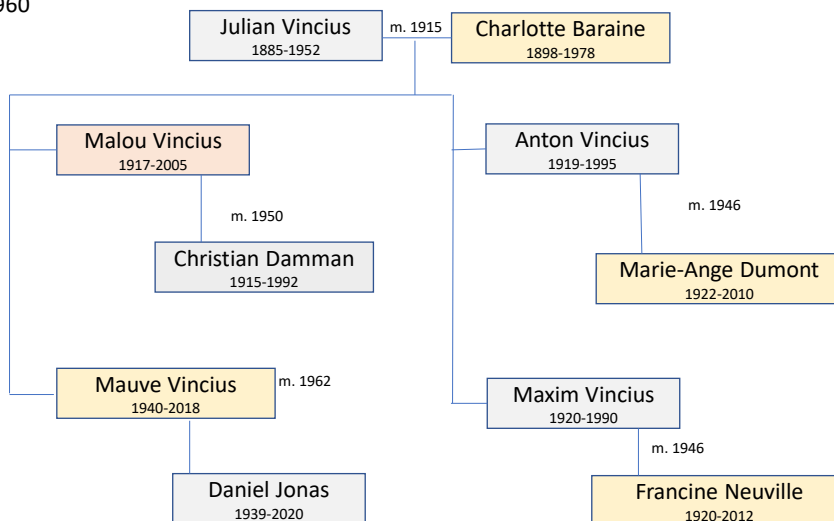
## The Family von Chrapitz

**BERLIN**

1880-1930 (3)

**The Kleinberger Family****Luxemburg**

1930-1960



## The Leaders of the Nations

### Russia and Poland

#### Chairmen of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets (1917–1938):

Mikhail Kalinin (1875 - 1946) In office 1919 - 1938

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870 - 1924), alias Lenin. Head of the Government of Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1924 and of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1924.

Ioseb Besarionis dze Jughashvili, alias Stalin (1878 – 1953). In office 1924–1953. Georgian. Head of the Government of the Soviet Union from 1924 to his death.

Georgy Maximilianovich Malenkov (1901 – 1988). In office March 1953 – February 1955.

### Germany

#### The Weimar Republic President:

Paul von Hindenburg (1847 - 1934). In office: 1925 - 1934. General and Field Marshal of the German Army. Full name: Paul Ludwig Hans Anton von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg.

#### After the Weimar Republic:

Adolf Hitler (1889 – 30 April 1945). *Führer* and *Reichskanzler*, Chancellor in office 1933-1945.

#### Chancellors of Germany:

Hermann Müller (1876 - 1931). In office: 28 Jun 1928 - 27 Mar 1930.  
 Heinrich Brüning (1885 - 1970). In office: 30 Mar 1930 - 30 May 1932.  
 Franz von Papen (1879 - 1969). In office: 1 Jun 1932 - 17 Nov 1932. 169 days.  
 Kurt von Schleicher (1882–1934). In office: 3 Dec 1932 – 28 Jan 1933. 56 days.

Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967). In office: 15 Sept 1949 - 15 October 1963.

### Austria

#### Habsburg Emperors:

Franz-Joseph I (1830 - 1916) R. 1848 - 1916. Emperor of Austria-Hungary. Dynasty of Habsburg-Lorraine. Married in 1853 to Duchess Elizabeth of Bavaria (called ‘Sissi’, 1837-1898). Son of Ferdinand I.

Karl I the Blessed (1887 - 1922) R. 1916 - 11 November 1918 (resigned). Grand-Nephew of Franz-Joseph I and great-great-grandson of Franz I.

Presidents of Austria:

Wilhelm Miklas	(1872–1956). In office: 10 Dec 1928 to 13 Mar 1938.
Arthur Seyss-Inquart	(1892–1946). In office: 13 Mar 1938 under Nazi dominance.
Karl Renner	(1870–1950). Acting 1945 – 1950.
Leopold Figl	(1902–1965). Acting 1950- 1951. 172 days.
Theodor Körner	(1873–1957). Acting 1951 – 1957.
Julius Raab	(1891–1964). Acting 1957- 1957. 138 days.
Adolf Schärf	(1890–1965). Acting 1957- 1965

**France**Presidents of France:

Gaston Doumergue	(1863 - 1937). In office: 1924 - 1931.
Paul Doumer	(1857 - 1932). In office: 1931- 1932.
Albert Lebrun	(1871–1950). In office: 1932 – 1940.
The office of President did not exist from 1940 to 1947.	

Chairmen of the Provisional Government:

Brigadier General Charles de Gaulle (3 June 1944 – 26 January 1946)  
 Félix Gouin (26 January 1946 – 24 June 1946)  
 Georges Bidault (24 June 1946 – 28 November 1946)  
 Vincent Auriol (interim) (28 November 1946 – 16 December 1946)  
 Léon Blum (16 December 1946 – 16 January 1947).

Presidents of the Fourth Republic:

Vincent Auriol	(1884–1966). In office: 1947 – 1954.
René Coty	(1882–1962). In office: 1954 – 1959.

Presidents of the Fifth Republic:

Charles de Gaulle	(1890–1970). In office: 1959 – 1969.
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**Great Britain**

George V	(1865 - 1936) R. 1910 - 1936.
Edward VIII	(1894 - 1972) R. 1936. He abdicated 11 Dec 1936. Reign of 327 days.
George VI	(1895 – 1952) R. 1936 – 1952. Brother of Edward VIII.
Elizabeth II	(1926 - ). R. 1952 - .

Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom:

Ramsay MacDonald	(1866 - 1937). In office: 1929 - 1935.
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Stanley Baldwin	(1867–1947). In office: 1935 – 1937.
Neville Chamberlain	(1869–1940). In office: 1937 – 1940.
Winston Churchill	(1874–1965). In office: 1940 – 1945.
Clement Attlee	(1883–1967). In office: 1945 – 1951.
Winston Churchill	(1874–1965). In office: 1951 – 1955.
Anthony Eden	(1897–1977). In office: 1955 - 1957.
Harold Macmillan	(1894–1986). In office: 1957 – 1963.

### **Kings and Presidents of Greece**

King George II	(1890-1947) R: 1922 – 1924 and 1935-1947. House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg.
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The Second Republic of Greece was proclaimed on 25 March 1924.

#### Presidents of the Hellenic State (1827–1832):

Ioannis Kapodistrias	(1776–1831). In office: 1827 – 1831 (assassinated).
Augoustinos Kapodistrias	(1778–1857). In office: 1831 – 1832 (resigned).

Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens (1891–1949). Regent: End Dec 1944 - Sept 1946.

King George II	(1890–1947). R. 1946 – 1947.
King Paul	(1901-1964). R. 1947- 1964. Brother to George II.

### **Hungary**

Miklós Horthy	(1868–1957). In office as Regent: Mar 1920 - Oct 1944.
Ferenc Szálasi	(1897–1946). In office: 16 Oct 1944 - 28 Mar 1945 as Leader of the Nation and Prime Minister.

#### Presidents of the Hungarian Republic (1949-1989)

Zoltán Tildy	(1889–1961). In office: 1946 – 1948.
Árpád Szakasits	(1888–1965). In office: 1948 – 1949.

#### Presidents of the Hungarian People's Republic (1949-1989)

Árpád Szakasits	(1888–1965). In office: 1949 – 1950.
Sándor Rónai	(1892–1965). In office: 1950 - 1952.
István Dobi	(1898–1968). In office: 1952 – 1967.

### **Kings and Presidents of Bulgaria**

House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha-Koháry:

Boris III	(1894-1943) R. 1918 – Aug 1943.
Simeon II	(1937 - ) R. 1943 – Sep 1946 (monarchy abolished by referendum).

#### First Regency Council for Simeon II:

Kiril, Prince of Preslav	(1895–1945) In office 1943 – 1944 (deposed).
Bogdan Filov	(1883–1945).
Lt. General Nikola Mikhov	(1891–1945).

Second Regency Council for Simeon II:

Todor Pavlov (1890–1977). In office 1944 – 1946 (monarchy abolished).  
 Venelin Ganev (1880–1966).  
 Tsvetko Boboshevski (1884–1952).

Presidents of the People's Republic:

Vasil Kolarov (1877–1950). In office: Sept 1946 – 1947.  
 Mincho Neychev (1887–1956). In office: 1947 – 1950.  
 Georgi Damyanov (1892–1958). In office: 1950 - 1958†.  
 Dimitar Ganev (1898–1964). In office: 1958 - 1964†.

**Kings and Presidents of Rumania**House of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen:

Michael I (1<sup>st</sup> reign) (1921 – 2017). R. 1927 - June 1930).  
 Carol II (1893 – 1953). R. 1930 – 1940).  
 Michael I (2<sup>nd</sup> reign) (1921 – 2017) R. 1940 – 1947.

Presidents of the Rumanian Republic:

Constantin Ion Parhon (1874–1969). In office: 1947 – 1952.  
 Petru Groza (1884–1958). In office: 1952 – 1958.  
 Ion Gheorghe Maurer (1902–2000). In office: 1958 – 1961.

The main Nazi Leaders, alphabetically:

General Ludwig **Beck**, Chief of the Army general staff until August 1938, resigned; his successor was General Franz Halder.

Werner von **Blomberg**, Defence Minister under Hitler, until January 1938.

Karl **Brandt**, Hitler's personal doctor.

Wilhelm **Brückner**, Hitler's adjutant.

Josef **Bürckel**, Leader of the Rhineland, later Reich Commissioner for the reunification of Austria with the Reich, headed by Seyss-Inquart and others.

Kurt **Daluege**, SS Senior Leader in 1934, Head of the Police Force in 1936, Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia in 1942.

Richard Walther **Darré**, Minister of Agriculture, Head of the Reich Food Estate.

Sepp **Dietrich**, Leader of Hitler's SS bodyguard.

Admiral Karl **Doenitz**, Commander-in-Chief of the *Kriegsmarine*, the German Navy.

General Werner von **Fritsch**, Commander in Chief of the Army until 3 February 1938, when he resigned. Killed on September 1939 in Poland. Followed up by Colonel-General von Brauchitsch.

Walther **Frank**, Goebbels' principal deputy in the Propaganda Ministry.

Joseph **Goebbels**, Propaganda Minister.

Carl **Goerdeler**, Price commissioner.

Hermann **Göring**, Air Force Leader

Walter **Gross**, Head of the Racial Policy Office of the NSDAP.

Franz **Gürtner**, Reich Justice Minister under Hitler.  
 Joachim **Haupt**, Head of management of the *Napolas*.  
 Count Wolff-Heinrich **Helldorf**, head of the Berlin Police Corps.  
 Erich **Hilgenfeldt**, Organiser of the NSDAP charity sector.  
 Heinrich **Himmler**, Reich Interior Minister for Police, SS, Gestapo, etc. after Wilhelm Frick.  
 Heinrich **Hoffmann**, Hitler's photographer.  
 Colonel Friedrich **Hossbach**, Hitler's military adjutant.  
 Ernst **Kaltenbrunner**, Head of the Austrian SS, later Secretary for Security of Austria.  
 Otto **Steinhäuser**, Vienna Chief of Police after the Anschluss.  
 Hans **Kerrl**, Minister of Religions and Churches, early 1935.  
 Hans Heinrich **Lammers**, Head of the Reich Chancellery.  
 Robert **Ley**, Reich Organisation Leader, the German Labour Front Leader.  
 Joachim **Mayer-Quade**, SA Leader of the Northern March.  
 Otto **Meisner**, State Secretary running the former President's Office.  
 Erhard **Milch**, Göring's State Secretary, former director at Lufthansa.  
 Reinhard **Muchow**, NS Factory Cell Organisation's leading figure, shot in a brawl 1933.  
 Heinrich **Müller**, Head of the Gestapo  
 Baron Konstantin von **Neurath**, Minister of the German Foreign Office, until 1938, then Reich Protector of Czechia.  
 Franz von **Papen**, Vice chancellor of Germany under Hitler.  
 Fritz **Reinhardt**, State Secretary in the Finance Ministry.  
 Joachim von **Ribbentrop**, Foreign Affairs Minister as of 1938.  
 Doctor Robert **Ritter**, head of the Reich Health Office as of 1936.  
 Bernhard **Rust**, Prussian Minister of Education and Religion in 1933. As of 1 May 1934, Minister of Education and Science Minister under Hitler.  
 Hjalmar **Schacht**, President of the Reichsbank until 1937.  
 Julius **Schaub**, Hitler's adjutant.  
 Adolf **Scheel**, Nazi Student's League head, the universities, as of 1936.  
 Baldur von **Schirach**, Head of the Hitler Jugend.  
 Kurt **Schmitt**, Reich Economics Minister, former director of the Allianz Insurance company. He resigned in January 1935 to be replaced by Hjalmar Schacht until 1937; later in 1938 replaced by Walter Funk as Minister and in 1939 as President of the Reichsbank.  
 Lutz **Schwerin** von Krosigk, Finance Minister under Hitler.  
 Franz **Seldte**, Labour Minister

Regional NS leaders: Walther Köhler, Adolf Wagner, Wilhelm Keppler, Robert Wagner (for Baden), Martin Mutschmann (Saxony), Robert Ley (early on in Southern Rhineland), Julius Streicher (Franconia- Nürnberg), in 1932 Georg Strasser's successor as the Party's Reich Organisation Leader, editor of the newspaper *Der Stürmer*.



## Part I. The NSDAP and Adolf Hitler.

## The Family Vincius of Berlin.

Julian Vincius was a doctor in medicine. In 1930, he was living in Berlin. He had studied medicine at the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau, a town near the western border of Germany and France. His family originated from the other, the far eastern side of Germany. His ancestors had been living in the towns of Vilnius and Thorn, the former lying in the centre of Lithuania and the other in the middle of Prussia. Julian had established himself right after his studies in Berlin, Germany's capital, as he had always intended. He was a Berliner at heart. Soon, he found a job at the Friedrich Wilhelm University of Berlin, at its Faculty of Medicine, in the renowned Faculty's hospital called the *Charité*, probably then the largest hospital in the world, and certainly the best equipped. Julian had fought in the World War as a German soldier, though he had immediately been appointed to the position of *Stabsarzt* or Staff Doctor in that war, sent by the *Charité*. He remained during the war almost entirely in the French town of Longwy, where he headed the German field hospitals.

After the war, Julian had established himself as a doctor in Berlin, though he continued working in the *Charité*. He led there a series of so-called barracks, a number of light buildings in which patients suffering from tuberculosis were treated. The barracks had been erected on marshy land, so they were built lightly, yet held all personnel, furniture and instruments needed to provide the best of care to the patients. Julian also held a private practice. His private clients came from the personnel and leading persons of the foreign embassies around the Zoo premises and parks of Berlin. The *Tiergarten Area* near which he lived, was famous for its embassies.

In the World War of from 1914 to 1918, Julian had served as a doctor with a military rank equivalent to the rank of Colonel. He had worked as the head of the war hospitals of the city of Longwy in France. These hospitals served to rescue and heal the German soldiers wounded of the Battles called of Verdun. In the war, he had earned some fame, the reputation of leading a constellation of the best coordinated, best supplied, best equipped and best working hospitals on the German-French front.

At the end of the war, Julian had brought with him his wife, his erstwhile young lover and dearest friend Charlotte Baraine, the daughter of the French war mayor of Longwy. At the very beginning of the war, Julian had been given rooms in Monsieur Baraines' house, opposite to his hospital. Charlotte was much younger than Julian. He was 33 years old at the end of the war, Charlotte just 20 years old. And Charlotte had given birth in Longwy during the war. Julian and Charlotte were not completely married, when she returned with Julian to Berlin. Officially, Julian and Charlotte had been inscribed in the official records of Longwy as being married, but there had been no ceremony. Contrary to custom, they had also not been married religiously. Whether their marriage was valid, may be contested, for Julian had ignored any opinion of his superiors. Monsieur Baraine, Charlotte's father, simply inscribed them himself as being husband and wife. Such matters were only brought to order once the couple arrived in the new peace-time Berlin.

In 1930, Charlotte and Julian had three children, two boys and a first-born girl, which were in excellent health and very lively of character.

Julian and Charlotte rarely returned to Longwy after the war. Charlotte's father visited them in Berlin. He was a man with a very humane, open mind, who appreciated Julian's work. Charlotte's sister and the rest of her French family rather considered a French woman married to a German enemy, and German-born children in their nearest of kin, as a rare example of treason to France. Was not Germany the arch-enemy of France and Lorraine? Charlotte's sister could not bring up the same openness of mind as their father.

On Julian's side, the family Vincius was large, so large that Julian had actually neglected to keep contacts with its members. He had never been very close to his father, Andreas, who still lived in Thorn. His mother, Lore Kremer, had known since Julian went to study in Freiburg she would not afterwards often see her son. This remained a constant pain to her, a nagging regret, but boys acted thus, and she knew her son happy, well-to-do, and happily married to his Frenchwoman. She seldom saw her grandsons and granddaughter.

Julian had a brother, who in his turn had engendered three sons. Julian and Charlotte met these once every while. This part of the larger family still lived at Thorn. With time, their contacts had withered.

Julian's grandfather was called Kurt Vincius. The Vincius were originally a Jewish family. Kurt had married a Jewish girl, and Kurt too was and remained Jewish. Julian had been the first and only in his family branch to convert to Christianity. He did that right before he entered the Freiburg University. He brought up his children in his new Prussian Evangelic Faith too, except for Malou, his first and war child, who had been christened in the Catholic Faith, according to her mother's wishes. Malou's brothers would be Evangelic. Nobody in Julian's own close family cared much for religion.

Julian had two uncles, called Max and Julian. The links with them he had neglected, and finally broken when he changed of religious faith.

Julian's grandfather Kurt had first married a Jewish woman, Hannah Sonnenfeld, and from her came the Jewish offspring of Julian's family, the uncles named Max the Younger, another Julian, and Andreas, our Julian's father. The anomaly in the family was that Kurt had later – or had it been always – fallen in love with Esther Kleinberger, a Christian woman. Though he never tried to divorce, he had children by Esther, who he gave his name too. Kurt had two children by Esther, a boy called Richard and a girl called Marlene. Of Marlene's children, Julian knew little, except for Richard's youngest boy, called Ernst, who had served as Julian's ordonnanz in the war, his aid and secretary, his devil-do-all in Longwy. Ernst Vincius was a boy who had studied little, yet had learned all in real life. He had always remained at the side of Julian during the war, lived in the same house in Longwy as Julian, and had taken care for Charlotte and her baby Malou when Julian couldn't. Ernst had returned to Berlin at the same time as Julian. He now owned several garages in Berlin, working out of the experience he had acquired taking care of Julian's wartime cars. Ernst had turned out an astute businessman. Ernst held contact with his brother and sister living in Thorn, and also with his aunt Marlene and her children, who bore the name of Lipinski.

Ernst Vincius was the only link Julian still used to hear about his far family in Thorn and in Lithuania. Those links faded with the years.

Julian's grandfather Kurt had two brothers, equally brothers in the Jewish faith. The youngest, Mikhael, had taken his wife and offspring to Denmark. The other, Haim Vincius, had been a soldier, a general in the Imperial German Army, before he married a woman called Leah Goldstern. Leah was the daughter of a Berlin editor. At the end of his military career, Haim had entered that firm, worked in it, held it afloat, then inherited it by his wife, Leah Goldstern. The editing firm of Goldstern & Vincius, established in Berlin, was now one of the smaller but respected firms of Berlin. Haim, his wife and his children Avram and David had married Jewish. Julian knew these Vincius sons well, lived in the same Berlin street as they, and especially liked David Vincius, Haim's youngest son. David had died in 1928. As with the other members of his larger family, Julian had neglected to follow up on David's widow and on David's children.

The great-grandfather of Julian had been called Max. Max had been a character greater than his times. He too had been married twice, almost the same way as his son Kurt, Julian's grandfather. Max had first married a Jewish woman, being himself a Jew. His wife then was called Sara Benavicius. He had three sons by her, among whom the already named Haim and Mikhael.

Max had divorced his wife and then married a non-Jewish woman, a Prussian aristocratic lady called Leandra von Chrapitz. For her, Max had converted to Christianity, to the Protestant Evangelical Church. So, Julian was not the first in the family Vincius to have changed faith. Max and Leandra had a son and a daughter. The son was called Julius, the daughter Maria. Julius called himself mostly only Julius von Chrapitz. He had one son, called Otto. Otto too dropped the annex of Vincius. He had the blood of a warrior, of the most dangerous of all warriors: of a Teutonic, Prussian soldier. Julian had met him during the Great War, in his hospital of Longwy, for Otto had been wounded several times, and Otto had preferred being cared for by Julian. They had become friends at the end of the battles. Otto had fought near Verdun and been wounded twice. He had arrived more dead than alive in Julian's main hospital of Longwy. A woman had stood first between them.

The woman was a cousin of Otto von Chrapitz, a daughter of Julius von Chrapitz-Vincius' sister Maria. The daughter was called Dorothea von Gomolenski, married since the war to Albrecht von Papau. Otto von Chrapitz had while still young lived a passionate affair with Dorothea von Gomolenski. And so had Julian Vincius later. Dorothea had no children. She couldn't have children any more after a sad abortion provoked by a self-installed nurse known for her dark trade. The abortion had been a mess. It had butchered Dorothea inside. Dorothea von Gomolenski had been a great love of Otto in his youth. He had neglected her after the abortion, and Dorothea had drifted nearer to Julian. Otto refused to acknowledge his relations with Dorothea, except for when he lay, near death, in Julian's hospital of Longwy. Then, he confessed what had happened to Dorothea and to himself. The confession had formed a decisive break in Otto's life. He had survived the war, married a Prussian noblewoman, and retired to Lithuania. He lived there now with his wife and children, but had continued to visit Julian in Berlin.

In his turn, Julian had fallen in love with Dorothea, practically lived with her at Freiburg, where she had followed him and had begun studies in medicine like he. He called her his Dora Gomol in those times. Dorothea had refused to marry him. She had used other lovers to push Julian away from her, and at the end of his studies Julian had returned to Berlin alone, leaving Dorothea to her lovers, disgusted with how she treated him. Dora continued her studies in Freiburg. Julian met her again only after the war and after his marriage to Charlotte. By then, Dora was a doctor too. She worked as the head of a group of nurses in the same *Charité* Hospital, at the university faculty of medicine. But Julian was married by then.

In 1930, Julian was a doctor in medicine and a director at the tuberculosis barracks in the large complex of the *Charité*. He was a professor at the Faculty of Medicine of the Friedrich Wilhelm University of Berlin. He was married to the wonderful, sophisticated, elegant and generally very much admired French lady Charlotte Baraine. Nevertheless, Dora Gomol had once more become Julian's mistress. The bonds between them had proved too strong. They had been drawn together.

Julian's closer friends were again the Prussian aristocrat and former Army Officer Otto von Chrapitz, and the Berlin businessman Ernst Vincius. These two were members of his wider family. Julian's friends Otto von Chrapitz and Ernst Vincius were respectively 44 and 33 years old. Dora Gomol was 41, Julian was 45. Charlotte was 32.

For the sake of their story, it is necessary to mention the religion of all of the characters. Julian, Charlotte, Dora, Otto and Ernst, were Christian of religion. Charlotte was and remained Catholic. The others vowed to the protestant Prussian Evangelic faith. Dora, Otto, Ernst and Charlotte had non-Jewish grandfathers and grandmothers. Julian's father and grandfathers were Jewish.

Early in 1930, Ernst and Julian Vincius had a conversation that would once more change their lives. They spoke over a glass of wine in Julian's vast apartment of the Landgrafenstrasse in Berlin. Charlotte, Julian's wife had joined them. Ernst asked Julian what he thought of the National Socialist Labour Party, the NSDAP, the *National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei*, of which the members were commonly called in short the Nazis.

Julian Vincius reacted somewhat surprised. Surely, Ernst knew as much as he of the Nazis. Julian answered with few words, as he also did habitually when interrogated about his ideas on German politics.

'Not much,' he started truthfully. 'Extreme rightist, despite the word of labour in their name. You must know about as much as I. They seek revenge for our defeat in the last World War. They call it the *Weltkrieg*, indeed. Their programme is based on the writings of that man who leads them currently, that Adolf Hitler. He wrote the book *Mein Kampf*, or 'what I fight for'. I read it. Dumped it. Hitler discovered somewhere a racial basis for the German people, probably in ancient Indian writings. He found the sun-symbol of the swastika in their history. He claims Aryan descent for the Germans. This is a rather unique thought, for if indeed the Aryans arrived here, there seems no reason to state only the Germans descend from them. All Europe must be populated by Aryans, I surmise! Hitler suggests we, Germans, are superior to other people. What does 'superior' means, by the way, and who knows what 'race' means?

Those are simple words with very complex definitions. Well, that man Hitler certainly doesn't seem to me a superior being. Merely a *Gefreiter*, a corporal in the army, of small education, he wanted to be a painter, tried to get into an academy and was promptly rejected for lack of talent. He isn't even German. He is an Austrian. We all know the perfidy of Austrian politics. It is an old empire, too small and too weak to mean much in our continent. So, out for getting bigger, Austrian ambitions also dominate that man Hitler. He wants to conquer more eastern land for the Germans. Who is he to make such claims for us? He wants this too obviously, especially, for the highest nobility of his homeland, the Austrian Habsburg descendants, but he does seem to acknowledge the fact that the Austrians are too weak a people to be able to grab pieces of the East, and certainly, the more so, of the West. So, he tries to warm the Germans to realise what nobody would be capable to do with his homeland, own Austrian armed forces. He boasts with us, Germans, claiming we were never defeated in the last war. We, German soldiers, of which he claims to have been part of, although he was a total nobody in our army, should do his work of conquest. Who is he, that Austrian, to tell us, Germans what we should do? Well, I can tell you, as you well know, yes, we, Germans, were defeated in our best power, led by the best generals we could throw against our so-called enemies, von Hindenburg and Ludendorff. I never felt the French people to be our enemies, even though we fought them. You just talk to our people of Freiburg! They feel closer to the Frenchmen of the Alsace, on the other side of the Rhine, than to the Prussians of Berlin and on!

Julian stopped, drank, then felt the need to pursue his ideas, 'this nobody Herr Hitler, had to blame somebody else for our defeat. Well, I can tell you, we, our soldiers were defeated all right! Blaming somebody else is cowardly, hypocritical, and so easy to shout! A group of people defeated us in our own homeland, says *Herr* Hitler. Of course, only Germans could defeat Germans! So, claims Hitler, the ones who beat us, utterly treacherously, were not all the German people together, but just the Communists in our own land, formed in Bolshevik ideology by the Jews! The 'International' is a Jewish song, he cries. Bah! That *Herr Hitler* is a pompous dumb-ass, who wants to be the master of the universe. He would like nothing better than use the most wonderful tool of all, the German Army and the German people and our Prussian character to reach his aim. That is, to realise for Austria what Austria would never be capable to do on her own. So, what do I think of the NSDAP? Its leader is a fraud, a traitor to the German people, a usurper, a malicious manipulator. He has followers as bad in character as himself. The names are Göring, Himmler, Hess and Goebbels, and a handful more. What are their real motives? Revenge, vanity, theft, power. They are seekers of power of the worst kind. How could anyone in Berlin be so dumb as to think such idiots could lead Germany? To where, to what, to more blood and tears and misery?'

Ernst did not seem very pleased. But he nodded in agreement.

'Yes,' he said. 'They have a militia, the Brownshirts, their *Sturmabteilung*, the SA, their stormtroopers. The SA supposedly is a private, independent militia, but they are controlled by the NSDAP party. They are very dangerous. They install a regime of fear. If you openly declare yourself an opposer to them, they beat you down. They destroy your shop or shops, scare away ordinary people, so much you can lose all your customers and you have to close business.'

‘I know, I know,’ Julian grumbled.

‘So, I definitely don’t want to lose my business. I am not robust enough to withstand them. I thought about joining them. If you can’t win of them, join ’em. I have no time to spend in anything like the brownshirts, in the SA. I would not take part in any of the actions of the SA. But I could take a membership in the NSDAP, show my head at a few of their meetings, yell with the crowd, cheer to the chief guide. And keep my own thoughts to myself, and preserve my garages.’

‘I understand,’ Julian answered. ‘Why not? If their militia indeed gets so strong the Berlin police always arrives too late, because the policemen are scared of the militia, then, well, it is better to live and do well, not oppose them too much. You are still vulnerable. I always thought you overstretched in loans to grow your affairs so soon. I see. You cannot afford at this moment of crisis to lose customers. Act neutral in the streets, join the worst dogs in all quietness so that they don’t bother you, and live calmly with Eva. I suppose I am doing the same. You do what you need to do to survive, Ernst. I know you’re a decent man. I shall never claim to be your better. I just hope the current state won’t get worse.’

Julian and Ernst Vincius drank their wine and continued to natter about their loved ones: their wife, their children. Both knew the apple of their carefree attitude had worms in it. Julian had a lover, Dora Gomol, and Ernst had to compromise with the Nazis. Would Julian ever be forced to do the same? How?

## The Ascent of the NSDAP and Adolf Hitler

### *Adolph Hitler*

In May 1913, Adolph Hitler lived in München, the capital of Bavaria, of Bayern. He worked here and there as an independent architectural draughtsman. He had no regular employment. He was an Austrian citizen in voluntary banishment in Germany. Hitler was born in Braunau-am-Inn in 1889. He spoke German. He had first arrived in Vienna in 1908. Later, he sought to be accepted at the Academy of Fine Arts of the capital of Austria, but he had been sent away and refused.

In 1914, Germany followed up on the call of the Austrian Emperor Franz-Joseph to help the Austrians fight their crusade against Serbia and somewhat later against the Russian Empire. Agreements existed between the two states of Austria and Germany to assist each other. A major armed confrontation between Eastern Europe and the two Western Empires had then begun. The German Emperor had waged the Russian Tzar would never run to the aid of Serbia, but the Russian Tzar did just that, and chose to confront both Austria and Germany. The World War was on, its main cause the ego of the three emperors of Austria, Russia and Germany, who had all three been out for expansion of their territories.

Hitler volunteered in Germany to join the German Army, as he lived in Bavaria at that time. The Army assigned Hitler to the 1<sup>st</sup> Company of the 16<sup>th</sup> Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment. Their commanding officer was Colonel Julius List. The Army sent Hitler's regiment to Ieper and Berselaere in Flanders, to fight against the British Expeditionary Forces, against the Belgian Royal Army and against the French Republican Armies. The first engagement of Hitler's regiment took place at the end of October 1914. The German Army and the Allied Armies suffered heavy losses in soldiers.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1914, Hitler had walked into a mustard gas attack near Wervik, north of Ieper. For some time, he was blinded. He lost his sight and was taken to a German hospital in Pommerania. In December, he received the Iron Cross Medal for Bravery 2<sup>nd</sup> class. After all, he was merely a corporal!

In early 1915 in Berlin, the civilian population began to feel a war was on. The prices of food grew considerably. With the first in-flood of handicapped, severely wounded men, a flood of depression hit the capital of Prussia, Berlin. These were the first signs of weariness with a still young war. The Social Democrats in the city were the largest political movement of the Berlin of those days. Out of their midst emerged radical groups of women, who tried to agitate for peace among all layers of German society. The women left their kitchen and emerged in the streets. Demonstrations even happened opposite the *Reichstag* building! In May 1915, the women shouted their disapproval of the measures of Philipp Scheidemann. Scheidemann was an SPD member, a member of the Socialist Party of Germany, though as yet a member of the then right-wing Government. Basic foodstuffs had become increasingly scarce. As prices therefore continued to rise, since food shortages began to cause a panic in the population, demonstrations happened more often.

In March of 1915, Hitler's regiment marched to the front of Fromelles near Lille in France.



Hitler's group defended themselves for 18 months in the trenches of the World War. Major skirmishes and attacks with counter-attacks took place there in 1915 and 1916. Hitler survived those ordeals. In all, he served the full 6 years the war lasted. Hitler's father had died in 1903, his mother in 1907. He still had a sister Paula and a half-sister Angela during the war.

On 1 May 1916, the *Spartakus Group* of extremist Communist workers, organised demonstrations in the Potsdamer Platz of Berlin. The Government arrested the leader of the *Spartakusbund*, Karl Liebknecht, and the police accused him of high treason. But the more than 25,000 people demonstrating in the streets demanded his immediate release from prison. End June 1916 then, came the first organised strike of the war. More than 50,000 workers of the main manufactories of Berlin, such as AEG, Borsig, Schwarzkopf and Loewe, went on strike the day before the trial of Liebknecht began. The well-organised anti-war protesters thus received the support from large sectors of the embittered population! The police made arrests. The Government banned extremist organisations and deported individuals to far-away regions.

At the end of August of 1916, on the Western Front, General Paul von Hindenburg replaced General Erich von Falkenhayn as Chief of the German General Staff of the Army. Hindenburg had obtained greater successes on the Eastern Front in defeating the attacking Russian Tzarist Armies that had tried to enter Germany in the north-east of the country.

In October 1916, Hitler's regiment fought in the terrible Battle of the Somme, which had been going on since end June of that year. He ran with the spiked helmet, the *Pickelhaube*, on his head. Hitler served here in a very dangerous function, that of a courier, at Allaines, between Bapaume and Le Braque. Soon, he served in a dugout in which the Regimental Staff worked, north of Le Braque. In early October, during a bombardment, he hid with others in a tunnel, when a cannon shell exploded near the tunnel's entrance. The exploding shell injured several soldiers, and also Hitler was wounded. He had a thigh injury. The regiment sent him to a Red Cross hospital near Berlin.

Hitler healed slowly in Berlin. With a fellow corporal, Franz Mayer, Hitler took a train to the Friedrichstrasse Railway Station of Berlin. He visited the city and its museums, as his main interest remained art. It was the first time he saw the capital of Prussia. Hitler stayed for about 2 months in Berlin. He found lodgings in the area between the Friedrichstrasse Station and the *Museum Insel* on the River Spree, an island in the river on which had been built several splendid museums. Hitler lived close to these finest museums of Europe, such as the German National Gallery on the Friedrichsgracht. Yet, he also saw the hunger, the misery, the shortage of foodstuffs, the high prices of meat, the black marketeering and the corruption in the city. He didn't particularly like Berlin, compared to München.

Hitler returned to his regiment. He had stayed there for several months already, when more than 200,000 workers in the armaments industry, of more than 300 factories, went on strike. In the same month, the USA declared war on Germany. At the end of the month, however, the war in the east ended, when the Bolshevik Soviets asked for an armistice.

By the end of September 1917, Hitler was 28 years old. He was a veteran of the war. He received a period of 18 days of leave from the Western Front, again to stay in Berlin. During that time, he lived in the house of a friend in Berlin's Schonensche Strasse. Once more, he noticed the dire conditions of wartimes in one of the poorest quarters of the city.

When Hitler returned to the front in France, the so-called 'Munitions Strike' happened all over Germany. About 1.5 million workers went on strike, mainly in the munitions industry. In Berlin alone, more than half a million workers went on strike. The Government ended the strike. The military authorities sent thousands of workers into the Army, and special convened courts of justice condemned numerous men to terms of imprisonment. The situation of the German population did not get better. The food supplies to the people deteriorated even further.

In September 1918, Hitler was again in Berlin for a term of about 10 days. The Western Front was collapsing by then. German soldiers surrendered in large numbers to the Allied troops. Germany had entered a state of revolution. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, Emperor Wilhelm II had to abdicate. The revolutionaries had won.

Hitler decided to join the extremist right-wing political parties. He felt disgusted by the defeat of Germany. In November of 1918, the Weimar Republic had been installed in Germany. It was a modern republic, with female suffrage, proportional representation, an independently elected president with wide-ranging emergency powers in a famous article 48 to be able to rule alone by decrees. And yet in the end, after about 15 years of existence, this fine democratic state organisation would fall apart!

The war was lost for Germany and Austria. Almost all Germans bitterly resented the peace terms of 1919. These included the demand for financial reparations for the damage caused by the German occupation of Belgium and Northern France, and for the Allied expenditures. The terms, in essence, were the destruction of the German Navy and Air Force, the restriction of the German Land Army to 100,000 men, and the ban on modern weapons such as tanks. Germany also lost substantial territories to France and Poland. The war had destroyed the European international economy, the German Empire, caused the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, the collapse of the Russian Romanov Empire, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Europe began an entirely new chapter of its history. Many people lost their bearings in this new world.

The main political event of January 1919 were the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht by the *Freecorps* Captain Waldemar Pabst. The *Freecorps* troopers were paramilitary organisations, used at first by the after-war Governments to bring back order in the country. Much later, in times of relative calm, the Kaiser Wilhelmstrasse of Berlin, which had been drawn from the River Spree on and continued to the east of the river to the Kaiser Wilhelm Brücke, would be renamed the Liebknecht Strasse and the Liebknecht Brücke. But that lay in the far future.

*The NSDAP founded*

Hitler had learned to like Berlin by then, though never as much as he had liked München. And he did still not like Vienna at all. He hated Vienna, with its society in which all the races of the Habsburg countries seemed to have gathered. He didn't like the Habsburg Empire, as it had refused to grant him his least chance in life to study art.

In June 1919, the German military authorities ordered Hitler, still a soldier then, to attend courses presented by the Information Department of the 4<sup>th</sup> Bavarian Group Command, then led by Karl Mayr. He learned to know better the aims of the various political parties, and took an interest in the differences between the political groups. In that same year, right after the war, Anton Drexler founded the *Deutsche Arbeiter Partei*, or DAP, renamed in February 1920 the *National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei*, the NSDAP. Its few members met at the beer café the *Sterneckerbräu* in München. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1919, Hitler had been assigned by the new German Army to spy on the activities of this extremist party, and he had become captivated by its ideology. He joined the DAP, and then the NSDAP. Hitler already spoke for the party in October of 1919. In February of 1920, he and Drexler drew up the programme of the DAP, later that of the NSDAP. Hitler's political career had begun. In 1919, after the war, a huge variety of such extremist, antisemitic groups had been created. The NSDAP stood at the far extreme ends of politics until the end of the 1920s. It had been founded in 1919, was dynamic, ruthless, and more violent than other extreme-wing groups.

Germany could only call on limited Armed Forces. Soon, however, paramilitary armed groups formed in Germany, called the *Freikorps*. They were armed, private bands, eagerly used at first by the Republican Government to put down Communist and other leftist uprisings. Some of these uprisings threatened in Berlin and München in the winter of 1918 to 1919.

On 13 March of 1920 happened a serious attempt at a putsch in Berlin. Leaders of the uprising were Wolfgang Kapp and General Walther von Lüttwitz. Kapp was an East Prussian civil servant, also involved in German politics. Von Lüttwitz was a general, in charge of the First Army Group Command. His main support came from the Erhardt Brigade, a brigade of the former Imperial Army, which should have been disbanded for Germany to remain in line with the Versailles Treaty, but wasn't. The local Government of Brandenburg, in which Berlin, fled first to Dresden, and then to Stuttgart. The putsch had seemingly been successful, but the SPD, the *Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands*, the party of the Social Democrats, called a general strike. The population of Berlin, as well as the regular police and Army, turned against the uprising. The troubles lasted until the 17<sup>th</sup> March of 1920, so they lasted only for 4 or 5 days!

Kapp then stepped down, declaring his mission complete. He did this to not lose face further, and handed over his supposed, self-assumed executive powers to the regular military leaders. The Kapp Putsch was over.

On the same day, Hitler had flown to an airport about 60 km north of Berlin, accompanied by the 52-year old Dietrich Eckart, an antisemitic journalist and editor of the weekly magazine *Auf gut Deutsch*. Eckart and Hitler had actually helped plan and prepare the Kapp Putsch. Eckart had been in charge of the preparations in Bavaria for the putsch. The flight to Berlin was Hitler's first airflight, though he was still in the official military service then. Hitler worked under Captain Carl Mayr, who ran the Army's Regional Information Department in München.

In 1923, more such rapidly dwindling left-wing and right-wing revolts happened in the Ruhr Region. They were stopped relatively easily, and the years of from 1924 to 1929 remained relatively stable. Still, at least 170 members of paramilitary groups were killed in street fights. The regular German Army remained neutral in these internecine struggles, and resentful always about the Republic's failure to change the restrictions on its numbers and equipment by the Treaty of Versailles.

In the NSDAP, Hitler came to know the leading figures of the right-wing Nationalist movements, people such as Walter Stennes, who had been involved in the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in January of 1919. Hitler met Count Ernst von Reventlow and Edwin and Helene Bechstein. He met General Ludendorff. In those times, he spoke out to excite the Berliners against the Jews. He called them the dirty East-European Jews, fustigating especially the Jews who had emigrated from the Pale regions, the areas in Russia where the Jews had been allowed to live, since hundreds of years ago. Yet, the Jews had been increasingly harassed under the last Tzars. Hitler said Berlin had been turned into a pigsty by the Jews! He spoke thus already in April of 1920.

The NSDAP sought to buy a newspaper in Berlin, to bring forward its antisemitic feelings. The party tried to acquire the publishing house of Franz Eher, and with that firm the weekly newspaper the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Mid-December, the party secured funds from General Franz von Epp, who had joined the NSDAP in 1920 and would later become the Governor of Bavaria. Also, funds could be got from Gottfried Grondel, an industrialist from Augsburg. He was the man who had provided already the money for Hitler's flight to Berlin in March of 1920.

The *Völkischer Beobachter* was then an ailing newspaper. By the end of December 1920, Hitler was back in Berlin to raise funds for the newspaper. The NSDAP was still short of money. Hitler stayed in a small Berlin hotel, the Hotel Sanssouci in the Linkstrasse, near a humble city quarter, not far from the Potsdamer Platz. He met people such as Heinrich Class, the head of a movement called the *Pan-German League*, who could appeal to almost unlimited funds, and who was willing to help Hitler get his hands on the necessary money to buy and save the newspaper. Hitler also met Fritz Geisler, the head of the *Patriotic Association of Germany*.

Geisler conferred with Hitler, Class and Leopold von Vietinghoff-Scheel in secret. Vietinghoff-Scheel was the secretary of the *Pan-German League*.

Thus, the NSDAP got access to wealthy, nationalist-minded men in Berlin, who nurtured many connections with men of rightist connections and who controlled additional funds. The *Völkischer Beobachter* survived only from gifts by such Berlin backers. The newspaper could pull through with donations in 1923. The NSDAP from then on had its own newspaper!

Hitler returned from München to Berlin several times in the period from 1921 to 1923, mostly to collect more funds for the *Völkischer Beobachter*, as well as to seek further contacts in the city. In 1921, Hitler limited his visits to Berlin, afraid of the sanctions ordered on the NSDAP and his person by the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Carl Severing. He gave lectures of propaganda for the NSDAP, and met other, several leaders of the German industry. His audience, quite limited for his private speeches, were high-ranking generals and important civil servants. He spoke against the Jews and against the Freemasons, explained the new social order the NSDAP wanted to install. He pleaded for instance with Ernst von Borsig, head of the Berlin Locomotive and Machine-building firm of the same name. Hitler also wanted to set up an NSDAP office in Berlin. This last idea came to nothing, because trade in Berlin was still dominated by Jewish businessmen. Hitler was also not very inclined to shift the party's interest from München to Berlin.

At that time, Hitler was convinced he ran the NSDAP! In August of 1920, there had been a meeting between the NSDAP and another rightist party with practically the same ideas as those of the NSDAP. That party was the *Deutsche Soziale Partei*, the DSP. The meeting held in Salzburg had been organised to discuss territories of influence. The agreement concluded that the DSP would stay north of the River Main, the NSDAP south of the Main. An exception was made for the DSP group led by Julius Streicher in Nürnberg. By the spring of the next year, 1921, plans were being whispered to merge the two parties. Hitler was not in favour of a merger at that moment. He feared his position in the NSDAP might be weakened. Hitler's rival in München was Otto Dickel, a writer for the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Hitler had to advance carefully. He also wanted the headquarters of the NSDAP to remain in München. Not everyone in the party agreed with this view.

On 11 July of 1921, Hitler resigned from the NSDAP! He had insisted on being given full powers in the party as its head, its headquarters to remain in München, and the party's programme to stay as it was. It meant the end, too, of the ideas for a merger with the DSP. In Hitler's views, all organisations that wanted to merge or work with the NSDAP had to remain under NSDAP leadership. As his position was accepted by a majority of leading persons in the party, Hitler's prestige grew. Hitler saw himself then more than ever as the only leader of the movement, as the guide, as the *Führer*. Nevertheless, the party remained marginally small in German politics.

In the autumn of 1922, Hitler surprised Berlin with several speeches. He ranted against the Prussian Government, calling its members the 'November Criminals'. As a result, the Government banned the NSDAP from Prussia! Hitler's NSDAP could from then on only work in Upper Bavaria. Hitler would be arrested immediately if he set foot in Prussia. He was not allowed to return to Berlin.

In January of 1923, Belgian and French troops invaded the rich, industrial region of the Ruhr. Allegedly, Germany had not paid its war debts to France and Belgium, nor to the other Allied Powers. Germany could not react with arms. Nevertheless, Nationalist circles tried to form a united front against the occupying forces, which eventually might not shy away from further military actions. In 1923, General Ludendorff tried to gather all the extreme right-wing and

conservative leagues together into one organisation with one and the same paramilitary grouping. Leaders of these paramilitary organisations flocked around him: General Theodor von Oven, as leader of the *Volunteer Corps*, and Gerhard Rossbach, and Adolf Heim, head of the *Reichsflagge*, the spokesman too of Röhm's *Bavarian Working Group of Patriotic Fighting Associations*.

In early April 1923, Hitler was once more in Berlin. He remained in some fear of being recognised in the city. He could not speak in public, but he could stay and address privately invited people in rather small settings. He profited from this loophole in the decrees published against him.

The German Government had announced a policy of non-cooperation with the Allies after the occupation of the Ruhr Region. The German economy was ailing. It could not meet the war reparation bills without raising taxes, but no German Government was willing to do so, because it would have allowed opposers to accuse them of taxing the Germans to pay the French. Had not the French and the Allies lost the hostilities as long as the German Army was still able to fight? Moreover, the war reparations had to be paid in gold and goods. At the growing rate of the inflation to preposterous and disastrous levels, the Germans were not any longer willing to pay, nor able to manage the payments. In December 1923, an American Dollar was worth 4 million million Marks, a 4 followed by twelve zeroes! This inflation meant also a moral and cultural disorientation.

Up to that time, Hitler had refused to allow photos of himself to be published, a way to avoid the police. That alone had attracted some attention. End May 1923, the satirical newspaper *Simplicissimus* had only presented a full page with the title of 'what does Hitler look like'. The caricaturist Theodor had concocted an unflattering caricature of him.

On 2 Sept 1923, was to be held a party rally day for Germany in Nürnberg. On Hitler's demand, the photographer and member since April 1920 of the NSDAP, Heinrich Hoffmann, made a series of photographs of Hitler. Hoffmann marketed the photos in various formats. It showed well Hitler's rigid features, his grim expression, a stern face expressing Hitler's fanatical strength of will, his determination to pursue his ideas, his rigour, and maybe too his brutal, unyielding and absolute resolve. In November 1923, as a counter-reaction, the artist painter George Grosz published a drawing under the title of, 'Siegfried Hitler'. Grosz had wanted to expose Hitler as a racist windbag, worthy of nothing more than public ridicule.

The German Communist Party, the KPD, began to apply the term *Fascism*, a word of Italian origin, to the dictatorial form of leadership of Hitler in the NSDAP, and to Hitler's use of brutal, military force against his opponents. Hitler was seen as a ridiculous figure, a strict demagogue, a scarecrow, a man utterly unscrupulous, as seen by the persons of the other political parties. Hitler showed the most ascetic, dull, fanatical Nationalism, great energy, with the psychological force of Nationalism and its revolutionary tendencies to wipe out the former shame for the defeats of the German Army, in revolutionary force against the rather weak Weimar Republic installed after the war.

*Fascism* was a form of hyper-nationalism. It emphasized the unity of the integral nation and wanted to clean out all the people who were deemed not to belong to the community: foreigners, ethnic minorities and other undesirables. It proposed racial exclusiveness, though

not necessarily for biological reasons, expressed through insistence on the special superiority of the nation in which *Fascism* was introduced. It showed the radical, extreme and violent commitment to the destruction of its political enemies, generally Marxists, Liberals, Democrats and reactionaries. It stressed discipline, manliness and militarism, with a belief in authoritarian leadership. In some countries, *Fascism* was expansionist, combined with imperialist aspirations and anti-capitalist tendencies. *Fascism* aimed at reorganising the economy along corporatist lines, abolishing Trade Unions, and in favour of regulation of the economic policies by corporations of which the interests were directed by the state. The aims of *Fascism* were to establish mass support for an authoritarian regime of a reactionary, non-revolutionary kind. It proposed the commitment to the collective will of the nation as the driving force in politics. The will of the nation would, of course, be represented and shaped by one man only, a Guide, *Il Duce, der Führer*. That idea especially appealed strongly to Hitler.

*Fascism* sought a revolution of mentalities, of values and will. It built a vision of a new society that would reward the strong, the fit, the meritorious, the deserving, far over support of the weak and miserable. Middle-class people tended to dominate in the party functionaries and leaders of the *Fascist* political parties. *Fascism's* advance depended on weak political elites, on the fragmentation of party politics, and on the freedom to build a movement that promised radical alternatives. In general, *Fascist* movements in Europe would be held in check by the then rather authoritarian regimes. The only countries where *Fascism* could become strong were Germany and Italy.

For instance, Oswald Moseley's *British Union of Fascists*, founded in 1932, could never break through. It had at its maximum 50,000 members. Lord Rothermere, the owner of the *Daily Mail* newspaper, supported it, but it collapsed after a big rally in London, in June of 1934, after nauseating thugging against the party's opponents. It had only 5,000 members left end 1934. Its impact on British politics was minimal.

In Spain, Primo de Rivera's dictatorship ended already in 1923. He went in exile to Paris. In 1936 then, had come Franco's uprising, followed by 3 years of civil war.

A Fascist party in Rumania was the so-called *Legion of the Archangel Michael*, with as leader Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. King Carol dissolved the Parliament in his country and established a royal dictatorship.

Several countries in those times reverted to one or other form of authoritarianism: Estonia, Latvia and Bulgaria in 1934, Greece in 1936. In Europe of 1940, there were only about 10 democracies left: Great Britain, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. The national assertiveness of the *Fascist* countries, Italy and Germany, was a new factor that threatened the international order.

One of the larger publishing empires in Berlin had been formed by a man called Rudolph Mosse. His flagship papers were the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*. The editor-in-chief was the founder of the German Democratic Party, supporting the Weimar Republic. One of Mosse's editors was a man called Carl von Ossietzky. In September of 1921, Mosse sent this Ossietzky from Berlin to München, to learn what was going on there on the *Fascist* front.

Ossietzky was to investigate on the no more than a then still obscure political factional entity

called the NSDAP. He found a small, but organised group, which could apply teams of regular storm troopers, *Sturmtruppen*, to break up opposing public gatherings with very brutal means. The NSDAP, though still under an interdict of the government, was working as a now secret society, using sophisticated and very unscrupulous ways. In Bavaria, a movement called the *Grossdeutsche Volksgemeinschaft*, the Greater German National Community, set up by leading National Socialists such as Alfred Rosenberg, Hermann Esser and Julius Streicher, formed a refuge for the banned NSDAP. Alfred Rosenberg was then the editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter*. In Northern Germany, the *German Nationalist Freedom Party*, then still under Ludendorff, joined forces with this NSDAP for the *Reichstag* elections of 4 May 1924. They formed a single faction.

### *The Rossbach Movement*

In March 1920, a *Freikorps* leader called Gerhard Rossbach rented a house in the Hohenzollern Strasse of Berlin, close to the Army Ministry in the *Tiergarten District*. He opened a club, the elegant *Tiergarten Club*. He kept there about 30 men to serve in the club. In fact, the men belonged to the *Rossbach Freikorps Division*. They amassed cars and guns, even machineguns. During the *Kapp Putsch*, the house was turned into a fortified position, the headquarters of the *Rossbach Freikorps*. After the failed coup, the club, groups and associations with military means were disbanded by governmental decree. In 1921, Rossbach set up two new organisations: *Die Völkische Turnerschaften*, a Nationalist gymnasts' association, and a youth organisation called the *Jugendbund Graf York von Wartenburg*. These associations proposed hiking trips in the countryside. They offered a savings society, and organised sessions of agricultural trainings. The members were sent to estates in Mecklenburg and Pomerania. They could be armed.

Another such organisation was the so-called *Heinz Operation*, led by another leader of a National Socialist movement in northern Germany, a man called Heinz Oskar Hanenstein. This man had been involved in the June 1922 murder of the then Foreign Minister, industrialist and politician Walter Rathenau. Hanenstein joined his Nationalist movement to that of the former Lieutenant Rossbach.

In November of 1922, a National Socialist group of people in Göttingen equally sought political refuge within Rossbach's group. They published a programme, which was in fact very close to the NSDAP programme. One of their clauses stated all East-European Jews had to be deported from Germany.

In August of 1922 took place a meeting in München of Hitler with those and other groups of officers from the *Freikorps*. Rossbach and Hanenstein were present, as well as members of the *Pan-German Workers' Party*, a middle-class association of younger people, actually also a *Freikorps* movement. In January of 1923, Carl von Severing banned also this group. A few hundreds of the men then travelled to Berlin to create havoc. The Government troops intercepted them from the Anhalt Berlin Station and sent them back to where they came from, under armed guard. The men wore already swastika signs, which the Government troops and police tore off them.

In view of these events, Rossbach joined the DVFP, or *Deutsch Völkische Freiheitspartei*, the German Nationalist Freedom Party of the people, a splinter group of the DNVP, the *Deutsch*



*Nationale Volkspartei*. The DVFP became the legal cover for the paramilitary activities of Rossbach.

In March of 1923, the Interior Minister of Prussia banned the DNVP and all its daughter- and side-organisations. Their avowed aim had become very clear: the end of parliamentary government as in the Weimar Republic, and to prepare for a Nationalist takeover of power. Several leaders of the DVFP were arrested, also in their ancillary associations, accused of high treason against the Republic, and of forming paramilitary groups. Rossbach landed in jail.

The authorities released Rossbach on bail in mid-October of 1923. The police did not think he would flee from Prussia, which he did promptly, first to München, and then to Vienna. The Austrian police arrested him in February 1924, but he was allowed to stay in Austria. Hermann Göring later appointed Rossbach to Deputy Head of the *Sturmabteilung*, the SA. Rossbach formed another, independent youth movement, and finally broke with Hitler and the NSDAP in 1926.

In 1923, the membership of the NSDAP in Berlin was still low: no more than a few hundred men, mostly former *Freikorps* members, men desiring to fight. The SA of Berlin had been formed in March of 1923, under the command of Hermann Göring.

In September 1923, Friedrich Ebert and Gustav Stresemann in the Government, declared an end to the passive resistance in Germany against the Ruhr occupation. The year was a time of uprisings!

Begin October, Ernst Buchrucker tried to take the fortress of Küstrin. Two days earlier, he had attempted to occupy the Government District of Berlin with 200 of his men. One of his commanders was the former Captain Walter Stennes. Stennes had captured the fortress in Spandau, but he left in peace on the assurance he and his men would not be prosecuted. Buchrucker had discussed his attempt in Berlin with Hitler and Ludendorff in München in August. Other men had met with Hitler then, men like Kurt Jahnke and Erwin von Scheuber-Richter. Kurt Jahnke was the man who had organised the passive resistance in the Ruhr region. An organisation called the *Black Reichswehr*, the Black Army, should be the first to intervene in the Ruhr. It had links with the Rossbach organisation. The group aimed to establish a right-wing dictatorship in Germany by means of a putsch. This *Black Reichswehr* was in charge of the *Reichswehr's* secret weapons arsenal. It was known by the *Reichswehr* leaders, and took even turns as sentries outside ministries of the German Government.

In October of 1923, a meeting was held of the organisation well known as the *Pan-German League*. Their leaders were then Heinrich Class and Gustav von Kahr, the General State Commissar of the Bavarian State. Lieutenant Fedor von Bock, an officer with a brilliant future, was present and told the audience the Küstrin Putsch was at an end. Colonel Friedrichs was the leader of the *Kampfbünde* in Berlin. He told there were 5 battalions of the Army in Berlin, of which already one was made up of National Socialists. General Hans von Seeckt told them to act within the law only. Other *Pan-German League* members such as State Commissar Otto von Lossow and the Head of Police Hans von Seisser, shared these views and goals. Early September 1923 then, the NSDAP founded the *German fighting*

*League*, and also the *Oberland League*, and the *Reichsflagge*.

The SA wanted to deliver a putsch. Hitler panicked. No putsch of that kind had known any true success the last years, and usually, the leaders had ended in jail and the party had been forbidden. Hitler was afraid he and Ludendorff would be excluded from Government. Moreover, the leading generals in service could set up their own Nationalist dictatorship!

### *Issues for the NSDAP*

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, Hitler then launched his own putsch, out of the *Bürgerkeller* in München. The coup for power in Bavaria crumbled rapidly. The Government of Bavaria stopped men sent from Berlin, took them from their train at Gera, and arrested them. In Berlin, members of the *Erhardt Brigade* and of the secret *Organisation Consul* stood ready to intervene.

Hermann Ehrhardt was a former lieutenant and commander of the *Organisation Consul*. In May 1923, Erhardt had set up the *Wiking League* in München. Its aim was the revival of Germany on a Nationalist and ethnic basis by the education of its members in the Nationalist spirit. Erhardt had already led actions in Leipzig in the summer, and had managed to escape from police custody there. In the autumn, he had established a series of military units in the Coburg Area.

In November of 1923 too, General Hans von Seeckt, as Head of the Command of the Army, received executive powers from the German President von Hindenburg. End of the month, he announced the national ban on the NSDAP and on the DVFP, as well as on the Communist Party. Hitler was thrown in prison for a term of 10 months. Proceedings began at the People's Court of München against Adolf Hitler, as head of the NSDAP. The party was in a crisis, so that various new groups were founded to continue the activities of the National Socialists overall.

The paramilitary organisation, the SA, had also been declared illegal. Hitler had appointed Röhm as its military leader, but the organisation of Nationalist stormtroopers was outlawed. In May 1924, Röhm then founded the *Frontbann*, a new paramilitary organisation, working under the patronage of Ludendorff, and not to be affiliated to the NSDAP. The *Frontbann* was made up of former members of the SA, of the *Sturmabteilung*. Röhm had been released from prison on April, 1 of 1924.

When Röhm and Ludendorff visited Hitler in the prison of Landsberg, Hitler rejected their plans. Hitler could and would not support an independent SA of which he was not the leader! He was afraid firstly to lose control of the SA, and secondly to become involved in paramilitary activities organised by others and which could only jeopardise his chances on an early release from prison on parole. His relations with Ludendorff became strained from this moment on, as Ludendorff could position himself as the real leader of the Nationalist movements.

Hitler was then also seeking to free himself from dependence on people he could not dominate, such as Röhm and Ludendorff, as well as from the politically naïve but strong-willed members, generals of the military establishment. Hitler relied on the party, on its

structure, for leadership over the Nationalist movements. From out of the NSDAP, Hitler would reform the SA to a new SA, under the leadership of Franz von Pfeffer. He wanted the SA to reflect the aims of the party, instead of dedicating it to merely military aims.

Hitler wrote his ideas and program for a future Germany down in a text called *Mein Kampf*, my struggle. It was written between 1924 to 1926, the first part in the Landsberg prison. *Mein Kampf* held two main ideas: antisemitism, of course, and the need of the German people to have more space to live in, more *Lebensraum*. Expansion space for Germany could only be found in Eastern Europe, but nobody at that time took a small political leader like Hitler very serious.

In the summer, in July 1924, Hitler was still in the Landsberg prison. He had to issue a public declaration he had stepped down as leader of the National Socialist movement to hope on an early release. He abjured of all political activity! The DVFP tried to take over the former NSDAP groups in northern Germany, but largely failed in these attempts.

Röhm led the *Frontbann* now, of which the northern *Frontbann* section had been founded in the *Reichstag* building itself. In March of 1925, the *Frontbann* had already 600 members in Berlin, and 2,000 members in Brandenburg. By then, the *Black Reichswehr* had been disbanded. As Röhm had the *Frontbann*, what was a party such as the NSDAP without a stormtrooper section? Hitler had one more issue in his power struggle within the party, and that was called the *Frontbann*!

In the same year 1924, two elections formed new parliaments. The first voting was held on 4 May 1924. The then called *National Socialist Freedom Movement* reached 6.4% of the votes. In greater Berlin it got only 4.8%. In December, a new poll seemed necessary. The two extreme right-wing parties were not allowed to participate in the voting. In February of 1925, Albrecht von Graefe founded the new *Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei*, the newer DVFP.

Hitler was released from prison in December 1924.

Four influential members of the DVFP resigned from their party and immediately declared their support for Hitler. These men were Hans Dietrich, Gottfried Feder, Wilhelm Frick and Georg Strasser. In March 1925, Hitler was in Berlin, trying in vain to gather support for Ludendorff's candidacy for President of Germany. He met 4 other members of the DVFP: Reinhold Wulle, Ernst von Reventlow, Franz Stöhr and Karl Fahrenhorst. End March 1925, the voting ended in ignominy for Ludendorff. The NSDAP had supported him, but no other party. He only got 1.1% of the votes! The result was disastrous for Ludendorff, and his former boss von Hindenburg remained in function and in power.

In that same month of March 1925, the ban on the NSDAP was lifted in Prussia, but from the 26<sup>th</sup> of September to September 1928, Hitler was banned from speaking in Prussia. In the municipal elections of 25 October 1925, the extreme right-wing parties also did badly. The NSDAP was so weak in Berlin, it could not even take part in the elections for the City Council. In November 1925, the NSDAP had still about 55,000 members, but at the end of the year merely 27,000.

Other Nationalist groups continued to exist in Berlin. There was the DVFP, Kunze's German

Socialist Party, and several other secret societies and paramilitary organisations. One among these was the *Wiking League*. The *Wiking League's* leaders in Berlin were two retired Army Majors, a Major Günther von Sodenstern and Major Hans von Sodenstern. They had about 500 members. They were Nationalists and antisemitic. In May of 1926, the Prussian Minister of the Interior banned in their turn the *Wiking League* and the *Olympic Sports Organisation*, formed after the ban on the SA. The police claimed plans had been discovered to take control of the capital and revoke the parliamentary democracy. In general, the Nationalist parties with the exception of the NSDAP, were in decline. Many smaller organisations disappeared. The *Stahlhelm*, the paramilitary organisation which had close links with the DNVP, continued to thrive.

The Berlin *Sturmabteilung*, the SA, also seemed to thrive. Its first head was Karl Daluege. The original SA of Berlin had been called the *NSDAP Sports Association for Greater Berlin*. Still, it could pride in not more than 350 members!

Kurt Daluege, born in 1897, was actually a commander of the *Rossbach Freikorps*! He had joined the München NSDAP in 1922 and from 1924 on, he had been one of the leaders of the *Frontbann* in Berlin. End 1926, Hitler even appointed him to *Gauleiter* of the Berlin NSDAP. The party was organised by *Gau* or provinces. In 1930, Daluege would be the leader of the eastern Section of the SS. He became a SS Senior Leader in 1934, and in 1936 he obtained the rank of Police General, head of the Order Police, the regular German police force that handled all aspects of law enforcement in Hitler's *Third Reich*. In 1942, Hitler appointed him to *Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia*. It was Daluege who gave the orders to the massacre at Lidice. Finally, he was tried and executed at Prague in 1946.

In 1925, the SA had been developed in almost soldierly fashion, organised in stormtrooper ways. They held demonstrations, which usually ended in violence. For instance, on 9 August 1925, they held a demonstration around the Memorial Church of Emperor Wilhelm on the Kurfürstendamm. It ended in a large fist fight. In February 1926, the SA clashed in a street battle in the quarter of Wedding with the *Frontbann* and with Communists. The SA seemed once more to be taking over where the *Frontbann* had been left.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1926, the National Socialists of Berlin gathered openly and in force in Charlottenburg to feast Hitler's 37<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary.

Nevertheless, sometimes, the SA and NSDAP leaders came to blows among each other, such as in a meeting end of August 1926.

In October of that year, an internal NSDAP report fustigated this internal situation of the SA and the NSDAP. Hitler was facing a meltdown of the Berlin branch of his party. The former leaders of the Berlin SA were no longer in control of the troops. A new leader confirmed himself.

His name was Heinz Oskar Hanenstein. His rival foremost was then Otto Strasser, an ideologist of the north-German NSDAP.

Even a pro-Soviet foreign policy had been devised in a left-wing National Socialist faction, which could become hostile to the München NSDAP and thus to Hitler! So, Hitler offered Strasser a position as the head of the party's Propaganda Bureau, in an attempt to make Strasser harmless. Strasser accepted the function. He then thought Hitler had been misled by the men around him. In a means to set matters straight in Berlin, in a tight organisation, Hitler

sent Goebbels to the city as temporary *Gauleiter* for a period of 4 months.

Joseph Goebbels was the *Gauleiter* of the Ruhr Region. He had joined the NSDAP in 1924. In August of 1926, the leaders of the NSDAP of Greater Berlin had gathered. The divisions in the party were by then very clear. Hitler sent Goebbels to Berlin to clean up the mess. Goebbels, of course, found only discontent and grumbling in Berlin. In October of that year of 1926, the city's acting *Gauleiter*, Ernst Schmiedicke, who was unable to control the situation, asked Goebbels to accept the post of effective *Gauleiter*. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, Goebbels accepted the task. He was now the *Gauleiter* for Greater Berlin, and Hitler, by a letter of October, 26 had also placed the SS and the SA under his command.

Goebbels was born in the Rhineland town of Rheydt on 29 October 1897. In November of 1921, he obtained his doctorate, so that in Berlin party members addressed him as Herr Doctor Goebbels. He had exercised no political activity until 1924. As of January 1923, Goebbels had found a job in in the Dresdner Bank in Köln. He didn't like his work, found it meaningless, and at a very low wage. In September 1923 already, Goebbels lost his job at the bank. He moved back to Rheydt, an embittered man.

When in June 1924, he also attended a meeting of the *Nationalist Freedom Party*, he remained disappointed by their blathering. Still, in August 1924, he took part in Weimar of a party rally of the *Nationalist Freedom Movement*, then still under the chairmanship of Ludendorff.

In August of that same year 1924, Röhm formed the *Northern Frontbann* section in Berlin. Röhm had no links anymore with the NSDAP.

By end September, Goebbels formed a local branch of the *National Socialist Freedom Movement*. He first worked also as an editor of the party's weekly newspaper, the *Völkische Freiheit*. When the local NSDAP broke free from the DNVP to form its independent branch in the Rhineland, Goebbels joined it in March 1925. He became the secretary of the *Gau* of North Rhineland. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, Goebbels had his first meeting with Hitler at an NSDAP rally of party leaders in Weimar. He met Hitler again in early November of 1925 and at end November in Plauen. Goebbels was very impressed by Hitler's personality. Goebbels was good at delivering speeches. He presented no fewer than 189 propaganda speeches for the NSDAP in the Rhineland, and even beyond from October, 1 1924 to October, 1 of 1925. Goebbels also travelled to Berlin to speak in public there. He was in Berlin in October of 1924, in March 1925 and in November 1925, in early 1926, and later still on more occasions. He spoke before 2,000 people at Spandau. But he couldn't like the city! He called Berlin an urban monster of stone and asphalt. It was so different from his beautiful Rhineland! Berlin was a wasteland of stone and a den of iniquity! Goebbels was no brilliant theorist, and no great strategist, but he knew what propaganda was, and how to use it. With time, he became one of the most capable propagandists of the NSDAP. He was sufficiently smart and eloquent for the task, and totally impressed by Hitler. Hitler shared his views of Berlin.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1926, the *Frontbann* joined the NSDAP, to become the NSDAP's 'Sports Association'. Its leader was still Kurt Daluege. But in Berlin, there was still no love lost between the Berlin SA and NSDAP members. They fought even amongst each other on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1926. When in November of that year Goebbels talked to Hitler, his mood was down. The party organisation in Berlin was appalling! Goebbels even felt insecure. He

knew too well he was an intruder. He had to conquer a city for the NSDAP, but the city was completely held by Marxism, Jewry and competing Nationalists.

Goebbels arrived in Berlin to take up his function on the 9<sup>th</sup> November of 1926. He arrived at the Anhalt Station. He gave a first speech at the Seitz Conference Rooms in Spandau and asked there for strict discipline. Immediately, Hanenstein left the party with 80 members. Later, about 20% of the party members resigned. Goebbels had to found an entirely new party in Berlin! Hitler had come to Berlin the same day as Goebbels. Hitler confirmed Goebbels as *Gauleiter* for Berlin.

Goebbels began to reorganise the Berlin NSDAP. He tried to stop the internal intrigues, to sow trust instead of mistrust, to work against the Berlin spirit of everybody struggling to achieve positions of power by all means. In Berlin, Goebbels learnt the ambitious leaders did not shy away from using physical violence on party members, going so far as to challenge them to duels. Goebbels was ready to use harsh methods to restructure the party. He made of Kurt Dalwege his *Deputy Gauleiter*. He had the *Berliner Arbeiterzeitung*, the NSDAP's official newspaper for Berlin and Brandenburg as a means of propagating his ideas and edicts.

The *Berliner Arbeiterzeitung* was filled week after week with virulent antisemitic attacks on politicians, journalists, writers, artists and other people working in the theatre and film industry. The newspaper took on the antiparliamentary and militaristic stance of the NSDAP, with more vigour, drawing attention of the public for its radical ideas. Goebbels set up a *National Socialist Freedom Alliance*, to demand excessive material sacrifices from its members. He needed money, but he had found the Berlin NSDAP was in bad financial shape, whereas for instance, he needed cars to intervene rapidly anywhere. He got occupied for months with this reorganisation work.

Although Goebbels lost members at the beginning, month by month, he could sign up more party members! As for propaganda in Berlin, he had the *Berliner Arbeiterzeitung* to continue its antisemitic attacks. The *Arbeiterzeitung* appeared in first issue in 1927. The editor-in-chief was still Gregor Strasser, who was by then also the head of the Nazi propaganda department.

Goebbels counted on strong feelings, still of after the World War. These sentiments were common in all right-wing, so-called *völkisch*, popular and very conservative parts of society. The messages were anti-democratic, anti-parliamentary, militaristic, and especially refusing any reparation money to the victors of the last war. Goebbels began to direct demonstrations of the power of the NSDAP throughout the city. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, he sent 300 members of the SA marching through the quarter of Neukölln. With Wedding, this was the most Socialist or 'red' district of Berlin. The poorest lived here, the unskilled workers in the factories of Berlin. The march served only as provocation to the Socialist and Communist organisations. All SA-men marched in uniform, wearing many flags and standards. At the end of the march, riots erupted. The police swept the Communists and Socialists away. Still, the march could not be called a great success. It had been too small, and had not been prepared to all details. The headquarters of the NSDAP in Berlin wanted more, but Goebbels esteemed the Party in Berlin not yet ready, too small, internally too divided. He continued to stage his speeches, usually in the *Kriegervereinshaus* of the Chausseestrasse, with each time from a 1,000 to 1,500 people attending. Hitler was still banned from speaking in public in Berlin, so Goebbels had to stand in as orator.

The first real battle between paramilitary groups in the streets of Berlin took place on 25 January of 1927, in the quarter of Spandau, after a meeting of the NSDAP held in the Seitz Conference Rooms. The Communist *Red Fighters' League* fought against the NSDAP members and the *Sturmabteilung* or SA. Riots also developed on 30 January 1927 in Cottbus. About 20 SA-men got wounded. And still the German press remained silent over the clashes. On 11 February, the SA entered the Pharos Hall in a courtyard of the Müllerstrasse in Wedding, and started a battle with the Communists. The Pharos Hall was the place where the Communists usually met. At that moment, however, only about 20% of the audience consisted of Communist militants. The rest were SA-men. About 80 Communists and members of the KPD, the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, were more or less injured. About 500 SA-men marched off in good formation. This fight did get into the press!

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1927, several more brutal incidents took place. On the previous evenings, hundreds of SA members in uniform marched together from the Anhalt Station in Berlin to Treblin, a small town about 30km south of Berlin. The next day, the SA held a mass meeting in Treblin. Then, they returned to Berlin by train. In the train happened to be a brass band of the *Red Front Fighters' League*. A fight ensued, fought with so far unheard of brutality. Shots were fired. The SA-men, who had fought with more than 600 men against the 20 or so Red Brass Band, stepped off the train at Lichterfelde-Ost. The railway carriage was completely wrecked.

The same day, in the evening, a new march built up at Lichterfelde-Ost. About 1,000 SA militants and as many NSDAP party members concentrated. They marched through Steglitz and Friedenau to the Wittenberg Platz, where about 8,000 people were present to hear Goebbels speak. Friedenau and Steglitz were middle-class suburbs. Here were established the headquarters of the Socialists. Once more, Goebbels had played on provocation. The march's aim was a display of antisemitism. Jewish passers-by were beaten up. A fight with the Socialists followed in the Wittenberg Platz.

Another place of rallying for the NSDAP in Berlin was the *Clou*, a concert hall and the city's largest restaurant. More than 3,000 people could gather there. Hitler spoke here in May 1927. He asked the audience whether they thought Germany was large enough to support its growing people. He said the land of the Germans should be made large enough to fit its number of people. If need be, the land had to be taken by fighting! Land had to be conquered! At that moment, Hitler wisely omitted to mention where land, the expansion of Germany, had to be conquered. Hitler was in fact still banned from speaking in public, but he could speak in private events, even if only open to party members, which he did in places such as the Berlin *Clou*. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, he spoke thus at the Feurich Hall in the Lützower Strasse of the *Tiergarten* District. Goebbels had gathered the party supporters there.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, Goebbels organised another such private mass meeting in the *Kriegervereinshaus* of Berlin. Hitler remained in Berlin until 7 May. He had long discussions with Goebbels.

On 5 May 1927, the Prussian Government banned the NSDAP from Berlin. The party had to disband. It had to stop all activities, such as marches and meetings. The NSDAP and its Sports Division the SA, its defence units of the SS, the National Socialist Freedom League,

the National Socialist German Students' Association and the German Workers' Movement, also the Hitler Youth, had to stop all activities, as counter to the Prussian Criminal Law. The police discovered weapons at the offices of the NSDAP and of the SA: cudgels, knives, guns, knuckledusters and the like. The police arrested about 20 NSDAP members of the then 1,400 registered members in Berlin.

The actions of the Government and of the police in Berlin had compromised the legal existence of the party in the capital. Hitler was not pleased! He wanted nothing more than to be able to speak in public again in Berlin. He was annoyed by the ban on the NSDAP in Berlin, and therefore quite angry with Goebbels. Also, the Otto Strasser faction on the NSDAP did not agree with Goebbels' view of propaganda and action. Nevertheless, the increasing tendency obtained by the NSDAP to acquire a position of leadership among the right-wing extremists had not been diminished by the ban on Goebbels' activities, on the contrary! Goebbels claimed his demonstrations were still only safety valves for the ruling classes. The indignation of the people had merely found a way of expressing themselves in the NSDAP. More actions would follow!

In April 1927, Goebbels also ranted against the Strasser Brothers in the *Berliner Arbeiterzeitung*. He accused Otto Strasser of being of Jewish blood. Goebbels demanded at a next meeting of all NSDAP offices unanimously to declare their trust in him.

On 20 May 1927, new *Reichstag* elections were held in Germany. The Nationalist parties won not even 1% of the votes in Berlin! They began to vanish from the Berlin electoral scene. At end May, Hitler gave a speech at a South Bavarian Republican Day. He told the NSDAP continued growing despite the electoral results. The SA indeed had doubled its membership in München, thanks to the brutal actions of the group in Berlin. The SA had broken the Red Terror in Coburg. Hitler supported Goebbels in his speeches. Goebbels did want the SA and the NSDAP to show restraint in Berlin, but he continued challenging the Government. The police cancelled an NSDAP event in the Hohenzollern Rooms of Charlottenburg. A march of 150 Nazis in the Kurfürstendamm ended in the arrest of over 30 NSDAP members by the police. At a meeting in the Tiergarten District, the police made more arrests. The judges, however, acquitted most of the NSDAP members in court. The judges thus showed they too had become rather reactionary and hostile to the Weimar Republic. By the end of the spring of 1927, the NSDAP in Berlin had won more than 3,000 members! One of these was the young Horst Wessel. He became a member of the SA and of the NSDAP at 19 years old.

In June of 1927, the leaders of the NSDAP in München discussed the issue of the NSDAP-ban in Berlin. According to Goebbels, the ban was unreasonable. The increase in membership of the NSDAP proved he was on the right track, despite the ban. He had no intention to curtail his activities in Berlin. His aggressive policy and actions would not be turned down. He claimed his position was not at odds with the aims of the party. He obtained the permission to continue.

Goebbels then wanted a newspaper of which the political orientation would be determined by him alone. He alone would write the editorials, and not Otto Strasser. At the beginning of



July 1927, Goebbels could start with his newspaper *Der Angriff*, the Attack. The editor was Julius Lippert. Caricatures were drawn by Hans Schweitzer, who used the pseudonym of Mjöltnir. Party members glued red posters everywhere in Berlin, though Goebbels' initial print had only 2,000 exemplars. The paper was openly antisemitic. It wrote the National Socialists were willing to use violence in dealing with their political enemies! Goebbels wanted *Der Angriff* to be deliberately aggressive and belligerent to distinguish it from other papers. It was using the language of the roughest. Goebbels won his bet! Not only was *Der Angriff* not banned by the authorities, by end October 1927 the courts of justice had lifted the proliferation of Goebbels speaking in public. Meetings and demonstrations of the NSDAP in public were again allowed. On 31 March 1928, the Chief of the Berlin Police also revoked the ban on the NSDAP itself. On 20 April 1928, the National Socialists could once more feast the 39<sup>th</sup> birthday of Hitler in the *Kriegervereinshaus*.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1928, the ban on the SA was lifted. It had now 800 members. That number grew rapidly to about 2,000 men. Goebbels could count on about 1,500 to 2,500 Brownshirts for his massive *Sportpalast* demonstrations. He launched a new poster campaign in Berlin. Hitler became more and more satisfied with Goebbels.

On 17 May 1928 took place a large propaganda march of 400 SA stormtroopers from the Stössenseebrücke to the Stettin Railway Station, through Spandau, Henningdorf, Heiligensee, Tegel, Reinickendorf and Wedding. It was part of the electoral campaigns. In the elections, the NSDAP won merely 2.6% of the votes, and in Berlin only 1.6%. In Wedding, the Communists reached 40% of the votes and the SPD, the Socialists, had 34% of the votes! There, the NSDAP got only 0.8%! This was 1928. The odds would turn rapidly, though.

Goebbels was one of the 12 elected members to the *Reichstag*. He thus enjoyed some protection from persecution, which made it easier for him to lead the electoral battles. Yet, the election results in the Berlin of 1928 showed that, finally, Goebbels' aggressive propaganda methods, based on antisemitic ranting and even his attacks on the Berlin press, had not helped much in battering at the popularity of the Berlin Communists. And his new journal *Der Angriff*, the several months of demonstrations, articles, speeches, posters, had not changed much the fact that the NSDAP remained a very small, marginal political group in the capital.

The NSDAP nevertheless continued absorbing radical right-wing groups, and thus to grow its members. In 1927, the *German Socialist Party* of Richard Kunze joined the NSDAP, and in the spring of 1928, the *Wiking League*, officially disbanded since 1926, joined the SA.

In May 1928 too, the *National Socialist Student Organisation* had been established. It won 790 of the over 5,100 votes for the elections in the Student Council of the University of Berlin.

The NSDAP had its issues, though. The disputes between Goebbels and Strasser remained unresolved, and the SA continued its attempts to break free from the NSDAP direction.

On 13 July 1928, Hitler was back in Berlin. He spoke at the Friedrichshain Rooms in the East End of Berlin, to an audience of 3,500 people. As often now, he spoke about the relationship between a country's population and its surface area. He spoke of the destruction of the

German art and culture under the influence of the Jews and the Bolsheviks. He called that German art degenerate.

Hitler talked about art, because in July 1928 was held the Great Berlin Art Exhibition. In a hall at Lehn Station, had been gathered works of the International Association of Expressionists, Futurists, Cubists, Constructivists, and works of the *November Gruppe* of Berlin, with designs of the *Deutsche Werkbund* of Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe.

On 28 September 1928, the Berlin judges officially lifted the ban on Hitler speaking in public. He could now speak whenever, where in Berlin he wanted, and on any subject. His first in Berlin had to wait for 16 November 1928. He spoke in the *Berlin-Schöneberg Sports Palast*. The *Sportpalast* in the Potsdamer Strasse of Schöneberg had the biggest indoor ice-skating surface in the world. It had a boxing arena, a ball room, a roller-skating room, a velodrome, a hippodrome, a theatre, and meeting-rooms. It was a new-style building with curved lines, walls painted in yellow and red colours, and of an elegant structure. It had been re-designed by Oskar Kaufmann, a Jewish architect, who would emigrate to Israel in 1933, but who died in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1944.

At that end of 1928, however, Germany had entered a new, worrying crisis. The numbers of unemployed people had risen by more than 20,000 in the last weeks of the year. Many scholars saw this as the sign of the start of a new economic crisis. But the years 1928 to 1930 knew also the breakthrough of the NSDAP as the dominant party of the right in German politics.

From July 1928 on, Hitler seemed to have made peace with Berlin, and to give his trust even more to Goebbels. He made more frequent visits to Berlin, the centre of power in entire Germany. He gave Goebbels the authority to do what the *Gauleiter* wanted. Goebbels could now appear in full force with the members of the NSDAP. He received more visibility in the party. He was the Hitler of the north! By July 1928, he could gather 12,000 people in the *Sportpalast* and present Hitler more than before as the genius of Germany, as the Great Simplifier, as the future of the nation.

Hitler spoke in Berlin end 1928, on the question of who should and could be blamed for the defeat in the last war. He gave the now traditional idea of the ‘stab in the back’ of 1918, orchestrated by the Bolsheviks and the Jews, who had conspired to bring about the fall of Germany by cowardice and betrayal. Hitler, obviously the veteran soldier, could not absorb the fact he had fought in the last war, and yet he and his comrades had to bite in the ground in front of the Western Allies of 1918. He proposed a new Germany, from which the Jews would be excluded. He emphasised the racist theory. Jews could never have German blood in their veins. They could not be heroes or heroic leaders. The Jews therefore, were merely parasites on the body of the German people. This all led to the bastardisation of the state, the negroisation of culture, bringing about the poison of pacifism in the people. The NSDAP, he claimed, would be German, racially pure, pure-blooded.

Hitler was time by time impressed by the number of people gathered for his speeches in Berlin, brought together by Goebbels: 18,000 people amassed in the huge *Sportpalast*! By the end of January 1929, he too had registered the exceptional increase in the unemployed. Here

was an event he could exploit! He claimed it was due to the infamous Dawes Plan, imposed by the Allies on Germany to pay the reparation money to the Allies, as agreed at Versailles. That plan had caused an impending disaster, so it had to be repelled.

In May 1928, the largest extreme-right political group had been the DNVP, the *Deutsch Nationale Völkische Partei*. It had fallen from 20% of the votes to 14%, a heavy defeat. The DNVP could not be called attractive anymore for the masses of the unsatisfied. In October 1928, the DNVP's new leader was Alfred Hugenberg. The group cracked under to its internal divisions. The DNVP members that were represented in the *Reichstag* under their leader Kuno von Westorp, wanted to remain doing their traditional parliamentary work. Hugenberg, however, wanted to move more to right-wing extremism. By the autumn of 1928, the internal divisions of the party grew and in the summer of 1929, the DNVP Party seemed to be really falling apart. Several DNVP representatives turned their backs to the party, left, and founded new parties. The DNVP nevertheless still had 6 times more representatives in the *Reichstag* than the NSDAP!

In the meantime, Goebbels had reached a third phase in his taking over of the NSDAP in Berlin. In a first phase, he had consolidated and restructured, revived the small party. In a second phase, he had used the SA as a means of propaganda for the NSDAP views, and developed the party to the dominant movement on the extreme right. In the third phase he entered now, he said the NSDAP was in need of a new sense of directives, to truly become a party of the masses and gain high numbers of voters and support. Goebbels thus had begun to play the role of a party strategist, using propaganda as his weapon. He had added some original ideas. But Goebbels also discovered, realised, he was not really a member of Hitler's inner circle!

Hitler then cast an eager eye on the *Stahlhelm* Organisation. The *Stahlhelm*, the Association of World War Veterans, had more than 200,000 members. It was huge, and their membership was still increasing. Hitler had noticed how, on the 30 September event in the Berlin *Sportpalast*, several hundred men of the *Stahlhelm* had turned up to hear him speak. Hitler initiated talks with the *Stahlhelm* leaders, but Goebbels was no part of the dealings! Yet, he too had been looking at the DNVP issues and at the *Stahlhelm*!

End April of 1929, Hitler was once more in Berlin. Goebbels met him and Hess at Hitler's Hotel Sanssouci. Hitler expressed rather pessimistic, bitter views on the *Stahlhelm*. But Hitler also asked Goebbels to take over the running of the NSDAP's nationwide propaganda machine. It was a promotion! This happened late in the evening in the Rheingold Wine Bar of the Potsdamer Platz.

On 13 May 1929, Goebbels published in *Der Angriff* an article entitled 'Against the Forces of Reaction'. He told the Weimar organisation of politics stood on the brink of a major societal catastrophe.

As of July 1929, Hitler had been meeting Alfred Hugenberg, the head of the DNVP. Goebbels on his side, found out that the DNVP was organising a referendum against the Young Plan, and that the NSDAP too was involved in the initiative. Hitler was willing to join forces with Hugenberg, to look beyond the current structure of the NSDAP in cooperation. Alfred Hugenberg had proposed to combat the Paris Tribute Plan that was based on what he

called the extorted confession of the Germans for the responsibility of the war. He wanted to call for a referendum, together with the *Stahlhelm*, the DNVP, the *Landbund* and the *Landvolk* Party, agricultural groups.

At the beginning of July 1929, Hitler joined a work meeting of the DNVP on the subject at the former *Herrenhaus* on the Potsdamer Platz. Present were Alfred Hugenberg of the DNVP and Franz Seldte, the leader of the *Stahlhelm* group. Hitler announced the NSDAP would join the protest against what they all called the *Pariser Diktat*. Seldte, Hugenberg and Hitler were appointed to head a working group on the subject. Hitler's participation in this *Reich Committee* raised his profile in the Nationalist camp immediately. Also, all right-wing groups had formed a united front! Hitler's place had been greeted with thundering applause. Goebbels was shocked when he heard a petition demanding a referendum had already been drawn up. All that without his involvement!

However, Hugenberg was the owner of one of the three empires of newspapers and magazines in Berlin, among which the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, a paper that announced every event in Berlin, the *Berlin Illustrierte Nachtausgabe*, equally very popular, *Der Tag*, which was a news service, and an advertising firm. Hugenberg also edited a very illustrated, and therefore quite popular magazine, called *Die Woche*. Hugenberg had taken over the *Scherl Verlag*, one of the two other publishing companies, so that what remained was the *Ullstein Verlag*, the Jewish press. If Hitler obtained access to the Hugenberg press, he could suddenly introduce his party policies to sections of the population hitherto inaccessible for the National Socialist press and propaganda.

*Der Angriff* now appeared twice weekly, yet this was pitifully insignificant compared to the city's other newspapers! End 1929, *Der Angriff* was published at the most at about 25,000 copies, about the same as the pro-NSDAP *Deutsche Zeitung*. The 3 daily Hugenberg papers sold at half a million copies! Indeed, the biggest newspapers in Berlin were then the *Morgenpost* of the *Ullstein Verlag* and the *Berliner Lokal Anzeiger* at 225,000 exemplars a day! End January 1930, Hitler would decide on a new paper for Berlin, called the *Völkischer Beobachter für Gross-Berlin*, to appear from March 1930 on. At first, it was still printed in München, but by 1 October of that year in Berlin.

In September 1929, the *Berliner Lokal Anzeiger* announced a demonstration against the Young Plan at the *Sportpalast*. Speakers were many: Hugenberg and Seldte, Franz von Stephani, who was the leader of the *Stahlhelm* in Berlin, Franz Xaver von Epp, and Goebbels. Goebbels' activities in 1929 were manifold for the NSDAP in Berlin: he staged no less than 850 events, 199 public meetings, 21 gala events, 305 member evenings, to hear speak 62 persons, among which Goebbels himself, for 93 appearances and Horst Wessel events with 56 appearances. The average number of attendees was 150, for party meetings 1,500 people. The meetings organised in the *Sportpalast* had titles such as, 'The Popular Front against Young' and 'The Final Thrust against Young'. Increasing numbers of Berliners flocked to the NSDAP and to the SA.

In 1929, the economic crisis worsened and the political uncertainty grew. From 15 September to 15 October of 1928, about 109,000 men were registered as receiving income support from

the National Insurance Service, or from Welfare payments. In the same time period of 1929, the number rose to 154,000 persons. By the end of 1929, the number stood at 293,000! In October of 1929, the Wall Street Exchange crashed. It took the German economy down with it. American banks withdrew the loans on which the German recovery had been financed and built since the end of the World War. As a result, in a few years, more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of German workers was unemployed. And due to a fall in world demand, German agriculture collapsed as well.

In September 1929, the police uncovered a fraud in the city administration of Berlin. The Mayor of the city, Günther Böss, had not paid a coat of his wife to Sklarek. Böss had made the city pay! Hitler reacted rapidly on the scandal. He denounced it publicly. In the elections for Berlin, a little later, the NSDAP won 5.8% of the votes, about 3.5 times more than in the previous score. In this voting of 17 November 1929, the SPD went from 73 to 64 seats, the KPD from 43 to 56, and the German Nationalists all from 47 to 40. The NSDAP had now 17 representatives, a major success. In the winter of from 1929 to 1930, the NSDAP had become an organisation without a greater rival on the extreme right. On 12 December 1929, the NSDAP representatives arrived in the Town Council in close formation, as a single block in brown shirts. They were exclusively men, and gave a provocative image. The NSDAP had become a small, but well-known political party.

### *Issues for the German Democracy*

The differences in views of how to handle the economic crisis were so manifold and great, no parliamentary majority could be found any more. President von Hindenburg could only form a Cabinet of Experts under the Catholic Centre Party Leader Heinrich Brüning. Brüning was an avowed monarchist. He could govern by using article 48 of the Constitution, giving emergency powers to the President von Hindenburg. This bypassed the *Reichstag*, a dire sign for the young democracy in Germany!

The violence in the streets answered the political uncertainty. The SA launched its brutality against the Communists and the Social Democrats, the left-wing parties. The unemployed workers flocked to the Communists. They cried out their revolutionary rhetoric. They proposed the destruction of the capitalist basis of society, the creation of a country managed by workers' councils, in fact *Soviets* in Russian. These messages terrified the German middle-classes. These knew very well by now, what had happened in Russia under the dictatorship of the proletarians and their *Soviets*.

### *From 1930 to 1933*

On 14 January 1930, Joseph Goebbels received a message telling him a group of Communist militants had attacked a group of SA-men, among whom the young Horst Wessel. The 20-year old SA leader had been shot in the mouth. He died on 23 February. The culprit was one Albrecht Höhler, who had been arrested by the police on 6 February. Wessel's burial took place on 1 March 1930. Adolf Hitler spoke on 22 January 1933, when a commemorative stone was unveiled and followed by a memorial service in the *Sportpalast*. The SA had its first martyr.

In 1930, the SA had still less than 2,500 members, and it was struggling to grow. It fought constantly against the Communists. The NSDAP newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, appeared as from 1 April 1930 on in a special Berlin edition. The Strasser brothers launched their second Nationalist daily paper on the same day. The paper was called *Der Nationale Sozialist*. This paper especially became popular. Goebbels was not pleased! Hitler changed his mind in favour of Goebbels. He stopped the Berlin edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* and allowed *Der Angriff* to be published daily as of 1 November 1930.

The times in Germany were gloomy! The economic crisis was developing for the worse. In March 1930, over 3 million people were unemployed. End of the year 1930, the number of unemployed had even reached 4 million. The Government reduced the wages and the income support of the German workers. More and more anxious and desperate German workers were then drawn to the NSDAP. The protests led to a political chaos.

On 22 December of 1929, the Germans had been called to vote in the referendum against the Young Plan, but only about 14% of the voters had voted against the plan. This was a humiliating result for the extreme right parties! The NSDAP used the result in its propaganda against its rival party, the more and more disorganised DNVP.

On 27 March 1930, the Government of Chancellor Hermann Müller resigned. The new Cabinet of Heinrich Brüning, could not obtain the parliamentary majority. The *Reichstag* had rejected the proposal of Brüning for the radical diminishing of the expenses of the state. The President then dissolved the *Reichstag*.

The Government nevertheless stayed in place. A period then began of a government over the parties. The Government did not lean anymore on a parliamentary majority, but on the trust of the president. Brüning could not master the economic crisis that followed, and he could also not resolve the political tensions among the German political parties. The DNVP representatives had by mid-July of 1931 fallen to 31. All the others had resigned. Nobody knew how to resolve the failing parliamentary democracy in the country. Brüning had no success in finding any viable coalition in Parliament.

In October of 1931, was formed the *Habsburger Front* of the NSDAP, the DNVP, The SA and the *Stahlhelm* organisation, with other rightist economic and finance circles. They demanded Brüning's resignation. Von Hindenburg sought openings on the right.

The result was a discrediting of the Weimar Republic as a system, in which thrived the radical parties, and foremost the NSDAP. The Government used systematically the Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution, allowing to bypass the parliamentary system by applying systematically Presidential decrees instead of laws. The main issues of the Government were thus the political radicalism, a crisis economic situation, and massive unemployment. Added to that came the international financial crisis. In 1930, the German Parliamentary system entirely transited to a presidential system. The last Weimar Government was the coalition of Hermann Müller and Heinrich Brüning, who was *Reichskanzler* from 1930 to 1932.

The Nationalist camp too was in turmoil, torn and divided. In Berlin, Otto Strasser spoke in favour of a leftist Nationalist Socialism. Hitler was desperately seeking to reinforce the unity in the NSDAP.

In Berlin, demonstrations of the NSDAP and the SA continued being held in the *Sportpalast*.

Goebbels and Göring, both members of the *Reichstag*, spoke in February and in April. On 2 May 1930, even Hitler was in the *Sportpalast*. The organisers of the meeting showed a film, 'The Somme', on the famous battles of the German Army in France. Hitler's arrival was the climax of the evening. He came on stage accompanied by Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia. The prince had joined the party! A little later, Goebbels reassured Hitler of his loyalty. Hitler left Berlin in the knowledge Goebbels would support him. Hitler had an ally in the party: he could play out Goebbels against Strasse.

On 22 May 1930 then, appeared an article in *Der Angriff*. Hitler and Goebbels were settling old scores with the Socialists in the NSDAP. The article was published before Hitler met Otto Strasser for a final conversation in the Sanssouci Hotel. Hitler held strongly on to the capitalist system! Strasser's ideas of co-ownership and giving the workers the right to take decisions in the factories were regarded by Hitler as simply Marxist, hence to reject. Hitler nevertheless did not eject Strasser from the NSDAP yet. He needed Strasser's supporters for the Saxon elections to the Regional Assembly on 22 June 1930. The NSDAP won there 14.5% of the votes, up from 5%.

Otto Strasser knew then the tide was turning. He resigned as editor of the Kamp Verlag's various newspapers, and aligned on Hitler's views for the party. Hitler allowed Goebbels to ban from the NSDAP the men who tried to break the party discipline. Goebbels acted swiftly and decisively. The next day after Strasser's announcement, *Der Nationale Sozialist* wrote, 'the Socialists are leaving the NSDAP!'

On 8 July 1930, the men leaving the NSDAP then formed the *Fighting Community for revolutionary National Socialists*. They were with 400 members in Berlin and 4,000 in Germany overall. A year later, this new organisation fell to 2,500 paid members. The movement slowly disintegrated, split, and was considered not to become a serious challenge for the NSDAP ever.

In July 1930, Otto Strasser left the NSDAP with his revolutionary Socialists. Goebbels had won his contest with Otto Strasser in Berlin. Strasser attacked the NSDAP leadership and accused Hitler of giving a bourgeois face to the party. Goebbels triumphed: he announced the NSDAP had now 10,000 members in Berlin, up from merely 400 in 1926.

In early May 1930, the Berlin NSDAP entered its new offices at number 10 of the Hedemannstrasse, not far from the Government District. Six large Swastika flags hung at the building.

And then, the one event happened in German politics that would change everything.

### *The Elections of 1930*

On 19 July 1930, the representatives in the *Reichstag* repealed the latest decrees of the Government of Chancellor Brüning. The verdict had been obtained with the help of the votes of the SPD, KPD, and partly of the DNVP. Brüning had to prorogue the *Reichstag* and set as date for new elections 14 September 1930.

Goebbels and the NSDAP stepped up their demonstrations and meetings in the *Sportpalast*: on 29 August, on 3 September and on 10 September. Hitler himself delivered a speech on 10

September.

When the results of the elections of 14 September came in, they indicated a sensational victory for the NSDAP. The party got 18.3% of the votes! It won 107 seats in the *Reichstag*. This meant a radical change in the balance of power in Germany. The jubilation in Nazi ranks reached total heights of triumph. Goebbels already demanded for the NSDAP to be reserved in any new Government the Home Office, the Defence Ministry and the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, as well as the post of Chief of Police for Berlin. He called for new elections to be held for the Prussian *Landtag*. The results led to a temporary paralysis of the German Government and of the machinery of the state. Goebbels still tried to have himself regarded as a far-sighted political strategist, in agreement with Hitler on all major issues. But Hitler never consulted Goebbels on important strategic matters!

Hitler came to Berlin, the centre of the political power in Germany, to discuss on the management of the country with the leaders of the other parties. He gave two main conditions for the NSDAP to participate in a Government.

Firstly, he would not accept a Cabinet of experts, of non-political people with no party affiliations.

Secondly, he wanted an end to the coalition government in Prussia, the end of a system that had always been aggressive towards him and his party. Hitler claimed the DNVP agreed with his claims.

The NSDAP moreover, demanded the Foreign Office, the Home Office, and the Defence Ministry.

During the negotiations, Göring was Hitler's political governor. Göring remained in contact with the members of the conservative elite and with the leading industrialists. Goebbels stayed excluded from the party's and Hitler's inner circle. The NSDAP in Berlin had reached only 14.6% of the votes, where globally it had reached 18.3%. The votes in populous Berlin had therefore brought down the results of the NSDAP from a greater triumph still! The NSDAP had failed to increase its votes as dramatically in Berlin as in other major centres, however. With his acceptance to negotiate, Hitler had given a public demonstration of his wish to remain within the law and even within the current political tradition. There would be nothing as an anti-parliamentary revolution – yet.

How was the situation for the other parties? The KPD with its Chairman Ernst Thälmann, had scored a great success in Berlin, by sending now to the *Reichstag* more representatives than the local Social Democrats. It had become the greatest political force in the capital!

Willi Münzenberg, a Communist representative in the *Reichstag*, published the illustrated weekly paper *Die Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung aller Länder* or the AIZ. It was the most successful weekly of Germany with 450,000 printed copies. A journalist of this paper was John Heartfield. The paper described the SPD, the Socialists, as left-wing Fascists.

Carl von Ossietzky, a Radical Democrat now, wrote in *Die Weltbühne*, Hitler was merely a puppet of the DNVP Chairman Alfred Hugenberg. He wrote the NSDAP posed no immediate threat to German democracy.

Friedrich Hussong, a German Nationalist close to the DNVP, the main political commentator of the very popular *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, saw the elections as the confirmation of the NSDAP's actual lack of independence.



In the beginning of October 1930, Hitler remained in Berlin for talks and negotiations with Brüning. Hitler made it clear to Brüning that for him, any successful foreign and internal policy was the annihilation of the KPD, the SPD, and the 'forces of the reaction'. Hitler would be prepared to join the Government with 3 ministers, but without committing himself to any of the Government's measures. Brüning refused to accept Hitler's demands.

The new *Reichstag* met for the first time on 14 October 1930. The day before had been marked by riots. On the day itself, all NSDAP representatives entered in one block, all wearing brown shirts and uniforms. Nationalist groups feasted their spectacular result with demonstrations in front of the *Reichstag* building. Riots broke out, in which many Jewish firms in the long Leipziger Strasse were attacked and devastated. More rioting followed in the evening on the Potsdamer Platz. Several hundreds of demonstrators smashed in windows of Jewish shops and also banks got attacked. Not all stores and businesses thus attacked belonged to Jews, but most were. More than 100 persons were thrown in jail by the Berlin police, among which 45 were members of the NSDAP, and 55 were avowed sympathisers.

In the meantime, charges had been brought against Goebbels at the Charlottenburg Criminal Court. The court demanded the appearance of Goebbels on that day, but he temporarily disappeared, as on the day of 13 October 1930, he became a member of the *Reichstag* and thus enjoyed immunity.

The north-eastern section of the SA had been growing very restless. The SA Supreme Commander in this part of Germany was Walter Stenner. He had tried in vain to have some of his SA leaders to be added to the list of the NSDAP candidate representatives. He had done this, because the SA lacked funds, and he hoped to recuperate some money from the SA representatives. In August, the dispute had gone so far as for SA members loyal to Stenner, to occupy and demolish the NSPAD offices in the Hedemannstrasse. The SA had fought the SS in the streets! On 31 August, Hitler flew to Berlin to talk with the SA men.

Hitler took over the running of the SA and of the SS in Berlin from Franz von Pfeffer, and he gave some money to the SA.

Carl von Ossietzky wrote that the Berlin riots had been fomented by Captain Walter Stennes and his stormtroopers. In *Die Weltbühne*, von Ossietzky wrote an article in which he wondered where the *Reichsbanner* men and the Communists were, as they had offered no reaction.

The NSDAP claimed it had nothing whatsoever to do with the antisemitic riots in the city. Immediately before the *Reichstag* had met, Hitler was drinking in the rooms of the Rheingold Wine Bar off the Potsdamer Platz. He confirmed he wanted to stay within the confines of the law, and therefore he condemned the riots. The NSDAP was a very disciplined movement, he emphasised, and it refused to use violence. No, the NSDAP had nothing against Jews! Hitler wanted to have nothing to do with pogroms. The party would not use violence! Indeed, in order to take distance from the reproach that his men had attacked middle-class property values, he had either to criminalise the riots now, or to throw the blame on his opponents. Hitler said Communist hooligans, provocateurs, shoplifters and looters had been at work, whereas the NSDAP was a peace-loving political party. Who believed him?

The issues of the Weimar Republic in forming a stable Government and in guaranteeing the peace and quietness in the country was the result of the inherent weaknesses in any Democratic system. There were too many parties that vied for dominance, all with a low percentage of voters overall. It meant coalitions had to be formed of several parties to form a Government. Such a coalition would always be weak, and remain weak, as the parties had strongly differentiated opinions about how a Government should work and how society should work together to common goals. This was the only way a democracy could fail, too many parties with strongly differing views on how to go forward. The situation would have been different in a country with only 2 or 3 dominant parties. The dispersion of parties that had too strongly opposing ideas and which were therefore not willing to cooperate, ended the democracy in Germany. Moreover, allowing armed gangs to be formed aside or directly in the political parties, aggravated the aggressiveness of the individual parties, a struggle in which the toughest, most unscrupulous groups could win by terror.

Meanwhile, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of October 1930, a strike began of 126,000 metal workers over wage disputes. The tension in Berlin mounted.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1930, the author Thomas Mann, who had received the Nobel Prize for literature barely 10 months earlier, spoke in Berlin's Beethoven Hall. His title was, 'A German Address: an Appeal to Reason'. He spoke against the ideology and the politics of the National Socialists. He said the political place of the bourgeoisie had now to be on the side of the Social Democracy. Disturbances followed Thomas Mann's speech, and he was down-shouted.

In December of 1930, the film *All quiet on the Western Front* of Erich Maria Remarque's book, published in 1928, was shown. Close friends of Goebbels were Arnolt Braun, a Nationalist writer, and Rossbach, men who wrote about the glorification of the *Freikorps Fighters* in the early post-war period. On 5 December 1930, Goebbels and his men visited the cinema where 'Am Westen nichts Neues' was shown. They threw stink bombs in the hall, and released hundreds of white mice. As the people fled, the hall resembled a madhouse!

Goebbels took on the role of the revolutionary agitator and activist in the NSDAP, as Hitler had to stay quiet because of his involvement in the foundation of a new Government. Several demonstrations were staged now in Berlin, also in the Kurfürstendamm and on the Ernst Reuter Platz. In December of 1930, demonstrations took place against the Remarque film, demonstrations in which from 8,000 to 10,000 people participated.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1930, the *Neue Preussische Kreuzzeitung*, a traditionalist right-wing conservative newspaper, organised yet another demonstration against the film that 'poisoned the nation'. On 11 December 1930, the Chairman of the German Board of Film Censors had to announce that the film risked to diminish Germany's standing. It offended German sensibilities and hence could no longer be shown in Germany.

This was later called the *Cinema War* of Berlin. It too had antisemitic aspects.

From the end of 1930 on, Goebbels newspaper *Der Angriff* started to appear daily. It had become essentially an anti-Jewish paper.

In December, Hitler was preoccupied with the nevertheless predictable defeats of the NSDAP faction in the *Reichstag*, where all the motions put forward by the party had been negated and

thrown out.

On 22 January 1931, Goebbels staged an event in the Friedrichshain Rooms, for an audience of 5,000 people, among which 500 Communists. A long and bloody battle ensued indoors. Windows were smashed. It was the equivalent of an assault by Goebbels on the city's 'Red East End'. The SA had entered the bastions of the working class area of Berlin, seeking to find new members. The SA had also set up a 'Storm Centre' in the Charlottenburg quarter, in the heart of a traditional working-class district. Attacks between the two groups happened in and around it. By then, the number of sympathisers and supporters of the SA had grown considerably in the ranks of the local police.

Hitler had always seen the SA as an instrument to dispose of the Communists. But the SA had a strictly political, not a military character. Hitler had stressed already in 1926 the SA's non-military but party-political character. As the SA grew in political strength, it developed a far more aggressive profile. Hitler had it difficult to explain and convince the police of the political SA's role, equally to the State Organs and to the *Reichswehr*. The open scepticism towards the SA augmented. Hitler had to stress the non-military character of his party and even more of the SA. He said the SA's actions were only reactions of self-defence. He conceded the principal aim of the SA was to strike at and to annihilate Marxism, but was not Marxism an ideology that led to the destruction of conservatism and to the ideas of internationalism, contrary to the nationalistic nature, now, of the German people? The SA had to strike at the heart of the workers' movements, at their strongholds, by using every means in their power. The Socialist workers' movements had to be attacked, intimidated, and driven back. Thus, on 22 November 1930, in the Eden Dance Hall, the SA had launched an armed attack on a KPD event. The police summoned Hitler to justify the NSDAP in the Moabit Court. Moabit was another quarter of Berlin. There, he was asked awkward questions about his involvement. He was not used to have his torrents of phrases to be interrupted. His role in the Moabit Court left in him a sense of deep humiliation, and still more hatred of the Socialists. He pursued his policies and aims chiefly through diplomatic manoeuvres, behind-the-scenes discussions and negotiations with the other German Nationalists and the *Stahlhelm*.

In 1930, the NSDAP had bought the Palais Barlow in München, turning it into the grander NSDAP headquarters. It would be called the 'Brown House'. The neo-classical Palais Barlow stood in München in the Briennerstrasse, between the Königsplatz and the Karolinenplatz. Goebbels feared this would cause a new row in the Berlin SA, where the head was still Walter Stennes. In München, the new SA Chief of Staff was Ernst Röhm. Hitler had recuperated Röhm and appointed him in 1931. What Goebbels had feared did happen! Röhm ordered Stennes and his entourage to be thrown out of the SA. Stennes and his men refused to recognise Röhm's order, to follow up on it. They occupied the Berlin offices of the NSDAP, and the editorial offices of *Der Angriff*. In early April of 1931, Stennes complained to Hitler for the leader's breach of faith. He said he had ordered the SA to assume control of the movement in the lands of Mecklenburg, Pomerania, Brandenburg-Ostmark, Silesia and Berlin. He had done his duty. Nevertheless, Hitler allowed Goebbels now to purge the Berlin party of all corrosive elements. Stennes and his followers indeed were expelled from the NSDAP. His criticism against the cost and the function of the München 'Brown House' was

rejected. The Stennes internal mutiny collapsed within a few days. On 3 April, the police intervened, on request of the NSDAP, to forcibly remove Stennes' men from the rooms they had occupied in the party's headquarters in München. As a result, about 2,000 Stennes SA members joined the Strasser group in June 1931, to form the *Fighting Community of Revolutionary National Socialists*. This organisation, however, dwindled rapidly. The ongoing unrest in and the unreliability of the SA was bound to be a source of considerable worries for Hitler!

As of February 1931, Hitler no longer stayed in the Sanssouci Hotel on the relatively modest Potsdamer Platz. He now stayed in the Kaiserhof in the Mohrenstrasse, on the Zietenplatz, near the Wilhelmsplatz. This hotel was much frequented by diplomats. Hitler's office was on the upper floor, at the rearmost corner of a long corridor. He took his meals in rooms on the first floor. In his reception room, he held meetings until late at night. In all, he occupied 12 rooms in the Kaiserhof.

In February too, the NSDAP held its official opening of the Brown House in München. Hitler liked München. He still didn't really like Berlin. He once told to the Italian consul in München he could not find in Berlin the peace and quiet he needed to work. It was a city without traditions, half Americanised, half lacking in culture. Even after the NSDAP had become Germany's second most powerful party, Hitler insisted on keeping his headquarters in München, although all the other important parties had long since relocated to Berlin, except of course for the Bavarian People's Party. Hitler called big cities such as Berlin 'excesses on the body of the nation'. Their inhabitants had no true roots, their inhabitants were rootless and unnerved by the psychoses and neuroses unleashed by the big cities. Big-city mentality meant for Hitler poisoned, baleful feelings, submerged in a thousand superficial impressions, sham politics, all caused by the cheap neon advertising, the run for cheap money and for sexual degradation.

While many negotiations were being discussed feverishly on the political scene, Berlin transformed itself by building along international, mostly American, modern designs. Hitler, of course, regarded the new style as a process of Americanisation, alien to German culture. He resisted the American trends in architecture. For Hitler, designs for public buildings were to provide an expression of strength and to reflect the primacy of politics over commerce and banking. Many new buildings rose in Berlin. The area from the Tauentzienstrasse, the *Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche* and the Kurfürstendamm was the zone commonly known as Berlin W. Here lived a high percentage of the city's Jews.

In May of 1931 collapsed the largest bank of Austria, the *Creditanstalt* of Vienna. In July, the second largest bank of Germany, the *Darmstädter und Nationalbank* went bankrupt. In September, Great Britain was forced to abandon the Gold Standard. Hence, the Pound Sterling lost one fourth of its value. In the 1930s, French exports came to only half what they had been in 1928. France remained reluctant, keeping to its prestige, to devalue the Franc, whereas the Sterling and the Dollar had been devalued already! France's exports were left uncompetitive.

Eastern Europe, highly dependent on its agriculture, was hit hard. It sunk into deep poverty and social misery. Agricultural prices collapsed, which also hit German income from

agriculture. High debts led to farms being sold off. The slump across Europe was at its worst! The blame for all this bad news and of the general misery was given to the state, to the bureaucrats, the civil servants, the townspeople, the financial exploiters, the foreigners and the Jews. From 1929 to 1932, the industrial production in Germany fell by 39%, in Poland by 30%, and unemployment doubled. Of the unemployed in Germany in 1932, only 15% received full benefits, even though that was but a meagre substitute. 40% of the workers depended on poor relief, a further 20% received nothing at all. In Berlin, thousands sought in the winter of 1932 to 1933 their way to big, improvised halls, organised to provide some warmth, basic food and overnight accommodation. The people were in apathy, resigned, filled with a profound sense of despair.

The economic crisis thus deepened already existing sources of anger and resentment in Germany. People were anxious and worried about their future and the future of their children. They would have followed anybody who could promise them better times. The Eugenics movement won support. In 1932, a voluntary sterilisation plan for people suffering from an extensive range of hereditary illnesses, from serious physical deformities to chronic alcoholism, was proposed to Parliament, even before the Nazi takeover. Germany was not the only country in which such measures were discussed. In 1940, 42,000 citizens of 30 USA-states were sterilised, mainly compulsorily, on the grounds of feeble-mindedness or madness. Overall, the Government authority in Germany was crumbling and public disorder was spreading. Violent clashes between the Social Democrats and the members of the Communist Party were multiplying. The middle classes feared a Communist revolution. The depression opened in Germany the not yet healed wounds that had only been superficially healed since 1918, and the democracy was blamed for everything.

By the summer of 1931, Berlin counted more than 20,000 NSDAP members. One print run of *Der Angriff* was now of 90,000 copies! The NSDAP leaders kept contact with the *Stahlhelm* and Hugenberg's DNVP. Their talks ended in the creation of a new movement of old organisations, called the *Habsburger Front*. Hitler sought this cooperation with the *Stahlhelm* and the DNVP, but Goebbels was unenthusiastic. He felt he had not much use of other movements and could expect nothing but trouble of them. He signed up thousands of new members now among the workers.

On 12 September of 1931 took place the first true German pogrom. It was called the *Kurfürstendamm pogrom*. The Jewish Community was celebrating its Jewish New Year in the synagogues, including the one in the Fasanenstrasse north of the Kurfürstendamm. From 500 to 1,500 National Socialists, Nazis, had suddenly gathered there from about everywhere in Berlin. They shouted anti-Jewish slogans, and attacked innocent passers-by in the streets. The rioting had been planned in advance. The rioters were almost all members of the SA. They sought out Jewish businesses to destroy according to a pre-arranged plan. Many windows were smashed. The Berlin Police had to react. The leader of the Berlin SA then was Count Wolf-Heinrich von Helldorf. When he heard the police were after him, the count and his adjutant Karl Ernst went in hiding in München to attend a meeting of SA leaders there. But they had to give themselves up to the Berlin Police on 21 September 1931. They were taken in custody. Begin November, the Berlin Justice Court sentenced Helldorf, Karl Ernst and Wilhelm Brandt, one of the *Stahlhelm* leaders who had taken part in the riots, to 6

months of imprisonment and to 100 Marks to pay for having disturbed the peace, and for insulting behaviour. On 4 February 1932, the Public Prosecutor's Office appealed. The District Court acquitted the 3 men from the charge of having organised the riots. Only Brandt got the 4 months of imprisonment. The two SA-men had but to pay the 100 Marks for insulting behaviour. Helldorf remained the SA leader for Berlin.

The membership of the SA in Berlin grew from 9,000 to 27,000 men! The growth was unique in Germany. The SA had become by then a powerful organisation, emerging against the background of a steadily worsening economic and political crisis. Berlin, for instance, had 615,000 unemployed on 4.3 million inhabitants in February 1932. At the end of 1932, this number had risen to 636,000 unemployed. Berlin had a higher number of its workforce unemployed than any other town in Germany.

On 3 December 1931, President von Hindenburg published and ordered a 4<sup>th</sup> Emergency decree to appease the growing violence in the city of Berlin. The decree banned the wearing of uniforms. During the Christmas and New Year period all public assemblies and marches were declared unlawful, as was the dissemination of political leaflets and posters. The decree ended on 3 January 1932.

The SA then continued harassing the KPD. Two NSDAP meetings had already been announced on 3 and 6 January 1932. They used their new battle song *Volk und Gewehr*, a song by Arno Pardun. Meanwhile, the political parties continued their negotiations to form a Government.

In that month of January 1932, a proposal was to change the Constitution in order to allow Paul von Hindenburg to remain in office as President until after May 1932. For that, a majority of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the members of parliament was necessary. That majority could not be reached without the consent of the DNVP and the NSDAP. At that moment, Brüning was still the Chancellor, the Prime Minister, and Wilhelm Groener the Minister of Defence. Hitler hesitated over whether to win a leading political position by peaceful means, or on whether to risk an open conflict in some sort of revolution. This, now, he had already tried twice, with disastrous results.

The power struggle in Berlin continued. If Hitler accepted to keep Brüning in office, however, he would add to Brüning's prestige and authority, helping the Chancellor to remain in power despite the lack of a parliamentary majority, and therefore in an unstable Government. If Hitler turned the proposal down, he would diminish the glory of Hindenburg, and undermine the authority of the Presidential function. Hitler did not want to do that either. Yet, he was convinced Brüning only wanted to patch up a system that needed to be taken down! Hitler wanted to dissolve the *Reichstag* and new elections to be held, so that the NSDAP could still win votes, emerge as the strongest party. He could not envisage losing votes. Hindenburg and Brüning understandably could not be persuaded to hold new elections.

On 16 January 1932, Hitler had to stand to the *Berlin Mitte* Country Court of Justice, in the courtroom of Moabit, on a charge of insulting behaviour brought forward by Walter Stennes, following Stennes' expulsion from the NSDAP. Hitler's co-defendant was Julius Lippert, the editor-in-chief of *Der Angriff*. The court dropped all charges against Hitler and only fined Lippert for libel.

Hitler continued on a programme of propaganda in Berlin. He could now speak for audiences of more than 6,000 people. SA targets remained the KPD, the Communists, and also the so-called *Iron Front*, an assembling organisation formed end 1931 by the *Reichsbanner* from republican parties and the trade unions. The aim of the *Iron Front*, ostensibly, was to halt the Fascist danger. The KPD fought back against the SA, with as a result an increasing number of seriously wounded men on both sides.

Hitler could not afford now any new SA rebellion against the NSDAP. On 9 February 1932, he spoke to 15,000 people in the *Sportpalast*, before all SA members. It was a rallying speech he gave. Hitler assured the SA were unconditionally loyal to him personally, especially in Berlin. A little later in the month, he spoke once more to 7,000 members of the SA and the *Hitler Youth* in the *Sportpalast*.

Soon would come the elections for President of Germany. Candidates were Hindenburg for another term, Ernst Thälmann for the KPD, Colonel Theodor Duesterberg for the DNVP and the *Stahlhelm*, and probably Hitler. But Hitler had an issue!

Hitler was not a German citizen! And that was the basic requisite for a candidacy to President. He was still Austrian. A means was found. The State Ministry of Braunschweig, ruled by a coalition of German Nationalists and National Socialists, declared Hitler be appointed to the position of Government Councillor, and that on 25 February of 1932. As a civil servant for Braunschweig, Hitler automatically acquired the German citizenship. He was entrusted with being an expert at the Braunschweig embassy in Berlin, responsible for obtaining commissions for the Braunschweig industry in general. The official ceremony for his appointment took place at the embassy in the Lützower Platz of the *Tiergarten* District of Berlin. Hitler swore the oath to perform his duties conscientiously, and he received his credentials. He immediately asked for the permission to an extended leave until the end of the presidential elections. He was now a German citizen!

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, Hitler informed Goebbels in the Kaiserhof that the NSDAP could announce publicly his candidacy to President. This happened that same evening at a grand meeting of the Greater Berlin NSDAP Gau in the *Sportpalast*. Goebbels himself announced the candidacy. Hitler too spoke at the *Sportpalast*, a speech relayed to the Tennis Hall of Wilmersdorf, a speech for the two centres in which had gathered about 25,000 people.

Hitler then attacked in his later speeches the papers issued by Jewish publishers. These were mainly Rudolph Mosse's *Berliner Tageblatt* and Ullstein's *Vossische Zeitung*. He spoke more against these than against the newspapers of the workers' associations, the *Vorwärts* of the SPD and *Die rote Fahne* of the KPD, as well as Willi Münzenbergs, also KPD, *Die Welt am Abend*. Goebbels too ranted against the Jewish press.

The NSDAP papers were simply unable to compete with the support given by the non-Fascist newspapers, especially those of Mosse and Ullstein, given to von Hindenburg. The enormous difference in copies divulged by the competition, formed a personal humiliation for Hitler. Goebbels had to plan the electoral war mainly through posters and speeches! Moreover, in the following weeks, the KPD gained in support, at the expense of the Social Democrats.

The SA's propaganda marches were not anymore just political demonstrations. They

developed into military shows of strength. The SA had become an anti-Marxist terror wave. Its marches were a form of provocation and the occasion to commit brutal acts against the NSDAP opposers. As these augmented, finally, the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Carl Severing and the Berlin Chief of Police Albert Grzesinski, banned all demonstrations as of 12 and 13 March 1932.

The final Election Day for the German Presidency was on 13 May 1932, a Sunday. The clear winner was von Hindenburg with 49.6% of the votes. Ernst Thälmann obtained 13.2% and the *Stahlhelm* leader Theodor Duesterberg got 6.2%. Hitler had gotten 30.1%, better still than the score obtained in the *Reichstag* election of 14 September 1930. Nevertheless, the result came as a shock to Hitler's supporters, who had expected better. Indeed, in the country, Hitler had only won 23%, less than the party's average in the cities. Hitler had in fact suffered an electoral defeat! As reasons for the failure, he gave the shortcomings of the middle- and lower-ranking party authorities and the issues over the party press. These were designed to quench all criticism of Hitler's own contribution.

Hitler's party became attractive in Germany, because it promised a new start by clearing out the old system entirely. They did not offer to defeat or to work together with their opponents, but to destroy them entirely and then create a new social order based on a new people's community that would provide more power and the new prosperity for Germany everybody lacked so much. Democracy, the NSDAP claimed, was dead. It appealed to national unity in the leadership cult of Hitler, a Hitlerian dictatorship.

Their leaders were gifted demagogues and propagandists. They were a determined lot, committed and utterly ruthless ideologues, though of ideas picked out of the skies, untried and unscientifically put together though based on principles uncovered in bribes during the last decades.

As of 3 April 1932, the NSDAP propaganda teams worked very hard. Hitler's electoral campaign focused on 23 rallies in 21 towns of Germany, among which Hitler travelled by aeroplane. Goebbels was in charge of the organisation, rallying vast numbers of people.

On orders of the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Carl Severing, the Berlin police raided the SA's preparations for a civil war. The SA had been known to be planning a series of violent attacks on the rest of the population. Their intention was to take over certain official positions. The police agreed it was immaterial whether the leaders of the NSDAP, that is Hitler, approved or disapproved the preparations. In Berlin, 60 premises were searched by the police, and the officers found many weapons. There were rumours of a putsch, ordered out of the NSDAP's main offices in the Berlin Hedemannstrasse.

Carl Severing, Wilhelm Groener, the Bavarian Minister of State Karl Stützel and various regional representatives met in Berlin under Chairmanship of Groener. They demanded a ban on the SA, the SS and a number of subsidiary organisations. In the end, Groener agreed.

Brüning and von Hindenburg signed an Emergency Decree on 13 April 1932, ordering the immediate disbandment of all the NSDAP's paramilitary organisations, such as the SA.

The NSDAP knew about the planned decree by 12 April at the latest. Hitler was in his Kaiserhof Hotel as of the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, after the completion of his electoral campaign. He invited his men to give the current authorities no occasion to call off the elections, already



planned for the 24<sup>th</sup> of April for the regional assemblies in Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, Anhalt, and for the Hamburg City Council. Hitler returned to Berlin for his electoral campaign in Frankfurt-am-Oder.

In the second tour of voting on 13 May 1932, von Hindenburg reached 53% of the votes, and the absolute majority. Thälmann got 10% less votes, and Hitler got 36.8%, up by 2 million votes in the first round. In the country, the figures were 48.1% for von Hindenburg, 31.2% for Hitler, and 20.7% for Thälmann.

In the new Prussian *Landtag*, the NSDAP got 162 representatives. It had obtained only 9 in 1928! The SPD got 94, against 137 in 1928. The Centre Party had 67, down from 71 in 1928 and the KPD 31, down too from 71. No party had reached the absolute majority of votes. The then Minister of Defence was Groener. Major-General Kurt von Schleicher was the Chief of the Ministerial Office in the Defence Ministry.

Schleicher did not approve of Groener's action of banning the SA. The Commander of the SA in Berlin was still Count Wolf-Heinrich von Helldorf. Helldorf was very popular with the NSDAP leaders, because of his dashing appearance as the organiser of the Kurfürstendamm Pogrom in September 1931. Schleicher now wanted to meet with Hitler.

General Kurt von Schleicher was a ruthless anti-Communist, who had been one of the founders of the *Freikorps* in 1919. He was forming in 1933 a secret group within the Army called the *Sondergruppe R*, or Special Group Russia, with the R for Russia. It was devoted to secretly rebuilding the German Army in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles. The secret rearmament meant dealing with Bolshevik Russia, under a confidential agreement which had been negotiated between Schleicher and the Soviet Central Committee member Leonid Krasin in 1921. The funds for Germany's covert military build-up were supplied by a network of dummy corporations created by Schleicher, notably the GEFU, the company for the Promotion of Industrial Enterprise. It funnelled 75 million *Reichsmark* into the Soviet arms industries. Head of Schleicher's Political department was Eugen Ott.

On 6 May 1932, Hitler was in the Obersalzberg. He took the night train from München to Berlin and had secret talks with Schleicher on 7 May 1932. Goebbels was not present. Schleicher told Hitler that von Hindenburg would withdraw his trust in Brüning, meaning the *Reichstag* would be dissolved again. The two men talked. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, Groener offered to resign from his duty as Minister. Rumours told Schleicher could be his possible successor.

On 19 May, Hitler spoke to the members of the Prussian *Landtag*. He met with the 162 newly elected NSDAP representatives at the Prinz Albrecht Hotel in Berlin, opposite the *Landtag*. Hitler said there could be no Government in Prussia that did not include the NSDAP. Until 17 June of 1932, Hitler turned up at 18 different regional assemblies, in Oldenburg, Mecklenburg, Hesse, etc. In Oldenburg for instance, the NSDAP had won 48.4% of the votes! In seats, it had gained an absolute majority of representatives, the first time in its history.

On 30 May 1932, Brüning announced the reorganisation of his Cabinet of Ministers.

Hindenburg accepted the Cabinet the next day, and Hindenburg appointed Franz von Papen as his Chancellor. Brüning was ousted out! Heinrich Brüning had failed in about everything. He had not solved the economic crisis. He had not been able to restore order in the larger German cities. In his efforts to help the destitute peasantry, he had proposed the break-up of the large landed estates, like von Hindenburg himself owned in Eastern Prussia. His deflationary politics had prevented the re-armament of Germany, and worse: he had offended Hindenburg by failing to secure von Hindenburg's re-election unopposed. The Army too had disliked Brüning, for it sought not democracy, but an authoritarian military dictatorship that would repudiate the Treaty of Versailles and re-arm the country, in preparation for the reconquest of the territories lost by Germany at Versailles.

So, Brüning was forced to resign, to be replaced by the landed aristocrat Franz von Papen, who was also a personal friend of von Hindenburg.

On 30 May 1932, Hitler drove to Berlin. President von Hindenburg received him and Hermann Göring to discuss the formation of a new Government. Hitler, however, wanted new Reichstag elections, by which he could hope to strengthen his party yet. He demanded the suspension of the various decrees that had defamed the NSDAP, especially the ban on the SA. Hitler regarded the new Government anyway as no more than a transitional Government, transitional to his taking power in Germany. Later, he even refused to provide a written guarantee that he would tolerate von Papen's Cabinet.

The other parties agreed to dissolve the *Reichstag*. On 4 June 1932 therefore, President von Hindenburg dissolved the *Reichstag* and set the new election date for 31 July 1932.

On 16 June 1932, after Hitler talks with von Papen, in which Hitler still demanded the ban on the SA to be lifted, a Presidential Decree was published on political excesses. In this, the bans on SA and the SS were indeed lifted. Hitler gave the SA back to Ernst Röhm to lead, and the SS to Heinrich Himmler. He confirmed the NSDAP would act in the strictest possible legal way.

Not just the daily displays of the provocative violence of the SA then worried the Government and worsened the political crisis. Equally aggressive had been the response of the Communists and their Chairman of the KPD Central Committee, Ernst Thälmann. Thälmann reacted against the reappearance of the SA in the streets with a wave of generally armed attacks on all National Socialist and SA meetings. On 20 June 1932, Hitler went to see the Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm von Gayl. He warned the Minister that, in view of the increasing attacks perpetrated by the Communists, the National Socialists would claim their right of self-defence. The SA then numbered tens of thousands of members! Its function was to fight against the organised workers' movements, the Marxists and foremost the Communists. According to Hitler, the NSDAP had to fulfil its historic mission by re-establishing a robust, united body of people to destroy Marxism. In actual fact, it was now a catch-all party of social protest, with strong middle-class support and some, weak, working-class backing in the polls. The Nazi programme was simple: Germany had to re-assert itself on the international scene, to become a leading power again.

The organisations Hitler and the NSDAP used for their fighting, were several. The *Reichsbanner* and the *Iron Front* had been formed with the intention of defending parliamentary democracy. The *Communist Battle League* was a replacement for the *Red front*

*Fighters' Association*, which had been banned in 1929. Its activists limited their actions to street fights with the SA. Plans for armed insurrection had remained very vague.

Clashes happened all over Berlin. On 25 June 1932, SA Storm Troopers invaded the offices of the Social Democratic *Vorwärts* newspaper in the Lindenstrasse of the Kreuzberg quarter. There was a shoot-out and 2 SA members got seriously injured. The next fight happened on 30 June in the vestibule of the Berlin University. National Socialist students sang their songs, including *Volk und Gewehr*, which led to hard fighting. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of July, a large demonstration of up to 40,000 SA members was planned for Unter den Linden. But the march had been forbidden by the Minister of the Interior. Instead, the SA would hold a mass demonstration in the *Lustgarten*.

On 8 July 1932, Hitler returned to Berlin to talk to Schleicher. He had given Goebbels the permission to harass von Papen's Cabinet. Still, demonstrations were permanently prohibited throughout the zone south of the *Reichstag*.

As the NSDAP knocked at the seats of power, the election campaign accelerated. Göring organised a party rally at the *Sportpalast* on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July. There were orders, forbidding the SA to carry weapons. Göring called an end to that order. As a counter-measure, President on Hindenburg gave the von Papen Cabinet the order to re-establish the law and order in all Prussia. Berlin stood on the brink of revolution.

The stress broke elsewhere. On 17 July 1932, bloody riots happened in Altona. The day had been called Bloody Sunday. Armed Communists and Nazis clashed during an SA propaganda march there. Altona was still an independent city. The battles caused 18 deaths among the civilian population, mostly by ricocheting bullets. As a reaction on the disorders, on 20 July, von Hindenburg released a Presidential Decree concerning the restoration of the law in Prussia. The state of emergency was declared in Berlin and Brandenburg. Ministerial authorities were granted to persons appointed by the President to Commissars for Prussia. The Commissar received powers for Prussians, the powers of a Prussian Prime Minister. Executive powers in Berlin and Brandenburg were given to Lieutenant-General Gerd von Rundstedt of the *Reichswehr*. In the morning of the same day of 20 July, von Papen dismissed the Prussian Prime Minister Otto Braun and the Prussian Minister of the Interior Carl Severing. Equally dismissed were the Chief of Police, Albert Grzesinski, and his assistant Bernhardt Weis, as well as the Commander of the local police, Magnus Heimannsberg, were dismissed too. The new Chief of the Police was Kurt Melcher. Countless high-ranking civil servants were pensioned off.

Meanwhile, Hitler continued giving his rolling speeches. He presented 49 speeches in that period, of 15 to 30 July 1932, in all important cities of Germany. At the end of July, Hitler spoke at the SA Sports Festival in Berlin. He had 120,000 people as an audience, this time! It was the biggest open-air event of the NSDAP ever in Berlin.

On 26 July of 1932, Ferdinand von Bredow, the successor of Schleicher as head of the Ministerial Office in the Defence Ministry, summoned Göring and Röhm to answer to charges claiming the SA was planning to take up arms to start a terror of violent acts. Göring told the left was preparing a coup. He could, however, produce not the least evidence to support his assertion. Hitler solemnly declared he had no intention of taking the law in his

own hands, nor the SA and the SS, also not in the aftermath of the elections. Von Bredow then issued an order to the regular Army to not entrust the SA with arms, and to not work together with the SA in the event of disturbances.

On 5-6 August 1932, Hitler once more talked with Schleicher, this time probably at Fürstenberg, about 80 km north of Berlin. Schleicher seems to have said then to a confident: 'I must now try to persuade von Hindenburg to accept Hitler as Chancellor of Germany.'

The Cabinet Schleicher then saw as possible was constituted as follows:

- Hitler: Chancellor of Germany, Prime Minister of Prussia.
- Strasser: Minister of the Interior for Germany and Prussia.
- Goebbels: Minister of Education for Germany, Minister of Culture in Prussia.
- Darré: Minister of Agriculture for Germany and Prussia.
- Frick: Secretary of State in the National Chancellery.
- Göring: Minister of Aviation.
- Schleicher: Minister of Justice.

A few days later, von Hindenburg expressed his preference for a continuation of the von Papen Cabinet. Von Hindenburg was not enthusiast for Hitler as Chancellor! Parts of the middle-class of Berlin thought it likely that Hitler would be appointed as Chancellor. Helldorf may still have been fomenting a putsch. Goebbels discussed this Berlin 'question' with Röhm.

On 12 and 13 August, Hitler was again in Berlin. He spoke with Goebbels, with Röhm and with Schleicher, with Frick, who was now the Chairman of the NSDAP faction in the *Reichstag*, and with von Papen. Von Papen and von Hindenburg wanted to abide by the principle of a Presidential Government, but only with Hitler as vice-chancellor. When he heard that, Hitler broke out in a hysterical rage. He shouted the annihilation of Marxism was the aim of his life! So, he needed the complete control over the apparatus of the state, over the Government. He refused any compromise on that point.

Von Hindenburg remained bad tempered over the matter. Von Papen intrigued to stay in place, and Schleicher was too ambitious and devious.

Hitler remained near hysteria. He felt power slip through his fingers. He again thought of a revolution. The signs were ominous: lower SA officers were armed, SA units wandered just outside Berlin, wearing machine-guns. The SA had tried to requisition lorries, and SA divisions obviously were but waiting for orders. Hitler had amassed about 60,000 SA-men near Berlin, to force von Hindenburg to make him Chancellor. Would Hindenburg refuse, he would be arrested and a national revolution be declared. The NSDAP would seize power. Were these but rumours?

On 18 August, Hitler gave an interview with Louis P. Lochner of Associated Press. Hitler laughed all the rumours of a revolution in Berlin away. Hitler insisted he sought only legal solutions. And indeed, Hitler and Röhm took measures to oppose any attempt at armed revolt. They even sent most of the SA on leave until end of August.

Nevertheless, disturbances continued in Berlin. At the Berchten District Court of Justice, 5 SA-men were condemned to death for the brutal murder of an unemployed agriculture worker at Potempa in the night of 9 to 10 August. Hitler sent them a telegram. He would oppose the sentence. This was later called the Potempa affair. Goebbels used this report in the *Berliner Tageblatt* as an excuse for a frontal attack on the Jewish Community. He launched antisemitic tirades and polemical rantings against the Marxist corrupters. He tried one more to provoke.

The SA actually remained all this time on full alert in and around Berlin. On 29 August, Hitler gave a speech at the Kaiserhof Hotel to the NSDAP representatives in the *Reichstag*. He referred to the Government as, ‘the system that rules us today.’ In actual fact, Hitler waited. He was then 43 years old.

On 30 August, the *Reichstag* elected Hermann Göring as their new leader. Von Papen presented a paper to Göring, demanding to dissolve the *Reichstag*. Göring nevertheless continued with a Communist vote of no confidence in the von Papen Cabinet, before the Chancellor had a chance to speak out. The vote was carried by an overwhelming majority, but the vote had been taken in violation of the Constitution, so the result as invalid.

New elections for the *Reichstag* were fixed for 6 November 1932. But the first cracks showed in the NSDAP. The middle classes were turning away in large numbers from the party!

At the elections for the *Reichstag* then, on 6 November 1932, the NSDAP fell from 230 seats to 197 seats! Throughout the country, the NSDAP lost 4.3% of the votes, in Berlin only 2.4%. Clear winners were the Communists, with up to 31.3% of the votes. The NSDAP returned to be only the 3<sup>rd</sup> party in Berlin. The 1<sup>st</sup> party in Berlin were the Communists!

Later, Chancellor von Papen was unable to achieve a broad-based National consensus. He resigned on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November.

On 18 November, Hitler and von Hindenburg met. On 23 November, Hitler and Schleicher spoke with each other, with the aim of forming a new Government. On 2 December, Hitler was back in Berlin. Georg Strasser, the NSDAP’s national organiser, declared he was willing to tolerate Schleicher as Chancellor, and Schleicher had already proposed to Strasser the post of Vice-Chancellor in his cabinet. Schleicher expected to be appointed Chancellor.

Hitler stated his conditions for participation of the NSDAP in a Government: adjournment of the *Reichstag* sessions until January of 1933, amnesty, the streets open to the SA and the SS, the right of self-defence.

On 5 December, Hitler addressed the *Reichstag* representatives in Göring’s official residence. He said no great movement had ever triumphed by making compromises.

A few days later, Georg Strasser wrote to Hitler. He resigned from all his posts in the NSDAP. He objected to the use of brutal force in the party’s confrontation with Marxism. Hitler took over Strasser’s functions to himself. He appointed Robert Ley as his Chief of Staff, responsible for the party’s political organisation.

The new Head of Government became Kurt von Schleicher. He became – briefly – the Chancellor of Germany.

Hitler disappeared for a few days from Berlin, until on 16 December he spoke to the NSDAP

representatives of the Prussian *Landtag*, in Göring's residence.

Hitler had understood the power of more publicity and propaganda. The Berlin edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter* would appear each morning as of 1 January 1933, to complement the evening edition of *Der Angriff*. Hitler's meetings over a new Government continued. On 4 January 1933, he met von Papen at the Köln home of the banker Kurt von Schroeder. The proposal discussed was to form a Government of which Schleicher would no longer be a part. On the 10 to 11 January, Hitler met von Papen again at Joachim von Ribbentrop's home in the Lenseallee in Dahlem.

On 10 January, Schleicher admitted in the press it was still completely impossible to negotiate with Hitler, as Hitler stuck stubbornly to his old demands, insisting on the Communists to be handed over to him, to be hunted down like wild animals.

In the following days, Hitler had several meetings still with higher members of the NSDAP. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, he unveiled a Horst Wessel memorial plaque at the Nicolai Cemetery in Prenzlauer Berg. More than 16,000 members of the SA were present. In the evening, he delivered a speech at the *Sportpalast*, after which he had talks with Frick, Göring and Göring's secretary, Paul Körner, with von Papen, Meissner, Oskar von Hindenburg, and others. On 23 January, he was back in München.

On that day, Schleicher asked von Hindenburg for unlimited executive powers in the entire country. Von Hindenburg didn't trust his Chancellor any more. He refused to give Schleicher a free hand in Germany. On 28 January 1933, Schleicher again spoke to von Hindenburg. But the President didn't even want to accept any of his chancellor's suggestions. Schleicher announced thereupon the resignation of his Government.

Von Hindenburg invited Franz von Papen to enter negotiations with all the various parties. Von Papen sent a word to Hitler via von Ribbentrop. The chancellorship of Hitler had become a possibility. Hitler indeed demanded the post of chancellor, and he wanted for National Socialist personalities to be Minister of the Interior for Germany and Prussia. The negotiations continued.

A decision was reached on 29 January 1933. In the morning, Hitler, Göring and von Papen met in the latter's apartment in the Wilhelmstrasse. Frick would be Minister of the Interior for Germany and Göring Commissar for the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. Hitler would become Chancellor, von Papen Vice-Chancellor and Commissar for Prussia. Hitler wanted the *Reichstag* to be dissolved and new elections held. He wanted to make sure that as chancellor, he would have the necessary 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority for an *Enabling Act*, which would transfer legislative authority to his new Cabinet, not to Parliament. The *Enabling Act*, *das Ermächtigungsgesetz*, freed the Government from any possible parliamentary constraints. It gave Hitler the right to pass laws without the Parliament's consent, effectively giving the chancellor dictatorial powers.

On the evening of 29 January, von Hindenburg accepted Hitler's conditions. The dissolution of the *Reichstag* was accepted too.

On 30 January 1933, at 11h00, von Hindenburg named Adolf Hitler Chancellor, in the name of the *Reich*, in the Chancellery at 77 Wilhelmstrasse, as the President's official residence

was still being renovated. His deputy would be Franz von Papen. At that time, the NSDAP had gathered 850,000 members. About 75% of these had joined since the start of the depression. The SA had 400,000 members, many of whom were actually not even members of the NSDAP. Hitler was made chancellor after an electoral defeat!

### *The Nazi Regime installed*

This was the beginning of the Nazi seizure of power in Germany! Hitler had obtained the highest office except for the presidency, without formally destroying the Constitution, and with the support of the conservative establishment and the Army. But he was the chancellor of yet but another Weimar coalition Cabinet. How to convert his position into the dictatorship of a one-party only state?

In the evening, 20,000 SA and SS members marched through the *Brandenburger Tor*, before the President and the new Chancellor, in the Wilhelmstrasse. The march took place at 19h30. It was torchlit. The drums rolled; the bands played march music.

Hitler established his domination over Germany within 6 months. His main method applied was open terror against his opponents and everywhere heavy pressure to comply with his regime. Tens of thousands of Communists and Socialists were arrested in these first weeks of Hitler's government. The men and women were thrown into makeshift camps, and grievously maltreated. Emergency decrees legitimised, most often than not afterwards, unconstrained police power.

The potential opposition to Nazi rule was rapidly and systematically eliminated. The defiant Communists were ruthlessly crushed. The Social Democratic Party, the SPD, was banned begin May. The bourgeois and Catholic parties were banned or dissolved. With record speed, the leftist parties were destroyed. The Trade Unions were soon dissolved and abolished, leaving but one NSDAP-controlled trade union. The Labour relations were thus restructured. Employers received dominance in the workplaces, so much for the word 'Socialist' in the name of the party. Wages were held down, so that profit could be maximised in manufactories and services. Still, the image of a new dynamism, of revitalisation of the state, became the new slogan. Unemployment fell, but the pay was miserable for the common worker. Those who protested against back-breaking work on the road building programmes, were thrown in the concentration camps. In February of 1933 was founded the Gestapo, the *Geheimer Staatspolizei*.

The new elections for the *Reichstag* were set for 28 February 1933. The Minister for the Armed Forces was to be Werner von Blomberg. As Labour Minister was chosen Franz Seldte, the leader of the *Stahlhelm*. These two men argued against the ban of the KPD in Germany. Franz von Papen was the Chancellor's official representative in the Cabinet, and the Commissar for Prussia. Hermann Göring was a Minister without portfolio, but the Commissar for air transport and Prussian Minister of the Interior. The Chief of Staff of the Army remained General Kurt von Hammerstein.

Hitler immediately announced, on a suggestion of von Papen, that the outcome of the new elections would not affect the forming of the present Government, and that those elections would be the last ones for the *Reichstag*. A return to the former parliamentary system, Hitler concluded, would be a failure and was to be avoided at all cost.

The declaration meant the effective end of the Weimar Republic, and the end of the democracy in Germany. In the next days, events precipitated.

- On 1 February 1933, Hitler dissolved the *Reichstag*. As the formation of a new working majority had proven impossible, new elections were foreseen for 5 March 1933.
- On 2 February 1933, the Government issued a ban on further demonstrations by the KPD and a ban on an SPD demonstration in the *Lustgarten*.
- On 3 February 1933, the SPD's newspaper *Vorwärts* was banned for 4 days.
- On 4 February 1933, the Government issued a decree for the 'Protection of the German People' that could be used to ban opposition papers and meetings.
- On 14 July 1933, the NSDAP, the Nazi Party, was declared the only party permissible in Germany.

Hitler announced these decrees were necessary for the country's economic and political revival, to deal with the current class system he found necessary to end, and to stop all further class conflicts.

The SA and the police smashed trade union offices. They caused the beating up of Communists and they broke up Social Democrat meetings. Hitler had intensified the violence in the streets. The function of the *Reichstag* became only to applaud for Hitler! Germany was no parliamentary democracy anymore.

Hitler had entered negotiations for support from the Centre Party. The negotiations were but a sham, for everybody in the NSDAP knew the Centre Party would never agree to any prorogation of the *Reichstag*. Hitler now concluded negotiations with the Centre Party were indeed useless, so new elections were unavoidable.

Hitler did not ban the KPD outright. He expected serious troubles, and possibly even a general strike in the country. He wanted to avoid these at the moment. After his announcements, however, there was no systematic resistance of the KPD anymore, and no attempt at insurrection. The SPD and the Social Democrat members of the *Reichstag* had merely declared they would continue their fight on a constitutional base. As for the Armed Forces, Hitler told Kurt von Hammerstein the SA would not encroach on the *Reichswehr's* military monopoly. The Armed Forces had to be kept out of the country's politics.

The leadership of the National Socialist movement was to be kept in München. Since 1929, Hitler had a 9-room apartment there on the Prinzregentenplatz, provided to him by the local publisher Hugo Bruckmann. In Berlin, as the presidential palace had been undergoing repairs, von Hindenburg occupied the Chancellery Palace, both in the Wilhelmstrasse. Until May 1934, Hitler had to occupy the Secretary of State's service flat on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Siedler's new extension to the Chancellery, itself only completed in 1930. Hitler ridiculed the building, as no visitor was much impressed by it.



On 10 February 1933, Hitler gave a speech in the *Sportpalast*, broadcast by radio and by loudspeakers in the squares of Berlin. The next day, von Hindenburg was undisposed to be present at the official opening of the 'International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition' at the Kaiserdamm in Charlottenburg. Hitler replaced him. He was a great fan of motorcars, he told. The invention of the automobile was Aryan, after all! This was the start of a tradition Hitler held on until 1939.

Rallies in the *Sportpalast* on 23 February for the KPD and on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February for the SPD were ended prematurely, because broken up by the police. Hitler held a new rally in the *Sportpalast* on 2 March. Göring spoke at the same time in one of the exhibition halls on the Kaiserdamm.

The SA deteriorated the situation in Berlin each day more and committed clear acts of terror in the city. Göring began to remove sympathisers for the Republic from the police and from the city administration, filling up the most important posts with Nazis. Göring decreed even somewhat later that the police officers who used their weapons when carrying out their duties, would be protected by him. It was a shoot-to-kill policy! Later still, on 22 February, Göring ordered the auxiliary police forces to be conscripted and deployed. As '*auxiliary police*' were meant the SS, the SA, the *Stahlhelm*, and the German Nationalist *Kampfring*. Indeed, Hitler had persuaded von Papen to appoint Göring as Prussian Minister of the Interior, and Göring had enrolled the SA as auxiliary police! The first of these SA auxiliary police forces for Berlin-Brandenburg was made up of 200 old and proven SA-men from all the associations under their group leader Wolf-Heinrich Helldorf. The Berlin SA would bring in the field in this way a total of from 1,500 to 2,000 auxiliary police officers.

On 26 February appeared in the press that during a police search in the KPD Central Offices in the Karl Liebknecht Haus on the Bülowplatz, truly sensational discoveries had been found underground. No more details were given.

And then, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1933 in the evening, something happened Adolf Hitler may have been waiting for! The *Reichstag* building was on fire! The police arrested a 24-year old Dutch citizen, one Marinus van der Lubbe, a former member of the Dutch Communist Party. He confessed. Judges found him guilty at his trial, sentenced him to death and he was executed on 10 January 1934. Van der Lubbe had burnt down the *Reichstag*, in his own words in protest against the injustices of unemployment. The fact has remained a large controversy. Was it really the Communists who had started the fire? Hitler claimed it had been the work of the KPD. But was it? The next day, Göring took up on Hitler's idea. He too spoke of a KPD plot. Göring consequently banned as well the Communist as the Social Democrat newspapers throughout the entire country. All KPD offices and meeting rooms were closed by the police, and all KPD representatives and officials were arrested. Then, more than 2,000 members of the SA and of the SS marched through the Berlin that was now truly theirs. About 130 Communist leaders were arrested by the police, among whom Hans Litten, Alfred Apfel, Ludwig Renn, Carl von Ossietzky and Ernst Togler.

The *Reichstag* met henceforth, pending reparations at its building, in the Kroll Opera House.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, the President issued a new decree 'For the Protection of the People and the State', also called the '*Reichstag Fire decree*'. By it, large sections of the Constitution were rendered null and void until further notice. The rights of the Regional Governments and communities were curtailed and the death penalty was introduced for a whole series of new offences. By this decree started Hitler's *Third Reich*. All power was in his hands.

### *Hitler in total Power*

Hitler and Göring brought the Cabinet to suppress the Communist Party, the KPD. Immediately, 4,000 Communists were arrested, beaten up, tortured, and thrown in concentration camps. End March of 1933, more than 20,000 Communists were in prison and in the summer, over 100,000 Communists, trade union members, Social Democrats and other leftist sympathisers, had been arrested. The Government did not ban immediately the Communist Party, fearing they would in the next elections massively vote for the Social Democrats.

Finally, on 5 March 1933 took place the new elections for the *Reichstag*. Still, the NSDAP obtained only 34.6% of the votes. The DNVP and the *Stahlhelm* stagnated at 11%. The SPD stranded at 21.7% with minor losses. The KPD went down to 24.5%, losing 20%. The Nationalists in Berlin, all together, reached but 45.6% of the total votes. They had no absolute majority, despite everything that had happened! And they certainly had not reached the absolute majority, needed for a change of the Constitution! The KPD plus the SPD were even still marginally ahead of the German nationalist coalition and the other Nationalists!

The still most Socialist district of Berlin was Wedding. The terror regime of the *Dritte Reich* could start. The Nazi Party had practically eliminated open opposition at every level and created a one-party state.. They managed the institutions of the state alone. They still had large state bodies hostile to them, mainly the Churches and the Army, but they had limited the powers of Parliament. They could count on many industrialists for support, for this class remained hostile to unionised labour. Aristocratic privileges remained strong in some areas, though the NSDAP did not believe in classes in society. After the Charlemagne Empire, and the empire of the Hohenzollern emperors in Germany, the *Third Reich*, the third empire, led by Hitler, had started.

New elections were organised on 23 March 1933. Now, the NSDAP reached its targets. They had threatened with civil war if they would be frustrated in the polls. The Nazis won over the Centre Party representatives with the promise of a Concordat with the Papacy, guaranteeing the rights of the Catholics.

On 23 March too, the famous *Enabling Act* was decreed, giving the Cabinet of Ministers the right to rule by decrees, without reference to the *Reichstag* or even the President of Germany. Only the 94 Social Democrat representatives voted against. The *Reichstag Fire Decree* and the *Enabling Act* were used to dismiss the enemies of the Nazis.

In the summer of 1933, the newly elected USA President was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He stopped the World Economic Conference, aimed at stabilising currencies and the tariffs wars. Roosevelt gave priority to US national interests to stimulating especially and first the US economy.

In 1933 could be discerned the first feeble signs of the patchy recovery from the Depression. Great Britain was the first country to surpass its industrial production levels of 1929. Unemployment fell from 17.6% of the working population in 1932 to about 12% in 1935. Yet, in Scotland, Wales and the north of England, still 50% of the population remained unemployed! What drew Great Britain out of the Depression was the cheap money resulting from a reduction in the costs of short-term borrowing. This was to encourage the big expansion in house-building. When in 1930, about 200,000 new houses had been built, the number grew from 1934 to 1938 to 360,000 houses built per year.

In France, expenditures were cut. The French Government devalued the Franc in 1936, then again in 1937 and in 1938. The Franc lost about  $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$  of its value in less than 3 years. Belgium left the Gold Standard in March of 1935. It devalued its currency by 28%. Production and exports then recovered. Unemployment fell sharply. Italy's way out of the Depression proved to be more cumbersome than in other European states, and it proved less efficient than was the case for the other European democracies.

Elsewhere in the world, more grand events had shaken the people's opinions. In September of 1931, the Japanese Army had occupied Manchuria. In 1932, then, a Japanese puppet state was set up in Manchuria, called Manchukuo. The League of Nations had no coercive power to force Japan to give up this conquered territory, and China was too weak and divided to attempt an armed conquest. Japan withdrew from the League of Nations. The country entered a period of diplomatic isolation. Thus, the League's aim to reduce the prospects of a new international conflict through a system of discussions and of collective security, based on agreements to disarm, had failed miserably. The only way to solve issues was with arms, and the League of Nations had no arms. On 2 February 1932 began a Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. The conference had as aim to regulate the arms trade and to restrict the movement of arms. The major countries against the idea were Japan, Soviet Russia, Italy and Germany. These last countries lacked the will to disarm. On the contrary, they were engaged already in an armaments race! On 14 October 1933, Adolf Hitler withdrew Germany from the Conference, and with it from the League of Nations. By a plebiscite in Germany, 95% of the votes confirmed the German will to support the act. The conference ended in June 1934. It had suffered a major blow, and Hitler was triumphant!

## Ernst Vincius

The great patriarch of the Vincius Family, Max Vincius, had founded two large and very different branches in his family, one branch by his first wife Sara Benavicius, which truly was a Jewish branch, and the other by his second wife, Leandra von Chrapitz, which was a Prussian, Christian Evangelic branch. Both families were Prussian of origin, and before that they were Lithuanians. Andreas Vincius, the father of Julian, was born in the Benavicius authentic Jewish branch.

One of the sons of Max Vincius had done the same, married first a Jewish woman and later a Christian one. This son was called Kurt Vincius, who had first married Hannah Sonnenfeld, true-and-true Jewish, and later had been the lover and then married to the Christian Esther Kleinberger. One of Kurt's Jewish sons was Andreas Vincius, Julian's father. On the other hand, Ernst Vincius was a grandson of Kurt Vincius in the Kleinberger branch.

Julian Vincius, the doctor, had to go back to his drawings, his schemes of the far family branches, to situate Ernst Vincius, to understand where Ernst originated from. Ernst's parents had appealed to Julian to take the younger boy under his feathers in the last World War. Ernst had been Julian's driver, main help, best friend and confident at Longwy in the war. Their friendship could be called uncommon, for Julian had studied much and continued to study each day. He was a true intellectual, whereas Ernst had not been able to conclude his studies, and had not gotten further than a few years at the gymnasium. This didn't mean that Ernst was dumb. He was quite intelligent, but relied on his hands and on a brain too practical to be lost in books. The fates of Ernst and Julian had first been linked in Longwy, France. Then, Julian and Ernst had returned together to Berlin, with Julian's wife and very young daughter. Ernst lived at first in rooms of the large apartment of Julian in the Landgrafenstrasse of Berlin. Ernst had continued to be the driver of Julian's family, as well as the guardian of Julian's children and Julian's wife Charlotte, who was a Frenchwoman who did not speak German for a while, though she learned quickly. Julian worked as a doctor and professor in the Berlin university's hospital called since ever the *Charité*. Julian also held a private practice at home. He had many wealthy customers, mostly from the foreign embassies near the *Tiergarten*, the Berlin Zoo, a place where the embassies had been built in a luxurious, wooded environment. Still later, Ernst had met a girl in Berlin, called Eva Trakei, and married her in 1921.

Ernst was a serious young man. Because of the war of 1914-1918, he had not been able to study much, which he did not regret, and he had to make a living by himself. Julian offered him the money to found his own garage. The money had been presented without interest and without the need of ever paying Julian back. When years later, Ernst presented himself to Julian with hands full of banknotes, Julian had refused to accept the money. So, Ernst could reinvest. Ernst had worked so hard and so well, shown true entrepreneurial talents, that he had gathered the funds to set up two more garages in Berlin, scattered all over the town. More would follow. Ernst had been very lucky to meet Eva Trakei, for the woman was loving, had a gentle character, was as clever as Ernst, worked as much, and was a great help in what

Ernst undertook. Ernst and Eva had fallen in love, married, and soon also had a family of three lovely children. He and Eva were truly happy being together. They were both Christians of the Prussian Evangelic Faith, as was in fact also Julian Vincius. Julian had converted from the Judaism in which he had been born to Evangelism. Julian had done that when he had arrived in Freiburg-im-Breisgau to study for doctor in medicine. Since the war, Julian considered the dozen years younger Ernst practically as his first son, and in any case as his best friend in Berlin.

A few days after the establishment of Adolf Hitler as *Reichskanzler*, Chancellor of Germany, on a quiet evening, Julian and Ernst sat together in Julian's office in the Landgrafenstrasse, while Charlotte and Eva were preparing an evening dinner for them all. Julian looked at his friend and found him a little nervous and as if embarrassed by something. What was bothering Ernst? Nothing could be as serious between them as not be dissipated by a fine Cognac, so Julian served two generous glasses. They were not talking about anything in particular, mentioning what they knew about their families, how Ernst's businesses were thriving, and how Julian advanced in his caring for the patients at the *Charité* Hospital.

When a silence fell in Ernst's explanations of how he thought to expand his garages yet, Ernst pushed the conversation on by asking Julian what his friend thought of the Nazi Party and of *Herr* Hitler.

They had talked about this subject often, and now Hitler held the power of the nation!

Julian looked up. He rather thought Ernst had by then to know how much he, Julian, loathed the Nazis. Why did Ernst bring this subject up once more? Had he again to try to convince Ernst of this bad apprehensions about the NSDAP and its stormtroopers? Besides, Julian was not eager to talk about politics that peaceful evening.

Julian began in a rougher voice than usual, 'you know how I feel about the Nazis, Ernst. They are more a gang of thugs than a viable, correct political party with serious moral and kind ideas about the German people and the world. Religion teaches us to be nice to each other. Is that not the message of Christ? Yet, these guys despise the Jews and all Socialists. They claim the Jews were at the basis of the Bolshevik, Communist ideology, and movements. Now, there is absolutely no decent proof Russian Bolshevism was a result of Jewish activism. There were no more Jews in the leadership of that movement than people from other groups of society. The Bolsheviks are not in favour of any religion of any kind. The Russians, due to their Christian Orthodox religion, have for ages, always, despised Judaism. They have always looked at the Jews as a group of foreigners who have settled in their country, and tried to diminish the influence of the richer Jews.

It is quite a preposterous idea to blame the existence of Bolshevism and Communism on the Jews! The Nationalists' Nazi leader, Adolf Hitler, is not even a German! He was born in Austria. I wonder where Hitler got his ideas from of believing the Germans are the only so-called Aryans, and a superior race. Many civilisations have existed before. The most splendid ones were not Aryan at all. The people living in Germany are a mix of several peoples having come to live in these lands from different regions and origins.

My idea is very simple: there is but one race, the human race. There may have been formed differences in colour of skin and hair of the peoples, but that is merely the result of

adaptations and defences of the body in environments that can easily and scientifically be explained. God created but one race, even though the peoples created in that race have differed with time in certain aspects, due to the weather and the influence of the sun. So, we have all different features on the surface, but we all live on the same principles of biology. There are millions of features, if not many more, by which all people are similar rather than different. The Aryan superiority ideas of Hitler and a few others around him, are nonsensical. They are not more than arguments put together to instil the feelings of the Germans with delusions of superiority. You know, the bullet of a German rifle is not thrown more rapidly than a bullet from a Russian rifle, especially when the rifle had been made in the same factory! Why would a Russian not been able to fire as accurately as a German? The Aryan superiority ideas of Herr Hitler are pure nonsense! In the last World War, the French shot as accurately as the German soldiers.'

'Moreover, practically all of the German people vow to one or other religion, and the German religions, the ones practised in our country, have Christian origins. All take to the Jewish Bible. The New Testament is the account of the life of Christ. Did not Christ told love, not hatred, and not envy is the basis of what we should believe in, and live by? Hitler and his cronies preach the contrary. They are evil! It will always stay a mystery to me how the German people, I mean individuals, can abide by Hitler's ideas of violence, terror, revenge and hatred and contempt for the little lives of the humblest of us. Everything in the ideas of Hitler is contrary to the Christian religion! Is our religion and all its pomp and celebrations then nothing more but a very thin veneer on our character? The German people could as well be called people without religion, then!'

Ernst remained silent. Julian sipped at his Cognac, and then continued.

'Then, Hitler's other main claim is that he predicted soon the world would be filled by so many people, we would all have to fight anyway for land to survive. So, he tells, better start soon to conquer land. He seems to forget, or simply didn't know that people can have less children and can adapt to their environment not to starve all together. Such a trend has started in our civilised countries, despite large fluctuations. Yes, in our times of abundance, more children are born and less children die early. The number of children born in hard times diminishes, a well-known phenomenon too! The more industrialised a country is, the less children are born. Any scholar of peoples' behaviour will tell you so! In times of abundance, more children are born. We should not fight with other people to survive! We should use our heads and work together. Having less children might help too, and that is happening. Of course, a Hitler who has never studied for a serious time wouldn't know all of this. Would he be able to understand even? Why should we not be able, as an intelligent people of a not murderous humanity, to find a natural equilibrium between the resources of the earth and the men, women and children living off the lands?

I occupy only a small piece of land, share with the other proprietors of apartments on this small lot. How many people can live on a few square metres in this way? Why, put some good earth and humus on the roof, strengthen the beams, and one can grow a perfectly fine vegetable garden on top! Why should we starve in devastating famines? Can we not live thus and yet realise interesting things for the survival of our world? We have discovered better ways to grow new crops and find food. The department of agriculture is promising us wonders, crops several times more important. And where is the hurry today? When I drive

through our countryside, I see more lands free of fine crops, abandoned, than lands occupied by grains or vegetables!

We may soon also discover the ways to produce by artificial means what we need to grow. The peoples of the earth exchange goods. You grow this, and I make that, so let's exchange! That is called trade. Trade will expand, of course, but why should that be wrong? We, Germans, aren't we smart enough to produce things other people may need? Besides, situations in which there would be dearth of food are so far off, centuries in the future, so why should we worry about such issues now?

There are other, much more important issues to think about today. Matters such as relieving the pain of the sick, of protecting ourselves against the worse effects of nature, of bacterias and so on, affecting us all. That is medicinal science. Yet, Hitler and the Nazis despise doctors. They allowed charlatans to be called doctors; people without education. The Nazis seem to despise education. That is the stupidest thing I ever heard!

You yourself, you didn't have the occasion to study. You always told me you would, if only you had been able too. You had to learn on your own, and you had special talents. Few people are lucky to have special talents, but they can all study. And so they should!

Hitler wants to conquer land in the east and he has made of rearmament already one of his priorities. Is that how one helps a country, in his own terms a race?

That man is stupid and sick, sick with ambition. I understand the urge: he never realised anything, has been called without any talent, would have been just a little man in the street if he had not been able to gain control of the NSDAP and its stormtroopers. Does that not tell Germany has become an un-Christian nation, a sick nation, which should be healed by study?"

Julian paused again for a short while.

He continued, 'to the east lies the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union may be supported by its former European Allies in a new war. What would we be up against? The Soviet Union, France, Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries and the Mediterranean countries, and the United States of America. How in heaven's name would we be capable to win from those? You tell me! Hitler and his party are simply and clearly dumb, and they are evil. Anybody who votes for such a party, a Nationalist party claiming we are so much smarter and powerful than the rest of the world, is stark mad! Look at the surfaces on a map, any map. Somebody in Germany, thinking we can be more powerful than other alliances in the world must have a few loose screws in his or her head! The Soviets, the Russians and their people living in Asia, are not more stupid than us, Germans. Who can claim otherwise, with which valid arguments? The Russians may be less schooled than we are, but that can be remedied within a few years. The Russians are not more stupid than we. Why, objectively, would they? They may have less basic research, but their artists, writers, painters, musicians, have proved they are no less shrewd people than we are. They may be less organised than we. That, surely, is only a matter of some time.'

'Yet, the Nazis, the NSDAP party, now dominate Germany. Their theories appeal to all the people,' interrupted Ernst

'True,' gave Julian back immediately. 'The people are still angry about us, the Germans,

having lost the war. We had to pay, although practically no foreign troops stood on our territories. Now, that, we should know clearly and all too well, was but a matter of time. The Allies could have pushed on to Berlin. We could have the French or English flag flowing over the Brandenburger Tor! That image shocks you, but it is quite the truth. We were lucky the French and the English were as weary of the war as we, so they stood where they were at the end of the war and didn't advance further. They could have! So, we lost very interesting lands because of our avowed defeat. We lost territories in what are now France, Poland, or Czechia. Austria lost its emperor, and so did we.

So, the Nationalist Germans are out for revenge. A powerful feeling seeking revenge is, nasty, bad, creator of death and contrary to our religion. When hit, turn the other cheek says Christian religion! In our religion, revenge is utter evil. Germany is so Evangelic, yet nobody seems to challenge basic concepts that are clearly and directly against our religion! Shame, I say! I didn't know we really could be such a resenting people! Yet, it seems we are.

Resentment is a feeling I detected in myself, and tried to control and subdue, as each religious man should. So, we Germans, we all feel at least a little, and many a lot, we must have revenge for our losses of the World War? And we should expand to become more powerful in the eyes of the world. All that, because we feel humiliated. The sheer possibility, which I find an illusion, of becoming an even greater empire than before, still appeals to us, is a throbbing, very alive desire? All such appeals and feelings are of the lower, detestable kind in universal morals, though! They are bad feelings, condemned by the Churches, feelings of the lowest kind! What would those feelings mean in the end? I fear everybody acts towards them, but nobody really wants to think of its implications. It means no less than a new general war! Haven't we had enough of blood and pain? Why does that Austrian corporal want to push us into a new war? Is he so smart as to believe it would best to do so? He couldn't even enter a school of drawing and colouring! Shall we let him decide over the fate, over the deaths of millions of young Germans? Yet, the NSDAP and the new Chancellor wage forward in that direction! Well, we will all march forward, straight with our heads and breasts into a new war, as ugly if not uglier than the past one. Didn't we have enough of the horrors of killing? At what enormous suffering shall we win or lose?

Truly, Ernst, whether even we win or lose shall not matter. The results for Germany and for the world shall yet be more catastrophic than the last time! You have only to look at the newer weapons, airplanes and bombs, and tanks, and guns, to understand instantly a new war will have tragic consequences for all nations, with more victims, two or three times, or five or ten times as many as in the past war! One must be mad to follow the NSDAP group of insane leaders! One must be mad to vote for them and give them the power to devastate the world in a new war. I assure you, Ernst, I am not a Communist, and not even a Socialist. But I rant, and rant.

What was it actually you wanted to discuss with me? I know. I can see on your face there is something, something really important for you.'

As Ernst was still considering Julian's words, he remained silent at first. Soon he too spoke out what was on his mind.

'As the NSDAP-men are not just antisemitic, they also despise other sorts of people, also of true Aryan stock! Their stormtroopers harass everyone who does not agree with their views. One word of an SA man, and no clients anymore go to a garage marked by them as of



contrary, anti-Nazi opinions. The Nazis liquidate many businesses, Jewish or not. One word of an SA man, Julian, and I may have to declare bankrupt. I am still vulnerable in financial terms. I have made debts to set up my businesses. Gambling my income would be worse than what I have to pay for my debts. For the moment, that proceeds to my satisfaction. I am getting richer. But with one snap of two fingers of but one SA-man, that all can change. I have no trouble paying the banks that lent me money. But if the Nazis and the SA boycott my garages, I am done for within 3 months. I may have to stop doing business, I may have to sell my garages, be declared bankrupt, and have to start all over again, if I am not thrown into a prison or one of those concentration camps the Nazis have been building: simple country fields delimited by *Stacheldraht*, by barbed wire, and where prisoners live in tents or in thin walled wooden barracks. Where would my family be? Herr Hitler has all power, now, in Germany, Julian! My poor wife and children! So, I thought of joining them, Julian!’

Julian looked with even greater surprise at Ernst. He couldn’t find any words. This sounded absurd!

‘I cannot win of them, Julian, so I thought of joining them. I intend to keep a very low profile among them, resist being drawn into brutal adventures. But a membership of the NSDAP may provide me with some protection against a prospect of the SA stormtroopers coming to my garage and destroy all I own. They are doing things like that, as you know well enough. I do not agree with their ideas, I believe yours are truer, but I also want them to leave me alone. My medal of the previous war won’t save me. Some feigning at being a supporter of theirs may offer better protection, and peace, and get me through the times until they are beaten. That they ever will be beaten, I am convinced of that. Their theories and actions are an abomination already now, anti-natural. They shall not last!’

Julian replied, ‘I see.’ He sighed. ‘I can follow your reasoning. You may be more right than I am, Ernst. Peace is what men like you and I most want. You may be right to join’ em, yet staying out of brutal actions against their opposers. Doing just that may become very, very tricky, Ernst. Well, maybe it could work, crying with the pack and not become brutal oneself. I doubt that, however. You may be forced to make a choice yet, have them yet beat you to pulp, or beat on others. Between evil and good, you may have to make a very public choice, the worst of all choices. You may well suffer anyway! An excruciating choice you may have to make then, Ernst. I surmise that when the Nazis force their theories on our country, we may all have to make such a choice, me too, or flee. Take one’s money and flee from here, start anew somewhere else, in another, more peaceful and peace-loving country, may be the only solution. I agree with you pride and personal integrity have to come second place, after courage and remain vowing to one’s principles, in view of the wolves howling together, when one’s family may have to suffer.

I don’t like saying this at all, but a choice now to join, even reluctantly, the Nazi’s rather than have them as enemies, may indeed still be the least sacrifice, the least bad way to go and get out of the way, to hide and survive. It is not very courageous, but the dilemma is terrible for a man like you, and like me, who loves his family.

So, do as you feel the best, Ernst. Go, and join them. Wait till the last moment is near. I’ll not

despise you for it. Our friendship can last. I hope for myself I'll be allowed to duck until the very last moment. Then, I'll probably go. I have no business. All I have and need is in my head. I can go whenever I want. I pray I may not be forced to make such a choice, such a decision as you have to face. If I were your father, I would now say you have my blessing. It will not be easy in the Party for you. In the end, you may yet be forced to do something you loathe, because against your conscience. Follow your conscience, or think indeed about your wife and children. The best would be to hide your family somewhere in the country soon, in an isolated house in a small village maybe. Hide Eva and the children. Eva may not like that, but I'll do what I can to help.'

Ernst nodded. The two men reclined, drank their brandy and talked on.

The next day, Ernst entered an NSDAP office and paid for a membership card of the party. The group of people behind the desk asked him whether he also wanted to take a membership card of the SA. Ernst said yes, but he explained he could better help the NSDAP by keeping his garages in good order. This would take him much time anyway. Yet, he told the party could count on him to provide cars and to help on cars. The clerks agreed to that, noted what he did and how he could help, and Ernst Vincius became a Nazi with a smile of the men in the Berlin NSDAP office. Several men came out of other offices in the building, all smiles, and congratulated him. He had made more friends!

## The Terror Regime of the Third Reich

### *The early years of the Regime*

The term of ‘concentration camps’ was used to denote the places of torture and death, where the opponents of the Hitler and the NSDAP Regime were incarcerated, at first during the summer and autumn of 1933. There was not enough place in the regular, existing prisons of Germany to hold the large numbers of people the Nazi leaders wanted to eliminate from society, to disappear from public life. The SA exercised a reign of terror over the people thus imprisoned, used much violence, humiliated the prisoners and ultimately killed them by various means. The SA men had not to fear being held accountable for deaths in the camps. After the SA, the SS of Heinrich Himmler took over the role. In and around Berlin, there were 105 such unofficial places of torture and elimination.

Right after Hitler’s gain of practically total power in Germany, the SA began eliminating the better known opposers to the NSDAP. The SA men broke into the house of the son of Friedrich Ebert. They raided the publishing houses of the Ullstein Brothers and of Rudolph Mosse. They dragged the staffs of the papers *Die Weltbühne* and *Das Tagesbuch* to the prisons. The arrests could now be made in broad daylight. The people pushed or drawn out of their houses or offices were ridiculed and mistreated by the SA. This movement was later called the ‘*Köpenick Week of Blood*’. It happened at the end of 1933, allegedly after a young Social Democrat had shot dead 3 SA Stormtroopers. More than 500 men and women, members of the Communist and Social Democrat parties, were arrested and tortured. About 90 to 100 persons were instantly murdered. Among these were also some well-known men, former politicians of high standing. There was no trial. It sufficed for the SA men to state they had found proof of a planned uprising. No such proof was ever produced. The State of Justice thereby ended.

No group helped the Nazis more than the SA, yet Hitler began to be concerned about the unbridled power of the huge SA organisation led by Ernst Röhm.

Already in 1932, Joachim von Ribbentrop had joined the NSDAP. He had excellent contacts in the leading circles of the Berlin society. He was the ideal person to act as intermediary between the society leaders and men like von Papen and others.

Hitler and the NSDAP soon obtained the control over the German press and over the film industry and the radio stations. Goebbels received that control, the Minister of Information and Propaganda. For instance, the biggest film company was the UFA. UFA stood for *Universum Film-Aktien Gesellschaft*. It was a world-famous company, headed by directors such as Ernst Lubitsch and G.W. Pabst. The UFA had been bought in 1927 by Alfred Hugenberg, now its largest shareholder. By 1933, the Nazis coerced Hugenberg to make National Socialist films almost exclusively. Hitler’s NSDAP trust company had already swallowed up the Mosse Verlag and the Ullstein Verlag. In March of 1937, it would also swallow up the film industry Tobis and in the same month the Nazi Government bought the UFA from Hugenberg. By end 1939, almost all German film producing companies had been naturalised. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels gave in 1937 18 Mickey Mouse films to Hitler as a Christmas present!

On 1 May 1933 was National Labour Day. An evening rally was to be held at the *Tempelhofer Feld*, near the airport, a new parade ground. The artistic design of the event had been given to an architect called Albert Speer. Speer had carried out a number of smaller commissions for the NSDAP before. He now imagined a vast propaganda spectacle, with very many flags flowing in the wind, powerful spotlights, and with a main, new building for 13,000 spectators. Speer used over 100 heavy-duty loudspeakers in the arena. He would organise the same rallies for 1 May in 1934 and 1935, until 1939. These were now emotionally charged events, set up as part of the public life of Germany.

As for the political parties, the Socialist Democratic Party, or SDP, had been banned as from 23 July 1933. By the begin of that month, the middle-class political parties had disbanded of their own accord. On 14 July 1933, a new law forbade the formation of new political parties. This signed the end of Germany as a parliamentary state! The NSDAP was now the only remaining party in the country.

Hitler then saw it as his special mission to make good with the city of Berlin what the Weimar Republic had neglected to do in the past. He wanted to transform Berlin to a true capital of the *Reich*, so that it could bear comparison with other capitals of Europe, such as London, Paris or Vienna. He asked his Finance Minister to make available 40 million Marks, later even 60 million, for each of the next years, to turn Berlin into a true capital of a world power.

Hitler was kept informed by his Secretary of State, Heinrich Lammers, about the Olympic Stadium. The Building Committee had agreed the old German stadium of 1913 and the neighbouring Sports Forum of 1928-1929 should be enlarged and converted to a new, grand Olympic Stadium. On 5 October 1933, Hitler inspected the site with his Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick. It was agreed all the Olympics buildings in Grönewald would later be taken over by the *Reich* administration. The new stadium was to be built to hold 100,000 spectators. It held a swimming pool and an arena for equestrian events. There would be a parade ground, large enough for mass demonstrations. An open stage was to be built in the delightful Murelle Gorge, to the north-west of the site. The new design was to be called the *Reichssportfeld*. Hans Pfundtver, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of the Interior, would lead the project.

As to the other projects for the capital, the new chancellery was to be built along the *Voss Strasse*. The *Städtische Oper* too was to be rebuilt, and renamed the German Opera House.

In May 1933 stopped the recruitment for the Nazi Party. The party leadership feared too many opportunists now began joining the NSDAP. As these people couldn't any more join the NSDAP, they entered the SA. This weakened the links between the Party and the SA. At the beginning of 1934, there were already 6 times more SA Stormtroopers than in early 1933. Moreover, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1933, Hitler had allowed the entire *Stahlhelm* organisation to be enrolled in the SA. By then, there were 3 million men member of the SA, even 4.5 million with the *Stahlhelm* and other such groups. The incorporation of the *Stahlhelm* brought its issues. Internal resentments between the two large groups created brawls and fights all over Germany. As the SA grew to a state within the state, Röhm wanted the SA to have its own disciplinary courts, such as the Army had. Röhm thus attempted to remove the SA from the

jurisdiction of the police and the courts of the Ministry of Justice. He wanted the SA to become a national militia, bypassing and possibly replacing the regular Army.

In comparison, the regular Army, was limited by treaty to 200,000 men, grown from the original allowed 100,000. The regular Army was better trained and armed, but the disparity in numbers began to trouble as well the Army generals as Hitler.

In December 1933, Hitler made of Röhm a Minister without portfolio in his Government. Röhm's wish had been to become the Minister of Defence! This post was still held by General Werner von Blomberg of the Army. A clash of ambitions between the SA and the Reichswehr seemed in the making. Röhm, with its huge SA, had become a menace to be reckoned with. There were issues over a possible incorporation of the SA into the regular Army. The Army could fear possible political infiltration in its command, and the SA leadership, as well as its ranks, included men who had been dishonourably discharged from the Army!

Von Blomberg and the Army were pleased by a promise of Hitler to grow the Army through the resumption of conscription. Hitler's foreign policy would have as its aim to grow the Army, so that the territories lost by the Treaty of Versailles could be recuperated. The Army generals had read Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and referred among each other to Hitler's apparent will to launch a new war of conquest of territories in the east. Von Blomberg strengthened his loyalty to Hitler by adopting the Aryan paragraphs of the new decrees, which banned Jews from serving in the Army, though at the same time insisting on Jewish war veterans not being dismissed. Actually, only 70 soldiers were thus actually cashiered. End 1933, von Blomberg had enforced the appointment of General Werner von Fritsch as head of the Army and of General von Beck as Operational Head.

With these 3 men, Blomberg, Fritsch and Beck in command of the Army, there was no chance of the regular Army yielding to pressure from the SA and Röhm. Could civil war between these two armed groups ensue? On 28 February of 1934, Hitler met the SA leadership. He forced Röhm to sign an agreement that he would not try to replace the Army with the SA. When Röhm left the meeting, he was heard to cry out he was not going to obey a ridiculous corporal! He threatened to send Hitler on leave!

On 2 August 1933, Hermann Göring, now Minister-President of Prussia, rescinded an order of February 1933 to enrol parts of the SA as auxiliary officers in the Prussian police. Other lands in Germany did the same. Stricter rules were issued to define who exactly was entitled to take people in custody. It was a first try of the Government to control the SA more. In April 1934, other such regulations were published. No one could be incarcerated for personal reasons, or because they had dismissed employees, or because they had brought objectionable legal actions to the courts. Suddenly, the SA began to understand they lost many of their reasons of existence.

In June 1934, Hitler visited Tempelhof again. The planned airport was to become the biggest and the first civilian airport in the world.

A few parties remained to be eliminated from the political scene for Germany to become a one-party autocracy. One of those was the DNVP. The head of that party, Alfred Hugenberg, was first obliged to resign from the Cabinet of Ministers, due to a whispering campaign on him. With Hugenberg, rich and powerful, now out of the way, the DNVP dissolved itself end

1933. The last party was the Catholic Centre Party. The Nazis sacked all Catholic civil servants. One of the greatest fears of the Catholic Church was of the Communists. The Pope's fear led to a deal with the NSDAP, a Concordat concluded in Rome. The Catholic Party agreed to dissolve itself for the finalisation of the Concordat. The Catholic Church in Germany had saved itself, but it had disappeared with the Centre Party from German politics.

By these actions, the whole fabric of association life was then brought under control of the NSDAP Party, in a process that took only from March to June 1933. The grasp for power had been completed in a few months of the Nazi Party's coming to power. Its power was by then absolute. Every national association and every local association, whether of sports, of culture such as choirs, soccer clubs, women's organisations, was under Nazi control by the end of the year 1933. The NSDAP organisations gained millions of adherents. More than 1.6 million people flocked to the NSDAP and the SA grew by the summer of 1933 to more than 2 million men.

As of the beginning of July 1933, there was no more talk of revolution in the NSDAP. Revolution had become unnecessary. Hitler had obtained by legal means all power in Germany. The Ministers in the Government sought to deal with the arbitrary violence of the SA. The Reich Justice Minister, The Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Economy, wanted an end to the uproars in the streets. Continuing instability in Germany would give the impression Germany was an unreliable country, and thus discourage economic investments and recovery.

Hitler, meanwhile, still regarded the growth of the SA as a danger for the coherence of the Armed Forces in Germany. He did not like debates and discussions in his Cabinet meetings. He preferred decrees to be fully worked out by one-to-one discussions, before they came on the table at complete meetings of the Ministers. From November 1933 on, he limited such meetings and his presence in them. He also reshuffled the Cabinet, with less conservative Ministers and more NSDAP Ministers. As Ministers he had:

- Goebbels had become a Minister in March of 1933;
- Rudolph Hess and Ernst Röhm became Ministers on 1 December 1933;
- Bernhard Rust became Education Minister in 1934;
- Walther Darré became Minister of Agriculture end June 1932, when Alfred Hugenberg had resigned on 2 June;

When on 20 January 1933, there were only 3 Nazi Ministers in the Cabinet on 17 Ministers as accepted by von Hindenburg (Hitler, Frick at the Interior, Göring without portfolio), in May 1934 the Nazis had reached a clear majority of 9 long-term Nazi members. They could now manipulate the conservative members, intimidate and bully them. The conservatives grouped around von Papen, who was the Vice-Chancellor. So did the leadership of the Army.

In April of 1934, von Hindenburg was ill. He retired to his estate at Neudeck in Prussia. The people of Germany remained rather apathetic at the changes in Government. With the illness of the President, the influence and power of Hitler in the Government rose. In mid-April, Hitler once more spoke to the Army leaders. This happened on board of the Deutschland battleship, navigating off Norway on a 4-day cruise. Hitler reached an agreement of curbing the power of the SA, in favour of the Army. On 20 April, the Prussian Minister-President Hermann

Göring handed over the control of the Prussian political police to Heinrich Himmler. Himmler from then on centralised the political police in the SS, which he drew away from the SA, of which the SS had originally been a part.

Von Papen sensed the oncoming taking over of all power by the Nazi Ministers in the Cabinet. On 17 June 1934, for instance, he gave a speech at the Marburg University, during which he warned against a second revolution. He attacked the personality cult that had been building up on Hitler. He spoke of the arrogance, the lack of character, insincerity and lack of chivalry at the heart of the current Government.

Hitler, as a form of answer, met his NSDAP Nazi party leaders at Gera. He spoke against the people who wanted to stop the victory of the Nazi ideas.

### *The Night of the long Knives*

The internal tensions among the Nazis had to be solved, lest the Nazi Party would explode and end.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1934, Hitler was called to a meeting at Neudeck in Prussia with President von Hindenburg. General von Blomberg was with von Hindenburg when Hitler arrived. Von Hindenburg made it clear to Hitler that if the SA were not immediately brought to heel, he would be prepared to declare the Martial Law over Germany and place the Government in the hands of the Army. Hitler had no option left but to act rapidly. He began planning the overthrow of Röhm. He worked in collaboration with Himmler and Himmler's Deputy, Reinhard Heydrich, who was Head of the SS Security Service. They began to manufacture evidence that Röhm was planning an uprising in the whole of Germany. On 24 June, this evidence was presented and explained to the leading officers of the SS. They received instructions on how to deal with the supposed putsch. The SS leaders were informed they would have to kill a number of the SA leaders.

On 27 June 1934, Hitler saw von Blomberg and Reichenau to secure the Army's cooperation. The next day, they expelled Röhm from the German Officers' League. The Army was now on full alert. On 29 June, von Blomberg had an article published in the Nazi's daily flagship newspaper the *Racial Observer*. In this, Blomberg declared the Army's loyalty to the Nazi regime. On 30 June, von Hindenburg agreed to have an audience with von Papen. This confirmed the leading Nazis in their belief they had the opportunity to strike at the conservatives in the Government as well.

Hitler telephoned Röhm's adjutant in his vacation hotel at Bad Wiessee, ordering the SA leader to meet him there in the morning of 30 June. Hitler then conferred with Goebbels and Sepp Dietrich, who commanded Hitler's personal SS bodyguard. He said he, Hitler, would move against the SA leaders the next day. Hitler sent Göring to Berlin, to take action there and see to it the party continued to hold a tight grip on all Nazis in the capital. In the night of from 29 to 30 June, the SA must have sensed something was up, for 3,000 SA Stormtroopers ran through München, shouting they would crush any attempt to betray their organisation. Adolf Wagener, the SA regional leader in München restored calm and order in the city.

Hitler arrived at the airport of München at around 4h30 in the morning of 30 June. He immediately rode to the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior, where he confronted the leaders of the previous night's unrest. He tore off epaulettes from the officers' shoulders. He shouted all officers would be shot and had them driven to the state prison of München at Stadelheim. Then, he took a group of his SS bodyguards to Bad Wiessee, to the Hanselbauer Hotel. Hitler arrested Röhm and the senior SA Group Leader. Other SA leaders were arrested and sent to the prison of Stadelheim. The SS arrested yet other SA leaders, who were still arriving by train at München, as soon as they got off the train. Hitler had already appointed Viktor Lutze as the new leader of the SA. And then, the killing could begin.

On 1 July 1934, Hitler sent word to Röhm in prison, saying Röhm could have a revolver to shoot himself. Röhm refused, and two SS officers shot him in his cell. More SA leaders were murdered in prison. Hitler ordered the SA leader of Silesia, Edmund Heines, who had led an uprising against the NSDAP in Berlin, to be shot immediately. Other SA men were then sent to the Dachau concentration camp.

On 30 June at 18h00 in the evening, Hitler flew to Berlin to coordinate the rest of the operation. Göring had already been shouting orders to shoot SA men in Berlin. Göring ordered the Vice-Chancellery to be stormed and secured. Gestapo agents shot von Papen's secretary Herbert von Bose. Another von Papen secretary, Edgar Jung, had been arrested on 25 June and was now shot. Von Papen was confined to his Berlin home. Major-general Kurt von Bredow also, was killed at his home. He had tried to resist arrest. On Heydrich's orders, the former Chief of Police and leader of the Catholic Action, was shot. The murder of Klausener too, was a clear message for the Catholic leaders, that a revival of independent Catholic political activity would not be tolerated.

Former Chancellor Heinrich Brüning had been tipped off that a purge was on. He succeeded in leaving the country.

Göring arrested Georg Strasser, now in retirement since his resignation from the NSDAP. Göring arrested him, for he had criticised further the NSDAP. Strasser was brought to the Police Headquarters, and shot. Strasser's friend Paul Schulz, a former top leader of the SA, was taken into a forest and shot. He was only lightly wounded, however, and escaped. Later, he negotiated his exile from Germany with Hitler personally. The well-known Captain Erhardt, who had been the *Freikorps* leader of the Kapp Putsch, heard of what was happening early, and escaped to Austria.

In Breslau, the head of the SS Security Service, Ernst Müller, received a post-dated, sealed letter in Berlin on 29 June. He travelled back to Breslau. In the morning of 30 June, Heydrich telephoned him and told him to open the letter. In the letter was a list of SA men. These men had to be eliminated. Müller followed the instructions, seized SA weapons stores, secured the airports and their radio transmitters. He arrested as many men on the list as he could. Heydrich repeatedly phoned him to execute the men arrested. Müller ordered them to be taken to the SS Headquarters, and shot in the night. More arrests and shootings happened on the morning of 1 July 1934.

The elimination of men who could ever become dangerous for Hitler's supremacy inside the NSDAP was not the only target of the aim of the Night of the long Knives. Hitler also took revenge on former opposers. In Bavaria, the former Minister-President Gustav Ritter von



Kahr, who had played a large role in putting down the putsch of Hitler in 1923, was cut down by SS men. And it happened the SS made mistakes. Thus, Wilhelm Eduard Schmid had mistakenly been taken for Ludwig Schmitt, a former follower of Gregor Strasser, and was killed. Otto Ballerstedt had prosecuted Hitler for the breaking up a rival political meeting. He was shot in Dachau on 1 July. The SS Cavalry Leader Anton Baron von Hohberg und Buchwald was shot at home, because he was a rival in the SS of the Officer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski. And while the SS were at it, why not shoot Jews? Four Jewish men were arrested in Hirshberg and shot, so-called 'while trying to escape'.

The men leading the purges did not touch Erich Ludendorff. Ludendorff died on 20 December 1937, and received a respectful funeral by the Nazis.

On 3 July 1934, Hitler addressed the Cabinet of Ministers. He gave as justification for the murders of Röhm, Schleicher and Strasser, that they had been plotting for a revolution and with the French Government no less, which would have plunged the country in chaos. The events were described as a cleaning in the Nazi movement of dangerous and degenerate elements. Röhm had been a notorious homosexual. On 13 July, Hitler convened the *Reichstag* and addressed the assembly. Hitler asserted he had crushed a conspiracy that would have overthrown the Reich. He told without shame that 37 people had been killed, whereas Göring alone had ordered the arrest of more than 1,000 people, of which at least 85 had been killed. Of these men, 12 had even been *Reichstag* representatives! The *Reichstag* members then applauded Hitler for his swift and decisive actions. In the next weeks, further arrests and dismissals continued. Behaviour such as heavy drinking, homosexuality, embezzlement, riotous behaviour, was ruthlessly purged. As a result, SA men began to leave the organisation in large numbers. As the SA had still about 3 million members in August 1934, this had diminished to 1.2 million in April 1938.

On 5 July 1934, the Government took measures to suppress the treasonable attacks of 30 June and 1-2 July of 1934. The actions of Hitler's soldiers were thereby declared legal and acts of national defence. The measures had consisted of shootings of people, suspected of having planned or taken part in the uprisings. They had led to about 24 deaths in Berlin. They had been called the '*Röhm Putsch*'. They had been caused by the embittered attempts of the SA to remilitarise its organisation and to establish itself as a kind of 'People's Army'. It had been a reviving of the difficult relationship between the SA and the Party heads on the one hand, and the *Reichswehr*, the Army, on the other. The move now to oust out the SA altogether, was led by Hermann Göring. Many top figures of the National Socialist movement were eliminated in the effort.

Gregor Strasser, the former NSDAP organisation leader was killed at the Gestapo headquarters in the then Prinz Albrecht Strasse. Kurt von Schleicher was killed with his wife in his home. General Ferdinand von Bredow, Schleicher's former Secretary of State, was gunned down in the former Cadet School of Lichterfelde. Eric Klausener, former head of the police department in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, was butchered in his own office. All the people thus killed, had tried in one way or another to thwart the attempts of the NSDAP, and then of Hitler, to seize power in 1932.

The SA had been permanently weakened by the killings. It was now little more than a sports organisation, although one that could at any moment be mobilised. Himmler's SS benefitted

from the losing of authority of the SA. Himmler had also taken over the running of the Prussian Gestapo from Göring on 20 April 1934. He was then the uncontested head of the Political Police in Germany. On 20 July 1934, Hitler even made of the SS an independent organisation, in recognition for the events of 30 June 1934.

The *Reichstag* applauded Hitler's justification for the killing. A law was passed providing the actions with retroactive legality! This law was backed by the Justice Minister Gürtner. Gürtner was no Nazi. He was a conservative politician.

The *Reichstag* was abolished in 1934. President, Chancellor and the Cabinet of Ministers ruled alone.

### *The Nazi Repression against Opposers*

On 7 December 1934, Hitler made of Göring his deputy in all the aspects of the Government, should he be unable to carry out his duties. Göring was thus the second man in the Reich. A week later, Hitler also named Göring as his successor. The Third Reich was by then a fully-fledged dictatorship, in which Hitler could do as he wished.

On 2 August of 1934, the President Paul von Hindenburg died. Asked, what Hitler wanted to be called, Chancellor or President, he declared he simply wanted to be called the Leader, *der Führer des Deutschen Reiches und Volks*. He kept also his position as *Reichskanzler*, as Chancellor. A law to this effect was ratified by a nationwide referendum on 19 August 1934, to approve of Hitler's self-appointment as head of the state. The Brownshirts exercised a terror atmosphere in the polling stations. People were obliged to cast their vote in public. Hitler received the appointment. Hitler alone was now officially in power.

The *Schutzstaffeln*, the SS, had originated as Hitler's bodyguard. It completely owed allegiance to him, and him alone. The SS obeyed no laws but their own. Hitler had the ambition to turn the SS into the elite of the new Nazi racial order. Therefore, the SS were to be strictly disciplined, puritanical, racially pure, and totally obedient, the best elements of the German race.

The SS had a defined hierarchy of officers, with great-sounding names, different from the names of the ranks in the Army. They received redesigned uniforms. They wore a silver death's head belt and badges. The letters SS were shaped on them like a double bolt of lightning. By September 1939, the Himmler magazine *Friends* had a circulation of 365,000 exemplars.

Hitler had established his closest Security Services of the SS already in 1931. From 1933 to 1935, Himmler expelled about 60,000 men from the SS ranks. He purged alcoholics, homosexuals and opportunists. From 1935 on, he required proof of Aryan ancestry, for which officers had to go back to the year 1750, to 1800 for the common soldiers. Only blond men would be accepted. Himmler also devised marriage rules. Often, the SS officers were highly educated men with university degrees.

Himmler established his Security Services with the SS in 1931, led by Reinhard Heydrich. Heydrich was tall, blond, an expert swordsman and a fine violinist, with an overbearing

manner and charisma, a high, clear voice. He had numerous affairs with women, also with sisters, daughters, women married to colleagues. For this behaviour, he was cashiered from the Army in April 1931. His latest girlfriend was Lina von Osten. The women served his ambitions. He had few scruples or empathy for others. Himmler and Heydrich took over one police service after the other.

The *Gestapo* or *Geheimer Staatspolizei*, had been founded by Göring as the political police service for Prussia. Its head was police officer Rudolf Diels. The *Gestapo*'s favourite car was the black Mercedes 260D. On 24 April of 1934, Göring replaced Diels and Himmler also became the head of the *Gestapo*. The *Gestapo* never grew to a large force, but a law of 1936 took the *Gestapo* out of the jurisdiction of the German courts. A German citizen could find no appeal for the actions of the *Gestapo*. On 17 June 1936, Himmler became the only Chief of the German Police. Heydrich was placed in charge of the *Gestapo* and of the SS Security Service. The police and the SS began to merge, and the usual, uniformed police was placed under the SS man Kurt Dalwege. The main aim of the *Gestapo* was to hunt down and apprehend the enemies of the Nazis within Germany.

On the opposers' side, the leadership of the Social Democrats, the ones that had not been killed or imprisoned, had fled from Germany and formed a group in Prague. According to Social Democrat Marxist theory, the Nazi regime was unlikely to last long. It was the last and desperate attempt of self-preservation by a capitalist system. Many Social Democrat resistance, secret groups continued to live on. They organised at least some criticism on the NSDAP actions, mostly in the form of underground leaflets. Most of these men lived a double life, outwardly maintaining conformity with the regime, though engaging in resistance activities in secret.

In January 1934, the Social Democrats spread a manifesto in which they called for a radical policy of expropriation to destroy the most powerful industry conglomerates and the owners of huge landed estates; all this was to be realised once Hitler had been overthrown, of course. Such acts would not make them popular with the leaders of German society. The Social Democrats were never able to expand beyond small, local, elite groups of activists for their cause. Arrests decimated them. They fuelled the abstentions in the elections for the *Reichstag*, hardly more. Any possibility of arousing the masses to opposition to the Nazis was doomed from the start. By the end of 1935, the formal, underground organisation of the Social Democrats in Germany, had been effectively suppressed by the German police forces. Organisations such as the *International Fighting League* and the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany, dwindled and disappeared. In the last organisation worked one Willy Brandt, a post-war Chancellor of Germany. He and many others escaped the country to avoid arrest, in Brandt's case to Scandinavia. Still, over a million Social Democrats remained in Germany. From 18 March 1933 to 2 January 1934, 2,000 people were condemned for treason by the regular courts. In the period of 1934 to 1939, about 3,400 people more were tried for treason by the courts. The courts gave sentences averaging 6 years each, or spoke out death sentences. The Reich Justice Minister was Franz Gürtner, the Reich Commissioner for Justice was Hans Frank, who was also the head of the Nazi's *Lawyers' League*. Hans Frank was officially the *Reichsrechtsführer*. By 1936, about 90% of the death sentences were also carried out.

*The Nazi Justice System and Nazi Terror*

The Nazis encouraged the prosecutors and the courts to charge all homicides with murder, rather than with the non-capital offence of manslaughter. For the Nazis, criminals were in essence hereditary degenerates, who had to be treated as outcasts from the race. When the incarcerated had finished their sentence and survived, a *Law against dangerous habitual Criminals*, decreed on 24 November 1933, allowed the courts to sentence any offender of 3 or more criminal acts to further confinement in a state prison after their formal sentence had been carried out. In the prisons where they were held, conditions rapidly worsened under the *Third Reich*. The food rations deteriorated, vermin infestation and skin diseases augmented, hard labour was introduced. Labour camps were set up, for instance, in the barren North-German area of Emsland to work in moorland cultivation. The aim of the penal policy remained the elimination from the true Aryan racial community of all elements damaging the people and the race.

In the Constitution, the so-called *Arienparagraph* on the Arian race was gradually modified and extended. Jewish judges and Jewish civil servants were no longer allowed. Later, this was extended to doctors, dentists, pharmacists, lawyers, artists, and journalists. Jews could still attend universities or public schools, but in ever smaller numbers. Jews could hold no military honorary functions, and so on. The names of streets, when containing Jewish names, had to be changed. Jews could not use banks in the parks to rest. They were not allowed in public baths. In September 1935 was issued a law called *Gesetz zum Schutz des Deutschen Blutes und der Deutschen Ehre*, a law to protect German blood and German honour.

The *Gestapo* eagerly pursued the Communists. Ernst Thälmann had been arrested right after the *Reichstag* fire in February 1933. On his trial, there had been a lack of hard evidence for the use of terror. Thälmann remained in prison in several places, without a formal trial. The Communists were still about 180,000 in Germany in 1933. They risked their freedom and lives in a struggle that, they thought, would ultimately bring them to victory. They remained active in the German resistance, but they could do not much more than keeping the movement alive underground. The resistance had it extremely difficult to communicate among each other.

The social and cultural infrastructure of the labour movements had been destroyed and their most talented leaders had either been killed or were now suffering in prison. Communist leaders were Walter Ulbricht, the former Communist leader, and Wilhelm Pieck. Pieck was a long-term *Reichstag* member and a former last-hour companion of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. But he had a rough, unfeeling character for people, with even a special talent for antagonising people. The *Gestapo* arrested the entire secret, national leadership of the Communist Party in Berlin on 27 March of 1935.

Nazi terror was nowhere more obvious than in the emerging power and fear-inspiring reputation of the *Gestapo*! The *Gestapo* remained, however, a rather small organisation with a small number of paid agents and informers. In 1934, there were but 41 *Gestapo* officers in Berlin, 41 in Frankfurt-am-Main, 44 in Bremen, 42 in Hannover, and 281 in Düsseldorf, yet this for the entire district of the Lower Rhine. In 1939, over all Germany, there were about 20,000 men in the *Gestapo*, of which about 3,000 were also SS men. The head of the *Gestapo*

was now Heinrich Müller, a very ambitious man. He would kow-tow to any superior. His main words were duty and discipline. Heydrich kept him on. The *Gestapo* held a comprehensive register of enemies of the state, broken down in categories. It worked in a system of denunciation, and tried to follow up on all such denunciations, even just malicious gossip cases. It tried to prevent any open critics ushered against the regime. It was obviously very dangerous to speak freely in public. People could never be sure who was listening. Fearing of being overheard rapidly inhibited free conversations in drinking houses, as one could be denounced on every incautious word or expression. Everyone feared being overheard. This too meant, that people who did not support the Nazi regime became very lonely people, who avoided others. Nobody in the end dared saying anything. The regime sought to eliminate the tiniest sign of discontent by sending the men and women to the concentration camps!

The *Gestapo* broke the Labour Movements resistance. Workers and entrepreneurs were put together in one unified organisation of 1934 called the *Deutsches Arbeiterfront*. Then, they turned to suppressing less ideological forms of dissent. For that, they could lean on an organisation of denunciators, upwards from the block wardens. Men and women who gave vent to their increasingly critical views of the Nazi party in public, got arrested. The Threat of arrest, persecution and incarceration in awful prisons of brutal and violent conditions, loomed over everyone In the *Third Reich*. Fear and terror were integral arms of the Nazis' political repression.

At the same time, also the Soviet Union had its Labour Camps in the less hospitable parts of the country, such as Siberia. Stalin purged the Communist Party inside his own lands. About 3/4<sup>th</sup> of a million people was thus executed in those months. At least 3 million people in all died in Stalin's death camps. Thousands of German Communists, many of whom had fled from Germany, died in Russia. Even more of the leading German Communists were killed in Stalin's purges than by the Gestapo and the Nazis in Germany.

How were the men executed? In Austria, hanging was the favoured method of execution. In Germany, executioners used the guillotine. Decapitation was the only method used for almost a century. In Prussia, the hand-held axe was the traditional method. Hitler decreed the axe should be replaced everywhere by the guillotine. The death penalty was reserved above all to the Communists.

On 24 April 1934, Hitler had removed cases of treason from the normal courts, and transferred them to a special People's Court. From June 1936 on, Otto-Georg Thierack presided over this court. He was a long-term Nazi, the former Minister of Justice in Saxony in 1933, and the former President of the Reich Supreme Court. He was a figure of major significance in the judicial system during the war.

On 2 August of 1934, all the soldiers of the *Reichswehr* had to swear loyalty to Hitler as the *Oberste Befehlshaber*, the highest in command.

*The Concentration Camps*

In the early months of 1933, The German Government hastily erected 70 concentration camps. A huge system of surveillance and control of society was brought into being, to track, arrest and punish anyone who opposed the Nazi regime, including more than a third of the electorate who had voted for leftist parties in at least 3 free German elections! Soon, about 45,000 prisoners suffered sentences in these camps. In the period of from August 1933 to April 1934, most of the camps were closed down. By May 1934, remained only 1/4<sup>th</sup> as many prisoners in the camps as there had been a year before. The great purge had already been finished by then!

Heinrich Himmler appointed most of the commanders of the camps. For instance, the commandant of the Dachau Camp was Theodor Eiche. The Dachau camp was Draconian to the extreme. The hardest psychological burden to wear for most inmates, was the uncertainty of the duration of their sentence. Most of the guards were malicious, bad, brutal, inferior human beings, who compensated their justified sense of inferiority by venting their anger on the prisoners. They were hateful people. On 4 July 1934, Himmler appointed Eiche to Inspector of the Reich's concentration camps. He obtained the top rank of SS Group leader alongside Heydrich, the Chief of the Security Service. Himmler brought the concentration camps under the control of the SS in 1934 and 1935.

In February 1936, the SS and the Gestapo were charged, not only with preventing any resistance from former Communists and Social Democrats, but also with crushing the workers' resistance and the purging of the German race of undesirable elements. Habitual criminals, asocials and deviants were seen as such undesirable elements. The aim was to purge the German race! With time, there was a sharp increase of inmate deaths. In the camps raged typhus epidemics, especially in the winter of 1938 to 1939. About 57% of the Dachau prisoners were not classified as political enemies. The camps were regarded as an instrument of racial and social engineering.

By 1937, only 4 concentration camps remained in Germany: Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald and Lichtenberg, the last being a camp for women. This may have reflected the growing sense of security after having successfully crushed all left-wing opposition in the country.

In 1933, several hundreds of so-called 'professional criminals' had been arrested by the police. In September of 1933 also, a 'Reich Beggars Week' had been organised, during which about 100,000 vagrants and mendicants were arrested by the police and sent to concentration camps. On 14 December 1937, a decree allowed for the arrest and confinement in concentration camps of everyone defined as 'asocial' by the regime and its agencies. No trial was needed! 'Asocial' meant anyone whose attitude did not fit in with the Aryan racial community: gypsies, prostitutes, pimps, tramps, beggars, hooligans, and so on. On 13 June 1938, the Criminal Police launched on orders of Heydrich a series of raids, at the end of which more than 10,00 people were arrested. The people classified as asocial swelled then the more or less depleted concentration camps to massive overcrowding. In the summer of 1938, more than 6,000 people were taken to Sachsenhausen and in August 1938, the inmates had grown to over 8,000 in this one camp. In Buchenwald, more than 8,900 of the about 13,000

preventive prisoners were classified as asocials. End 1939, about 21,000 people were imprisoned in concentration camps. The inmates worked. Sachsenhausen made bricks for Hitler's planned transformation of the Elbe port. In Mauthausen and in later Flossenbürg, the prisoners had to work in quarries.

The concentration camps used a system to distinguish between the categories of inmates, by the colours of an inverted triangle on his or her striped camp uniform. Black was for an asocial, green for a professional criminal, blue for a returning Jewish emigrant, red for political prisoners, violet for Jehovah's Witnesses, and a yellow triangle under their category badge, the Star of David, for Jews.

Life in the camps was very brutal. All prisoners were at the mercy of SS men, and suffered from bad treatments. In the late 1930s, the camps had become institutions beyond the law. What happened in the camps was meant to be shrouded in mystery. Actually, they were a shameless horror. The guards were poorly educated men, rough and brutal. A camp such as Dachau, was guarded by 6,000 SS men, Buchenwald by 3,000 SS men.

### The Nazi Regime and Propaganda, Film, Radio, Newspapers and Literature

Each local branch of the Nazi Party had about 8 cells per 50 blocks, controlling about 50 households in each block. The men overlooking one block each, had appointed helpers to cover each group of houses. In all, there were then 200,000 political leaders and 2 million 'Block Wardens' in Germany. Often, these were the first to contact in cases of denunciations. They exercised close surveillance over known dissenters. They even wore a uniform, of brown-gold colour with red collar epaulettes. They came to be known as the 'Golden Pheasants'. Thus, the Nazi terror machine reached down to the smallest units of everyday life and work. German society was now a society engaged in self-surveillance.

On 14 July 1933, a new law had turned Germany into a one-party state. The Government was allowed by law to consult the people in particular politics, on its own initiative. These were mainly propaganda exercises. In the Weimar Republic, the power to start referendums or plebiscites, lay with the people. Within a few months of the coming to power of Hitler and the NSDAP, the Nazis had deprived the German people from virtually all basic human rights. The Constitution and the added laws formed no protection anymore against the state, and from the people who managed it. Hitler and the NSDAP simply wanted the people to endorse their wicked, totally wrong and evil ideals of society. For that, the Nazis had to change people's minds to create a new German culture that reflected only their values and no other. For that, the Nazis needed an overbearing propaganda system.

Goebbels announced in March of 1934 that the NSDAP had forced a revolution of the mind, the transformation of the German nation into one people. The era of individualism had been destroyed, and the individual would be replaced by one community of people, led by the Führer. On 13 March, Hitler wanted a Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda. Goebbels became its leader or Minister, and he won a seat in the Cabinet with it. Goebbel's Ministry got staffed by young ideologues.

Hitler and Goebbels sought the constantly renewed mass enthusiasm for the ideas of the *Third Reich*, the *Mein Kampf* ideas, with the almost hysterical adulation of the leader. The fact that this leader did not have the intellectual capabilities of clear and wise judgement, had never succeeded in any higher studies, had even be refused by the artistic academy of the visual arts, seemed to bother no one. The Nazi propaganda spread and emphasised the leader cult.

An example of grandiose propaganda was the Party Rally of the NSDAP in 1934 in Nürnberg. A special railway station had been built to bring the people to the place, a huge field formerly for Zeppelin balloons to take off. The rituals were elaborate and grand. Leni Riefenstahl, a cinema actress in which Hitler had seen a genius film director for what he needed, put the spectacle on celluloid film. The name of her film would be *Triumph des Willens*, the Triumph of the Will, a title chosen by Hitler himself. Yes, Germany could conquer the world, if only it had the will to do so. It was the only film made in Germany on Hitler, but it said all. Goebbels had protested against it. In his view, propaganda was the most effective when it was indirect. Riefenstahl's film was as direct as possibly could!

Other films were made in that period, such as the 'SA-man Brand', a film on the young hero Horst Wessel, later changed into the title 'Hans Westmar, one of many'. Such films were about the period of struggle, when the Nazis sought power. Those films were no longer appropriate in times when the NSDAP had consolidated its rule. Other names of the new films were Marlene Dietrich, Fritz Lang, Emil Jennings, Gerhart Hauptmann the playwright, and also Thea von Harboer. The singer Zarah Leander with the deep voice, the actor Theodor Loos, the directors Veit Harlan and Hans Albers. Albers was married to a Jewish wife, who, however, stayed all the time in Switzerland. For the Nazi films, there was no international market. Foreign sales of German films fell due to the increasing political content. The most intelligent actors and directors would leave Germany early, first of all the idol Marlene Dietrich. They travelled to Hollywood! In June 1933, the Nazis founded therefore the Film Credit Bank, which funded by 1936 most of the larger films. On 16 February the Nazis decreed a Reich Cinema Law, which included pre-censorship of scripts. This was followed in 1936 by a newsreel law, allowing the Nazis to prescribe the propaganda content of news.

The Nazis installed a Reich Radio, with news of their own. They devised cheap radio sets, the so-called *Volksempfänger*, on which only German radio stations could be captured, not for instance the BBC. Over half a million of these sets were already made in 1933. By 1939, about 70% of all households owned at least one such wireless radio.

The party main ideologue was Alfred Rosenberg. He became the leader of the *Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur*, which had already 2,100 members in January 1932, and 38,000 in October 1933. Rosenberg's *Fighting League* had been renamed to the National Socialist Cultural Community, though it was dissolved in 1937. Goebbels had here won a battle from Rosenberg.

In the domain of music, Bernhard Rust, the newly installed Minister of Education, organised a panel or committee of senior musicians, including the director Wilhelm Furtwängler, to control and censure the musical events in Berlin. In the 1930s, more than 2,000 artists, writers, musicians, film actors and film directors, architects and journalists, left Germany to



flee the Nazi control on their work. The Nazis did not enrich German culture; they made it poorer of its greatest proponents of culture.

The Labour Organisations of Germany, mostly Socialist and Communist movements, were integrated in the *Nazi Labour Front*, headed by Robert Ley. It was soon purged of dissidents, of non-conformists, of Jews, of all people the regime regarded as socially undesirable in German culture and mass media.

In the news media, the most reputed journal of Germany was the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. It had survived, independently of the greater press empires of Alfred Hugenberg, Mosse and the Ullstein families. On 11 March 1933, its offices were invaded by a group of SA men. The paper bowed deep to the Propaganda Ministry and its original editorial staff resigned. All Jewish collaborators were dismissed. On 1 June 34, the Jewish family of the paper's founder, Leopold Sonnemann, sold its shares under pressure to the IG Farben concern. IG Farben then owned 98% of the shares in the paper. IG Farben's leading figure was Carl Bosch. After 1936, the paper served the regime. In 1938, IG Farben secretly sold the paper to the Nazi Party's Eher Publishing House. On 20 April 1939, the NSDAP Party's press Mogul, Max Amann, formally and triumphantly presented the *Frankfurter Zeitung* to Hitler as a birthday present. Its writers, among which Walter Dirks, Paul Sähle, Dolf Sternberger and Otto Suhr, who had Jewish wives, had all left by then. The readership of the newspaper declined, until it was closed down in 1943.

The Nazi regime had created in 1933 the *Reich Press Chamber* under Max Amann. All cultural domains had been brought under such organisations, now called 'Chambers'. Amann was the head of the Eher Publishing House, that took over an increasing number of newspapers for the Nazis. Other newspapers but the Nazi papers declined rapidly. In 1934, the *Berliner Tageblatt* fell from 130,000 to less than 75,000 exemplars a day. The *Vossische Zeitung* fell from 80,000 exemplars to under 50,000 exemplars a day. The Nazi newspapers of a circulation of 782,121 exemplars grew to 86 papers with a circulation of over 3 million a day by end 1933. In 1934, the Nazis urged out the Jewish owners from the Ullstein Verlag and the Nazis bought the publishing firm of the Ullstein. In 1935, the *Reich Press Chamber* banned all confessional or special interest group papers from press ownership, closing the papers that had become financially unsound or owned by Jews. In contrast, the Nazi Party's own daily was still the Racial Observer, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. It sold to more than one million copies a day and its Editor was Wilhelm Weiss.

The head of the *Nazi Press Bureau* was one Otto Dietrich. Dietrich and Goebbels extended their control over the contents of the German newspapers. They decreed a new Editors' Law, written by Dietrich. By this law, all editors were personally responsible for the content of their papers. The proprietors' power of dismissal was removed. The rules governing the content of the newspapers was defined. The editors could not print anything that might weaken the strength of the German *Reich* abroad or at home, that undermined the community will of the German people, the German defence, its culture and economy, or which injured the religious sensibilities of others.

Membership in the *Reich Association of the German Press* was made compulsory, subject to revocation if a journalist contravened a code of conduct enforced by professional justice courts. Without the membership card, no journalist could write in a German newspaper. By

1935, about 1,300 Jewish, Social Democrat and Left-Liberal journalists had been barred from working. The *German News Office* published instructions on what could be printed in the papers. Besides this, on 24 April 1935, were made public the 'Amann Regulations', which allowed for the revocation of the licence to print of any paper that was deemed to exercising 'unfair competition', or doing 'moral harm' to the readership. Yet, an openly antisemitic paper was *Der Stormer* of Julius Streicher, which contained many untrue stories telling supposed atrocities committed by the Jews, often clearly pornographic and therefore read, and never revoked.

In literature, the style at that moment was called Expressionism. It was the rejection of naturalism in favour of the direct communication of emotions from the soul. Expressionism avoided the realistic depiction of outward appearances. There were many writers in Germany, some of whom were Communists, some pro-Hitler, many others not. Membership of the *Reich Chamber for Literature* was compulsory for all writers to be published and to speak in public. It was compulsory too for all publishing houses, booksellers and everybody connected with the book trade. A decree of 4 February 1933 allowed any book to be seized and forbidden that tended to endanger public security and order. A Supreme Censorship Authority for dirty and trashy Literature was based in Leipzig, against '*Schund und Schmutzliteratur*'. By the end of 1933, over a thousand titles had been banned by various institutions. A blacklist existed of forbidden books. Some foreign books too were forbidden, with even works of Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott! A head of the Reich Literature Chamber was Hans Johst, a pro-Nazi playwright. But from the mid-1930s on, much literature was not overtly Nazi literature. People chose for themselves still what they wanted to read. Great bestsellers remained Trygve Gulbrandsen's novels on the Bjørndal Family, and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*.

For the theatre had been arranged a *Reich Theatre Chamber*. President was the *Reich Literary and Artistic Theatre* Director Rainer Schlösser. In theatre programmes stood a 4 to 1 ratio of German plays to foreign plays. The Theatre Chamber harassed and in some cases closed own amateur companies, in the economic interest of the professionals, who were still plagued by unemployment as a result of the depression. As Goebbels was careful to not carry his cultural resolution so far as to stifle theatres by ideologic correctness, even the least conformist theatres could mount new, critical or even radical plays, so that popular demand did not drop drastically.

Some of the most fanatical Nazi art gallery owners and museum directors organised shows of the modernist work they had withdrawn from their grand exhibitions: works of Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Franz Marc and August Macke, Karl Schmidt-Rotluff, Emil Nolde, Alexei Jawlenski and Vassily Kandinski. Some of these artists emigrated from Germany. In 1938, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner committed suicide in Switzerland, Max Beckmann left for Amsterdam. Directors of the German National Gallery were dismissed: Ludwig Justi was dismissed in 1933, his successor Alois Schardt in 1935, and his successor Eberhard Hanfstaengl in 1936.

On 27 November 1936, Goebbels ordered a decree banning art criticism. The decree merely allowed art reporting, limited to simple descriptions. Goebbels organised a 'First Exhibition of degenerate Art' in München, entitled 'German degenerate Art since 1910.' The

organisation of this exhibition he entrusted to Adolf Ziegler, the President of the *Reich Chamber of the Visual Arts*. It opened on 19 July of 1937. About 690 works were badly displayed, poorly lit, jammed on the walls, placed high. The most important criterium for the selection of works was not aesthetic, but racial and political. The exhibition knew a great success. It was very popular. By end November, it had attracted over 2 million visitors. The exhibition also showed works from foreign painters, such as of Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Oskar Kokoschka, Paul Klee and Vassily Kandinski.

On 31 May 1938, a law for the *Confiscation of Products of degenerate Art* was decreed. It legalised the seizure of degenerate artwork from galleries and museums, as well as from private collections. The decision over the works was delivered by a committee, presided by Adolf Ziegler and Hitler's photographer Heinrich Hoffmann. In total, 5,000 paintings, 12,000 graphical works from about 100 galleries and museums were seized. More than 3,000 artworks were sold via the Galerie Fischer in Lucerne, Switzerland. Further sales took place in Zürich, in transactions from August 1939 to 1942. In all, over 12,100 art pieces were removed and held in a warehouse of Berlin. On 20 March of 1939, over 1,000 oil paintings and over 3,800 graphic works were burned in the courtyard of the central fire station of Berlin.

The *Reich Chamber for Architecture* expelled Jewish artists from the profession. Buildings of the *Third Reich* were to be built for permanence, durability. A well-liked architect was Paul Ludwig Troost. Troost died in January 1934. The new Reich Chancellery, an example of Nazi gigantism, was inaugurated in 1939. It was built by Albert Speer, who would later become a Minister in Hitler's Cabinet. It had a main gallery, twice as long as the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Another example of the Nazi style was the Nürnberg Party Rally grounds. The Zeppelin and Mars fields there could hold 250,000 seated places and 500,000 people standing! Albert Speer was appointed to General Building Inspector for the Capital. Hitler thought of a new name for Berlin: Germania! Speer drew plans for the new Berlin.

By 1935, the artists experimenting in modernist architecture, were expelled. Mies van der Rohe, for instance, emigrated to New York.

In music, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels established the *Reich Music Chamber*. All Nazi committees and organisation overseeing the arts were called by that name of 'Chambers'. The Chamber's President was Richard Strauss, who was 70 years of age. Strauss was an experienced cultural politician.

Strauss disliked Bruno Walter, the main music director of Germany. Walter was banned. Also banned was Fritz Busch and the anti-Fascist conductor Arturo Toscanini. Toscanini had refused for instance, to conduct at the Bayreuth Festival. Vice-President of the Music Chamber became the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler. Nevertheless, both Strauss and Furtwängler did not hesitate to work with Jews, such as Stefan Zweig. On 6 July 1935, Strauss resigned from the Chamber. His work 'Silent Woman' was withdrawn after 2 performances, and then banned for deviation from the *Reich*. Hans Severus Ziegler staged an exhibition of degenerate music in May 1938. Considered as Jewish or too modernist composers were Mendelssohn, Heine, Denzö da Ponte (the librettist of Mozart), Igor Strawinsky, Bela Bartok (who was anti-Fascist), Anton von Webern, and Alban Berg, some of the now greatest names in German music. Also, the critic Hans-Heinz Stuckenschmidt and

the conductor Erich Kleiber were put aside. On 4 December 1934, Goebbels forced Furtwängler to resign from his state posts at the Opera, the Berliner Philharmoniker, but Furtwängler continued to conduct at times the Berliner Philharmoniker. In 1938, Paul Hindemith emigrated to Switzerland, and then left for the USA. His wife too was half Jewish, and had been a collaborator of Bertolt Brecht. Carl Orff composed the grand 'Carmina Burana' and remained pro-Nazi.

Wagner, the preferred composer of Hitler, had definitely been antisemitic. He had written texts in that sense. His wife Cosima gathered an antisemitic circle after his death. From 1933 on, Hitler attended the Bayreuth Festival of Wagner's works, his music-dramas for a 10-day period each year. He poured money into the opera house. On Hitler's express insistence, the yearly Nürnberg Rally of the NSDAP began with a gala performance of Wagner's *Meistersinger von Nürnberg*!

In 1939, Alfred Rosenberg had all but abandoned his interest in the cultural scene. His influence in the cultural sphere had declined. He had turned his interest to Foreign Policy.

Jewish composers and their music remained black-listed in Germany. For instance, the music of Georges Gershwin. Jazz clubs were raided by the SA more frequently in the years after 1935. Jazz rhythms in music could easily be recognised, and were damned as inappropriate.

In the Schwabian town of Trossingen was established a firm called Hohner. It produced mouth organs, but then from 20 to 22 million pieces a year, more than half the total world production. Almost all of its mouth-organs were exported to the USA. Already in 1931, the harmonica had been banned from Prussian schools as bringing about vulgar and amateurish music.

Nazi culture glorified power, which was most obvious in its architecture. Yet, culture was no longer a privilege of the elite. It was intended to penetrate every area of German society. Then it became reduced to little more than the celebration of power and an instrument of propaganda.

The Propaganda Ministry of Goebbels aimed at banning individual thinking and feeling, to mould German society into a single, obedient and disciplined mass. Nazism imbued the German thought and language with the metaphors of battle, terms such as the battle for jobs, the struggle for existence, the fight for culture. The German language became even more strident and militaristic. But the public soon found the never-tiring regime's demands for constant acclamation of the NSDAP aggressive ideals too wearisome. Even the Nürnberg Party Rallies lost by repetition and insistence much of their power to inspire.

### *Nazism and the Churches*

The Nazis in general were no religious people. They didn't like the many Churches that divided Germany. Most of them would have preferred one national religion, with one State-controlled Church. A king of Prussia had nurtured similar feelings when he created the Prussian Evangelic Church out of the Lutheran and Calvinistic Protestant Churches. That experiment had only succeeded partly. The now German Evangelical Church nevertheless

seemed the best alternative for the religious unification of the German people. The Church owed no allegiance to any foreign body such as the Roman Catholic papacy. Hitler may have nurtured the ambition of converting Evangelism into a new kind of National Church. This could be a powerful vehicle for the nationalist and racial doctrines of the Nazis.

Nazi supporters founded in May 1932 already a pressure group called the *German Christians*. Members of this group won a victory in the Evangelical Church elections of 23 July 1933. The man who won most of the votes to lead the Church was one Ludwig Müller. The group was against the influence of the Jews in Germany, rejected Christian cosmopolitanism, and refused racial mixing.

The *German Christians* gave the Nazis the identification of German Protestantism with the nation. Reich Bishop Müller already merged the Protestant Youth with over 1 million members into the Hitler Jugend! On 13 November 1933, 20,000 *German Christians* assembled in the Sports Palace of Berlin, to demand the sacking of all pastors who had not yet declared in favour of the Nazi regime. At that moment, about 40% of all German Protestant Christian pastors were member of the NSDAP. In November 1934, The NSDAP created the *Provisional Management of the German Evangelical Church*. The Evangelical Church, now a state institution, adopted the Aryan Paragraphs in the law. They had to dismiss 18 pastors, to whom the rules applied

In April of 1933, the Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke out in defence of equal status for Jewish converts. In Church election, he led the opposition to the German Christians. He worked with Martin Niemöller. They founded the *Pastors' Emergency League*. Of these, no more than 5% were Nazi members. They organised Bible lectures and Bible study groups. Most of the members were women. Another opposition group against the *Reich Church* was the *Confessing Church*, which repudiated the Aryan paragraphs in the law.

Hitler and the leading Nazis then considered religion too sensitive an area to back *Reich Bishop Müller's* politics with real force. Hitler reluctantly abandoned gradually his ambitions of creating a synthesis between the Evangelical Church and Nazism. By the end of 1934, the attempt of the Nazis to form a synthesis between German Protestantism and Nazism had failed. The regime had not succeeded in bringing the churches to heel. There would be no official State Church of the *Third Reich*! Nevertheless, In July 1935, Hitler created a new Ministry for Church Justice. A former Prussian Minister for Justice, Hans Kerl, headed the Reich Ministry for Churches and Religion from early 1935 until 1939, when it too was dissolved.

Kerl initiated repression against the Confessing Church. Theological students were ordered to join Nazi organisations. They were forbidden to teach in schools. Pastors were banned from preaching. The Nazis arrested Niemöller. In his trial, however, the judges acquitted him of all serious charges. He was fired on 2 March 1938. The Gestapo had been waiting for him. Hitler had personally ordered his arrest. He was sent to the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. In the camp, he persevered and went as far as even to repudiate his earlier antisemitic views. He was frequently beaten in prison, but moved in 1941, together with 3 Catholic priests, to Dachau, where they enjoyed at least some improved conditions.

As for the Catholics, about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the German population still, the Church remained owing institutional allegiance to the Popes of Rome. Heydrich, for instance, considered the Jews and

the Catholics, acting also through political institutions such as the Centre Party, or its Bavarian equivalent, *the Bavarian People's Party*, as the two principal enemies of Nazism. As the Catholic Church rejected racism, it was for Nazism subversive of the racial and spiritual integrity of the German people. Thus, for the Nazis, it was of prime importance to reduce the Catholic Church in Germany as quickly as possible.

In July 1933 had been concluded a Concordat between the Nazi regime and the Papacy. The Nazis promised to protect the Catholic lay institutions, in return for the Popes' commitment to abstain from involvement in politics. Thus, The Catholic Community in Germany had agreed to abandon the Centre Party, which duly dissolved itself largely, as well as a few other political organisations, such as the Catholic Trade Unions. In return, the Catholic Church expected a large number of other lay organisation to be allowed to maintain their independence from Nazism.

But on 19 September 1933, the Nazis began to seize the property of these Catholic lay organisations, forcing them to close down. Catholic newspapers were forbidden. The then leading figures of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Bertram in Breslau and Cardinal Michael Faulhaber, began to protest. They objected to attacks on non-Aryan Catholics. Cardinal Pacelli, the Secretary of State under Pope Pius XI, complained to the German Foreign Office. Nothing more was done.

The leading Nazis were well aware of the danger in attacking deep-rooted institutions and traditions in the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, they moved on.

The Catholic Youth Organisations refused to dissolve themselves for *the Hitler Jugend*. The *Hitler Jugend* therefore was unable to make headway and grow in strongly Catholic areas of the country. Baldur von Schirach then encouraged *Hitler Youth* units to pick fights with the members of their rival Catholic Youth groups. In 1934, during the *Night of the Long Knives*, the SS shot Erich Klausener, the General Secretary of the Catholic Youth Sports Association. Also got killed Adalbert Probst, the National Director of the Catholic Actions. He was killed in his office in Berlin. In München was shot Fritz Gerlich, the editor of the Catholic newspaper *Der Gerade Weg*, a critic of the Nazi Regime.

Alfred Rosenberg, the leading Nazi ideologue, publicly rejected many Catholic doctrines, such as the immortality of the soul, and Christ's redemption of mankind from original sin. In his opinion, Catholicism was nothing but the creation of Jewish clericalism. His books had been placed therefore on the Catholic index.

On 19 March of 1935, Clemens von Galen, the Catholic Bishop of Münster, launched a fierce attack on one of Rosenberg's books. About 20,000 Catholics came in the streets to hold a procession and cheer the bishop. Von Galen wrote to Hitler to complain about attacks on the clergy by Nazis such as Baldur von Schirach. The counter-measures from the Nazis were tougher than before, issued by Himmler and the Gestapo against Catholic lay institutions. Also, Goebbels and the Propaganda Ministry sent a flood of accusations against Catholic lay institutions. The tactic largely failed. Then, the protests against Rosenberg's anti-Catholic diatribes grew. The people protested against the removal of all religious symbols from schools. Catholic priests refused the absolution to girls who joined the League of German Girls, an institution created by the *Hitler Jugend*. Parishers began to resign from the NSDAP in Oldenburg. Cardinal Pacelli, the Secretary of State in the Vatican, sent lengthy complaints

to the German Ministers. The Nazi regime largely ignored the protests. They continued the war against Catholicism in the cultural infrastructure of the Catholic Church. For instance, from 1935 on, the *Reich Theatre Chamber* began to ban Church-sponsored musical and theatre events. From 1937 on, it banned Nativity plays, arguing they were but a form of Catholic propaganda. Goebbels launched a campaign against the alleged corruption in the Church.

In January 1937, a delegation of German bishops and cardinals such as Bertram, Faulhaber and von Galen went to Rome to denounce the Nazis for violating the Concordat. Thereafter, in March of 1937, the Papal encyclique *Mit brennender Sorge*, With burning Worry, was smuggled into Germany and printed. It denounced and condemned the hatred and calumny poured in the Catholic Church by the Nazis. Hitler ordered all copies to be seized. Anyone in possession of it was to be arrested, and further such publications were to be banned.

Himmler and Heydrich escalated even the police harassment of clerics. More than one third of Catholic priests in Germany were subject to some form of disciplining by the police and the official authorities. This went as far as imprisonment of the priests. Many priests were accused and tried for alleged sexual offences. By April 1937, over 1,000 priests, monks and friars were waiting trials in homosexual charges.

By 1938, the majority of Catholic Youth groups had been closed down. They were accused of spreading writings, hostile to the state. More trials followed. The Propaganda Ministry built up a steady campaign to portray the Church as sexually corrupt and unworthy of being entrusted with the education of the young. Goebbels denounced Catholic corrupters as poisoners of the people's soul. The Nazi slogan remained, 'one leader, one people, one school'. By end 1937, all private schools run by the Churches had been closed down or nationalised. The Nazis exercised pressure on parents to sign their children up for Nazi ideological institutions instead of for religious education.

In other ways too, the Nazis harassed the Catholic Church, so that its power and influence diminished. From 1939 on, by order of the Education Ministry, in teacher training colleges, posts in theology that came vacant were no longer filled. By September 1937, Hitler considered the issue of repudiating the Concordat with the Papacy. Finally, he refrained from doing so. Rosenberg continued bringing anti-Christian ideas in the *Hitler Jugend*. The Nazis continued their fierce anti-Christian propaganda. Non-Christians in the Nazi leadership were Erich Ludendorff, Robert Ley, Heinrich Himmler, Alfred Rosenberg, Reinhard Heydrich and Richard Walther Darré. In 1936, the SS men were forbidden to wear uniforms at Church services. In 1939, this decree was extended to all Nazi Party members. The Nazi Regime was determined to reduce, probably even to eliminate, the Churches as centres of alternative ideologies to the Nazis. Not only the Catholic Church suffered from slow, long-term harassments.

The same happened to the Jehovah Witnesses. They had refused to deliver oaths to Hitler. As they were less in number, they could be easier eliminated.

There was a long tradition of antisemitism among the German Catholics and Protestants, so there were little formal protests against the Nazis' acts of antisemitism.

Nazism was no religion. Nazism was not even a coherent set of rules to live by. The basis of its actions was science, but applied according to beliefs, not to facts, prescribed and invented by only a few people. Nazism demanded the continuance of the German race, not of other

racism. They believed in Darwinian competition on earth and in the universe. The German race had to win the competition, and was the best and strongest to realise it. This was the only criterion of morality, which could and did lead to terrible acts. In that set of ideas, there was no place for compassion, empathy, or love. The set of Nazi beliefs was not complete, not coherent, and thus a meagre substitute for any religion. Yet, it pervaded society by terror and violence.

### *The Nazis and Education*

The NSDAP leaders founded the *National Socialist Teacher's League* already in 1927, led by Hans Schemm, a former schoolteacher. By end January 1933, the *League* had 12,000 members. The number grew to 220,000 members end 1937, then to about 300,000, practically all schoolteachers in the end. The large Catholic Teachers' League was closed down in 1937.

From 1933 to the end of 1939, the Nazis thus tried to organise all aspects of German life by creating groups of which people had to become members to play any role in society's life. Then, they published decrees on what should be done in that domain, according to Nazi principles.

All this was according to Hitler's ideas on education, eagerly taken on by the other Nazis. Hitler's main theme was that the German people had not to become a people of scholars, for if they were weak and physically degenerate, cowardly pacifists, they would not storm the heavens and they would not win the struggle for survival of the fittest.

Of course, Hitler certainly did not have the profile of a scholar himself. The first purpose of schools for Hitler and the Nazis was therefore to burn the sense of race and social feeling into the instinct and the intellect of pupils, into the heart and brain of the youth. The Nazi educational theorist was Ernst Krieck, and the ideal German boy for Hitler was a slender and supple youth, swift as a greyhound, tough as leather and hard as Krupp steel!

On 30 July 1933, Wilhelm Frick, the Reich Minister of the Interior, issued a directive for schools.

The purpose of History, the decree said, was to teach students that life was always a struggle. Race and blood were central. Only leadership determined the fate of people. Central themes of teaching therefore were courage in fighting, sacrifice of one's life for greater causes, admiration for the *Führer* who always knew best, hatred of one's enemies, who were first and all the Jews.

In Biology, racial teaching and racial hygiene took first place, as well as population policies and the protection of the family.

Physics began to include such themes as ballistics, aerodynamics and radiocommunications. Geography spoke of concepts of home, of race, of living-space, of blood and soil.

Social arithmetic was a new branch to calculate how much it cost society to keep mentally ill persons alive.



Empathy among teachers and pupils were turned into military spirit and drill. Nevertheless, the militarisation of educational life caused increasing disillusion among parents.

On 30 July 1933, a decree of the Education Ministry edited the 'Guidelines for History Text Books'. History had to be taught on the 'concept of heroism in its German form, linked to the idea of leadership'.

The boys had to sing Nazi militaristic texts. They received some form of early military training, and the books they had to read were of the Nazi ideas. Boys had to do parade ground marching. The emphasis on competition and struggle was constant. Debates or discussions were in disfavour, compared to learning how to obey. Military discipline and physical power were emphasised, leading boys to become violent, insolent and aggressive.

In January of 1934, a directive made it compulsory for schools to educate children in the spirit of National Socialism. Propaganda posters for Nazism appeared in schools, and a variety of Nazi festivals had to be celebrated. School heads who remained reluctant, were dismissed from their posts. In 1936 was issued the 'German reading Book' with Nazi texts on how young men and girls should live. Picture books for the very young were introduced, in which the Jews were depicted as devilish, ugly creatures, always dark-haired, lurking in dark places, ready to jump on the unsuspecting blond-haired German children.

Of course, open dissent in schools against such changes were virtually impossible. School management and parents' associations were turned into agencies of Nazi control. Still, increasing numbers of teachers took early retirement or left the profession. In 1936, 1,355 unfilled jobs remained open in elementary schools. In 1938, the number had grown to 3,000. In 1938, class sizes on average increased to 43 pupils per teacher, up from 37 in 1927.

By the summer of 1933 already, just a few months after Hitler taking over power as Chancellor of Germany, the Nazis had dissolved almost all the rival organisations to the *Hitler Jugend*, with the exception of the Catholic Youth Organisations, which took a longer while to close. This was once more an example of how fast the Nazis modified German society to their needs of total control. From July 1936 on, the *Hitler Jugend* had an official monopoly on sports facilities and activities for children younger than 14 years. Later, this was extended for youth up to 18 years. Then, sports facilities were no longer available for non-members. Practically all young children were member of the *Hitler Jugend* by 1939: about 8.7 million boys and girls. On 1 December 1936, the *Hitler Jugend* had become an autonomous organisation, directly accountable to its leader, Baldur von Schirach. On 25 March 1939, membership was made even legally binding from the age of 10 on. Parents could be fired if they failed or refused to enrol their children.

In August 1937, the Reich Education Ministry took central control over the appointment of teachers. The same year, the secondary school system was rationalised in three main branches. One was modern languages and the humanities, a second group on science and technology, the third had a classics-based curriculum. A Reich Examination Office oversaw all educational examinations.

The Nazis also founded elite schools.

On 20 April 1933, Bernhard Rust, the Reich Education Minister, founded three so-called *Napolas*, standing for *National Political Educational Institutions*. These were boarding

schools, on the example of the Military Cadet Schools, designed to create a new National Socialist German elite. By 1939, had been established 16 of these *Napolas*. Students were selected especially according to racial criteria, and the applicants had to demonstrate courage and aggression in character. The *Napolas* were run by SS and SA officers, who had little educational experience, but they had a parallel staff of educators for the non-militaristic subjects. The man who was in charge of the daily management of the *Napolas* was Joachim Haupt, but when it became clear he was a homosexual, he was dismissed and the *Napolas* were transferred to within the SS.

On 15 January of that year 1937, Baldur von Schirach and Robert Ley together, issued an announcement for the foundation of the *Adolf Hitler Schools*, secondary schools run by the *Hitler Jugend*. Thereby, they overrode Minister Bernhard Rust. The first such school opened in April. Most of the students lived in the boarding schools of the organisation. There were no courses on religion, no examinations, but regular Examination Weeks. Children from 12 years on could enter these schools. One such school was to be erected per Nazi Party Region. In 1938, they had only about 600 pupils and until 1941, the schools depended on rented premises in the Order Castle of Sonthofen. These Order castles, or *Ordnungsburgen* in German, were intended exclusively to teach students of the Adolf Hitler Schools. Three such castles existed, high up in remote country districts. One was the Falkenburg on Lake Röss in Pomerania, the other was the Vogelsang Castle in the Eiffel Hills near the Rhine, and the last was the already mentioned Sonthofen Castle in the Bavarian Allgäu. The intentions to build 2 more castles was never realised.

The *Adolf Hitler Schools* and the *Order Castles* did not admit female students. The *Napolas* did.

In January 1934 then, opened the *National Socialist High School*, founded by the SA and its leader Röhm on the Starnberger Lake. It was a private school, renamed by Rudolph Hess on 8 August 1939 the *Reich School of the NSDAP*, the most successful of the Nazi elite schools. It was housed in 40 villas.

Nevertheless, none of these so-called elite schools could match the standing and excellence of the long-established academic German grammar schools. In 1940, there were only 6,000 boys and 173 girls in the *Napolas*, the *Adolf Hitler Schools* and the *Reich School* together! Six times as many pupils studied in other residential schools. The goal of the education in the elite schools was the formation of character. The educational standards of the special schools declined markedly by 1939.

### *The anti-intellectualism of the Nazis*

Bernhard Rust, the Nazi Education Minister, was a rather weak man, indecisive, and fundamentally uninterested in the universities. Building strong character was the first target of Nazi education, not intellect.

The lead in the Nazification of university life was taken by the *Nazi Students League*. Leader of this movement from 1936 on was Gustav Adolf Scheel. All existing student organisations were incorporated in this *Nazi League*. It had the right to appoint its own leaders and run its own affairs. In 1933, less than 5% of the German university students were member of it, about 5,000 students. Many of these were also members of the SA. The students of the

universities overall, had now to follow a compulsory military training, which led to a drastic fall in academic standards. Yet, in October 1934, after the tragic events of the *Night of the Long Knives*, the SA was effectively removed from the universities and training by the SA was replaced by less demanding sports education. As to the ancient fraternities, Hitler gave a speech in June of 1935, saying he expected these old, conservative organisations to wither away as the remnants of a bygone aristocratic age. Still later, the Nazis openly condemned the fraternities.

In the *Third Reich*, the number of students in the universities fell spectacularly, from in 1931 about 104,000 students to in 1939 merely about 41,000 students. The same decline happened in the technical universities, as from 1931 of 22,000 students they fell in 1939 to only 12,000 students. The greatest decline was in law and in the humanities. But students in economics augmented from 6% to 8% from 1931 to 1939, and in medicine from 30% to 50%. These two disciplines were the greatest winners.

The regime also placed restrictions on women students in universities. For Hitler, the main purpose of educating girls should be to train them as mothers! Also, on 12 January 1934, the Interior Ministry under Wilhelm Frick decreed a Law against the overcrowding of German Higher Education Institution and Schools. By this law, no more than 10% of the number of male students in grammar schools were allowed for female students. Girls were sent to domestic education. In 1937, as the secondary schools were reorganised, the grammar schools were not allowed anymore for girls, no Latin and Greek for girls, although knowledge of Latin was a requirement of entry into the universities. No wonder then, the number of female students in universities fell to one third by 1939. Moreover, from 1938 on, all girls graduated in the university entrance examinations, were obliged to take a 'domestic' year.

From the spring of 1934 on, 6 months of labour service were deemed obligatory for all university entrants. By then, first and second year university students had already to serve a 10-week period in a labour camp. The students also had to spend several weeks each year on work in special camps or farms, in their vacation period, a time during which normally they would be expected to study and revise their notes. They now had to work in factories or on the lands, or on harvests. The aim of these works in strict military discipline, under much verbal abuse, was supposedly once more, an exercise of character-building, to overcome the snobbery and the intellectual arrogance of the highly educated, probably hard-felt by Hitler. The works were in unskilled physical labour, in building roads, draining marshes, and so on, all on meagre rations. For the students, having to do for so many months of physical labour, working without pay, meant a world turned upside down. It did not create solidarity with other social classes, but bitterness and resentment. In 1939, students of universities had to work in the harvests on order of Heinrich Himmler, as Polish seasonal workers in Germany were unavailable. Moreover, at the university itself, they had to spend 3 evenings a week on political indoctrination, though these lectures were abolished by 1939. Students usually found lodgings at the homes of private persons. By 1939, however, the Nazis created 232 so-called *Comradeship Houses*, where they lived together during their university days.

New courses at university had names as racial studies, racial hygiene, military history, prehistory, German folklore. These courses were installed on demand of Walter Gross, the Head of the Racial Policy Office of the NSDAP.

The success of the Nazi Party to curb the universities to their own ideology was surprisingly rather limited. No more than 15% or so of the students turned Nazi in their views. Nazi ideology was too crude, too self-contradictory, too irrational, too un-scientific, to have a great impact on intellectuals. Many of the greatest minds in Germany of that time remained reluctant to open to the Nazi ideas. Albert Einstein was a pacifist, a supporter of the Weimar Republic. He emigrated.

Philip Lenard rejected the Nazis view that Einstein's views were but a Jewish fraud. He had received the Nobel Prize in May 1919. Nevertheless, he joined the NSDAP in 1937. His pupil was Wilhelm Röntgen. Johannes Stark was a close friend and associate of Lenard. He was hostile to modern physics. Minister Frick appointed him to the presidency of the Imperial Institute of Physics and Technology on 1 May 1933, and later for one year even to President of the *German Research Community*, which distributed large sums of Government research funds. But Lenard and Stark could only fill about 6 out of 81 physics chairs at the universities! And in 1936, Johannes Stark was removed from the presidency of the *German Research Community*.

Lenard and Stark together campaigned against Werner Heisenberg, a Nobel Prize winner for his work in Quantum Mechanics in 1932 and Professor of Theoretical Physics at Leipzig University in 1927. Heisenberg wanted to have the prestigious Chair of Theoretical Physics at München, but Lenard and Stark campaigned against the appointment, and thereby damaged Heisenberg's work. A public response of Heisenberg was signed by no less than 75 leading physicists. But on 1 December 1939, the chair went to Wilhelm Müller, an aerodynamics expert. Müller wrote a book, edited in 1936, with the name *Jews and Science*, in which he had attacked relativity theory as a Jewish trick for stupid people. Heisenberg had the chance to know quite well Heinrich Himmler's family. Himmler cleared Heisenberg's name in July 1938. The National Socialists in general nurtured a direct suspicion for abstraction and theoretical thinking, comparable maybe to the official revulsion for what they called degenerate art.

In November of 1938, Hitler launched a diatribe against intellectuals. No wonder, he was not an intellectual either, and had never started university studies. Hitler said intellectuals were unreliable, useless, dangerous, constantly critical, and showed an irreducible individualism, combined with no solidarity with the masses. One could read also in *Mein Kampf* how Hitler held intellectuals in contempt. Yet, he was now the *Führer* of Germany! No wonder then, that under the *Third Reich*, Germany's universities knew a radical decline. Student numbers fell, leading scientists and other scholars had been dismissed and often replaced by less smart people, many teaching positions remained unfilled. As a result, the number of young males graduating from high-schools that joined the army, grew from 2% in 1933 to 20% in 1935. The reason for this was the huge expansion of the professional army, and the growing number of prestigious, well-paid posts in the army.

Ultimately, everywhere in the educational system, the impact of the Nazis on education was practically disastrous. The Nazis saw the educational system as a means of inculcating the

young with their own view of the world, and at the same time as a means for preparing the young for a new war. This pushed aside notions such as freedom of mind, critical intelligence, or pure research as a whole.

At that time, the Scientific Research Community in Germany was still excellent, probably the best in the world, and organised in two large institutes, the *German Research Community* and the *Kaiser Wilhelm Society*. These guaranteed that scientific research did not collapse altogether in Germany.

In 1936, Heisenberg and his colleagues secured the removal of Stark from the presidency of the German Research Community, because of his hostility to theoretical physics. His obstinacy was hampering German war-relevant research.

Otto Hahn and Lise Meitner discovered nuclear fission in 1938. Others discovered the nerve gas Sarin, the jet propulsion engine, the electron microscope, the electronic computer, cold steel extrusion, aerial infrared photography, tape recorders, X-Ray tubes, colour film processing, intercontinental ballistic missile, and the first television broadcast strong enough to reach out beyond the planet, was Hitler's speech at the opening of the 1936 Summer Olympic Games.

As for the science of History, there were still excellent historians in Germany, such as Hermann Oncken and Johannes Haller, who insisted history was a search for the truth, not a very welcome word for the Nazis, who twisted history as it suited them. The *Reich Institute for the History of the New Germany* was led by the Nazi Walter Franck and research into the Jewish question was led by Alexander von Müller, who had been associated with Hitler already in München in the 1920s. In 1935, von Müller had taken over as editor the prestigious German *Historisches Zeitschrift* from the Liberal Friedrich Meineke. The historians organised their annual Congress of Historians, but those ended in 1937, as no scholar still bothered to attend. One of the grander historians was the Freiburg University Professor Gerhard Ritter. Ritter was an army officer who had fought at the Somme in World War I. He was a patriot, but stood squarely on his feet. He was no antisemitic and deeply mistrusted the populism of the Nazi politicians. He was critical of many aspects of Nazi ideology. Nevertheless, his books served the usual Nazi themes of German nationhood and heroism, such as told in the lives of the great German heroes of the past.

In Theology, the Protestant and Catholic theologian had continued bitter quarrels over religious themes since ever. At the Bonn University, Karl Barth was the guiding spirit. In April of 1933, the faculty got a new dean, Christian Emil Pfennigsdorf. He fired or transferred 10 out of his faculty's 14 members, and replaced them by his own supporters. As a result, his faculty virtually ran out of students! In 1939, in the Theology Faculty, 8 out of 12 chairs remained unfilled. Then, 2 new professors came from München, where the Nazis had closed down the theology faculty.

In 1933, Hitler appointed Fritz Lens to the new chair of Racial Hygiene at Berlin University, the first such chair in Germany. In racial hygiene, the quality of the professors was often poor.

In Medicine, from 1936 on, the leader of the *Reich Physicians' Chamber* was Gerhard Wagner, a close associate of Rudolph Hess. By 1938, there was such a shortage of qualified medical chairs, that the Ministry of Education had to ask retiring professors to stay in office. The idea that racially inferior people could legitimately be used as objects for medical experimentation, began slowly to make its way in Germany.

When the Pathologist Gerhard Domagk won the Nobel Prize for Medicine, for his development of Sulphur drugs to fight bacterial infections, he was not even allowed by the Nazis to accept it.

### *Economy and Employment*

In the German economy and in technology, the main idea, introduced at the February 1933 Motor Show in Berlin, was the construction of the *Autobahnen*, the German highways. Originally it was an Italian idea, but Hitler took it up. On 30 June of that year, Hitler appointed Fritz Todt to oversee the building of the new motorways. Todt had also persuaded Hitler to the idea.

Todt was the leader of the Party's *Fighting League of German Architects and Engineers*. He was appointed as Chief Technology Advisor in the office of Hitler's deputy Rudolph Hess. It may have seemed a strange idea at the beginning, for even in 1935, only 1.6% of the German population owned a car. This figure was 4.9% for France, 4.5% for Britain, and 4.2% for Denmark. Compare this to 20.5% for the USA! Still, motor car production doubled in Germany from 1932 to 1933, and again from 1934 to 1935. By 1938, Germany's vehicle production was growing faster than in any other European country. Nevertheless, the largest transport providers remained the railways. The Nazis obtained the support of the famous racing-car engineer Ferdinand Porsche.

Von Papen immediately fed 300 million *Reichsmark* in the project. Von Schleicher's Ministry poured in 500 million *Reichsmark*. The Nazis overall increased the amount to 600 million *Reichsmark* in the summer of 1933. Günther Gereke, an economist, had been appointed as the head of the *Reich Commission for Work Creation* in 15 December of 1932. He was enthusiastic for the highway works. In general, the number of jobless people had already at end April of 1933 fallen by over half a million men, as Franz Seldt, the Labour Minister, could announce on 27 April 1933. By the end of 1933, the Government had injected 5,000 million *Reichsmark* for job creation schemes, of which 3,500 million had been spent by early 1936. These had been invested in subsidising house purchases, in house conversions and repairs, to stimulate the construction industry. So, the beginning of the economic recovery in Germany had begun quite naturally in the last months of 1932, without truly innovative Nazi intervention. Unemployment levels had fallen by 1934 to less than half the levels of 1932. The numbers fell below 1 million unemployed in 1937.

The NSDAP's Chief Administrator was Gregor Strasser. He had set up and taken the lead at the head of an *Economic Policy Division* to work out job creation schemes for the future. On 1 June 1933, the *First Law on the Reduction of Unemployment* made about 1,000 million *Reichsmark* free for public works. This was made concrete in the *First Reinhardt Programme*, named after Fritz Reinhardt, the State secretary in the Reich Finance Ministry.

In September 1933, the *Second Reinhardt Programme* made 500 million *Reichsmark* in credits available for private businesses, mostly in the construction business.

In 1937, the Government announced the ‘People’s Car’, the Volkswagen. One of the first models was only presented at the International Motor Show of Berlin, opening on 17 February 1939. Hitler even gave one to his mistress Eva Braun for her birthday. The car was only renamed the Volkswagen after the war! No models were actually assembled during the *Third Reich*. The Beetle came after the war.

By the end of 1933, the Government wanted to inject 5,000 million *Reichsmark* for job creation schemes, of which 3,500 million had been spent by early 1936. The Government subsidised house purchases, house conversions and repairs to stimulate the construction industry.

As of early June 1933, marriage loans, interest-free loans were provided for the wife who had been in employment and gave up her job at the moment of her wedding. She had to promise not to start working again until the loan was paid off. The maximum period of the loans was 8,5 years, but with 4 children, couples would have to repay nothing. The advantage was given only to recognised Aryan couples, of course. A medical examination to that effect was a pre-condition. The marriage loan scheme and the rejection of women working outside the home, were central to Nazi ideology. Nevertheless, the idea never realised as much as Hitler and the Nazis hoped for. Women continued to realise themselves as much as men, though in other ways.

Hitler emphasised in a speech at a meeting of National-Socialist women, that the emancipation of women was an invention of Jewish intellectuals, and therefore un-German in essence. The man’s world was the state, the woman’s her husband and family and her home. One recognises in such stances the lower middle-class mentality of the time, the social environment Hitler had his ideas from without any serious scientific or moral justification.

The unemployment levels in 1934 had fallen to less than half those of 1932. In 1937, they fell below the one million person level. Here was Hitler’s economic miracle, but the tendency was well under way before Hitler came to power. The Nazis had the extreme luck in coming to power when the economy was rapidly starting to recover. The Government did apply a bold policy of deficit spending, and gave a huge increase in investment in the economy, so that prosperity recovered.

From before the Nazis had taken over power, the Government had installed a Voluntary Labour Service or VLS. Young men were rounded up and given the choice of serving the land or losing forthwith all benefits. The payment of the work was very poor. The most vociferous protesters were sent to Dachau concentration camp for re-education!

### *Rearmament*

For Adolf Hitler, the main focus in bettering the economy lay on re-armament. Quite logically and in coherence with the ideas presented in *Mein Kampf*, for new factories and old

ones converted, the emphasis lay on military production at short notice, for the conquest of new lands to be added to Germany. For instance, in the *Strength through Joy Car program*, workers left a part of their wages each week to save for buying a car. By the end of 1939, 270,000 Germans had thus given 110 million *Reichsmark* to the state. But in September 1939, the factory for such people's cars had been converted to war production. No one ever saw the car during the war, and certainly not after it. Hitler continued saying to leading SS and SA men, that it would be necessary in about 8 years to create the living-space in the East he deemed necessary for the German population, because the economic recovery by that time would have run out of steam. Hitler put the re-armament process in action as of February 1933, when there was no air force in the country, no large battleships, no tanks and no heavy guns. In April of 1933, he gave the military control over their own re-armament schemes. Germany had then about 2,800 firms to which orders for arms production could be given.

A few examples of this re-armament effort follow.

In July 1933, Krupp supposedly built new agricultural tractors; in reality, they built tanks.

In November 1934, the German Navy could order for 41 million *Reichsmark* of military equipment and 70 million *Reichsmark* worth of ships.

The production of rifles and guns began in the Borsig manufactories near Berlin and in the *Bochumer Gesellschaft* of Hamburg.

In January of 1933, the Mauser Rifle factory increased its workforce from 800 to 2,300.

The Rheinmetall Company made howitzers and machine-guns, and took on more than 500 workers.

These activities boosted local industries.

The Nazis re-introduced Conscription for the Army in March 1934, for a period of one year. This was extended to 2 years in August 1936. In May 1935, the compulsory military service was re-introduced in Germany. It was for all men over 18 years old, and who had served the 6 months required in the Reich Labour Service.

In October 1933 already, Hitler asked the British ambassador whether his Government could agree to pass the German Army from 100,000 men, as determined by the Versailles Treaty, to 300,000 men. By a fast, massive recruitment programme, the German Army had grown by October 1933 to 240,000. In June of 1936, the General Staff of the Army estimated they had 793,000 men, including reservists and non-combatants. In 1940, Germany had 750,000 men in active service and 1 million men in reserve. The country had a *Luftwaffe* of 28,000 officers and men, but by August 1939, there were over 380,000 men and officers in the *Luftwaffe*! As for the Navy, Germany had merely 17,000 Naval officers and seamen, but in 1939 almost 79,000. In a few years' time, the Nazis and Germany had built quite a large and complete Army.

In March 1935, Hitler announced the creation of a new *Wehrmacht* of 36 divisions, in all 550,000 soldiers, and the reintroduction of the general military service. Also was made public the existence of Germany's *Luftwaffe*, its Air Force, about as big as Great Britain's! Both were a plain defiance of the Versailles Treaty. The western democracies protested, but what more could they do?

In April of 1935 took place an international conference at Stresa, in Italy. Great Britain, France and Italy agreed there to uphold the Treaty of Locarno of 1925. But Great Britain also



agreed on a bilateral Naval Treaty proposed by Germany, limiting the relative size of their fleets. This offered a further boost of Hitler's prestige internationally. In September of 1934, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations. It signed mutual assistance pacts with France and Czechoslovakia.

In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, an old African kingdom. Italy's initiative was an old, imperialist action executed with modern methods and arms. Italian bombers made widespread use of poison gas to terrorise the population and the Ethiopian Army. The Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie fled. In May 1936 then, Italian troops entered the capital Addis Adabba. It lasted an additional 7 months before Ethiopia had been 'pacified'. The king of Italy was proclaimed Emperor, and Mussolini's prestige rose sky-high. The League of Nations did react. It imposed limited economic sanctions on Italy. The export of foie gras to Ethiopia was banned, though not of iron and steel, not of coal and oil. Great Britain and France had agreed to carve up Ethiopia, which had been invaded by another League member state, Italy, in an act of unprovoked war!

### *Nazi Finances*

In 1933, Germany had been left in a dire financial situation. The country had suffered from 3 years of economic depression. How could the Nazi regime pay for its ambitious programme of rearmament and job creation?

In 1933, the President of the *Reichsbank* was Hans Luther. In March 1933, Hitler replaced him by Hjalmar Schacht. Schacht was a financial wizard. He had brought the inflation under control at the end of 1923 for the Weimar republic. His real name was Horace Greeley Hjalmar Schacht, as his father had spent 7 years in the USA. His origins lay in Hamburg. Schacht actually divorced his first wife for her radical pro-Nazi views. In 1923, Schacht had become the Commissioner for National Currency, appointed by Hans Luther, the then Weimar Finance Minister. In November of 1923, Schacht was promoted to President of the *Reichsbank*. The Government regarded him as a kind of financial miracle-worker. He had resigned from his functions in protest, when the Weimar Government adopted the Young Plan. He retired, and also left the Democratic Party.

Schacht met Hitler in early 1931, introduced by Hermann Göring. Soon for Hitler, Schacht was the best financial manager in the country. Hitler brought to Schacht the issue of the financing for the re-armament of Germany.

End May 1933, Schacht came up with an ingenious scheme for deficit financing. He set up a *Metallurgisches Forschungsinstitut* or *Mefo* with 4 separate companies, and provided with a capital of 1 million *Reichsmark*. This institute was authorised by the Government to issue so-called *Mefo Bills*, guaranteed by the State and the *Reichsbank*. The bank met the bills simply by printing banknotes. Between 1934 and 1936, half of all purchases of the German military were made by these bills. The *Reichsbank* covered the bills by printing money. By March 1938, 12,000 million *Mefo Bills* had been spent and the number of these notes in circulation grew by end March 1938 to 6,000 million.

Nevertheless, in 1937, Schacht became worried about the inflationary effect of printing so much money in the form of the *Mefo Bills*. He stopped issuing them. Instead, he used tax vouchers and non-interest-bearing treasury notes. As a result, the *Reich* debt ran high. Hitler didn't care much about the issue, for in his view, deficit-financing was a short-term measure. The debts would be paid for by his desired territorial expansion in the near future. In other words, the financing of war made war necessary.

Autarchy was the Nazi-term for self-sufficiency. It was a basic precept of Nazi economics from the early 1920s on. Nazi financial policy focused on withdrawing as much as possible trade from international markets and reorienting it towards the countries which could or would one day be part of the new Nazi Empire. Hitler did not seek to boost exports. The only way to a long-term and secure recovery of the German economy was through the conquest of living-space in the East, a fundamental idea presented in *Mein Kampf*.

On 13 September 1933, the Nazis founded the *Reich Food Estate*, headed by Richard Walter Darré, the Reich Farmers' Leader, the Minister of Agriculture. Its aim was to unite producers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers in a single chain and in a fair deal for all. It was to control the supply of food, with fixed prices, the quantities and quotas determined in the interest of the producers.

In September 1934, Schacht launched a production battle aimed at making Germany self-sufficient in food supplies. This would keep funds inside Germany. The aim proved elusive, and the *Reich Food Estate* was pushed aside by the imperatives of autarchy and rearmament. In the effort, between 1933 and 1938, 140 villages were broken up and 225 rural communities were disrupted or even displaced by compulsory Army land purchases for motorways, airfields, barracks, camps and training areas.

The result of the Nazi policies was that in autumn 1936, they had created a shortage of consumer goods, as demand began to outstrip supply. The Price Commissioner, Carl Goedeler, the Mayor of Leipzig, who was a conservative politician, proposed the slowing down of rearmament. Hitler instantly rejected the proposal.

On 26 October 1936, the Government had to impose a freeze on the prices of food. And on 1 January of 1937, the Government introduced the rationing of butter, margarine and fat. By the end of 1936, it became thus clear that the self-sufficiency in food was a far illusion. It simply could not be reached. Darré's star began to wane. A law of 26 June 1936 allowed the state to merge farms together, to create larger and more efficient units. That scheme too was extremely unpopular! On the eve of the war, end 1939, Darré's original ideas had practically disappeared. And by then, 15% of Germany's food supplies still came from abroad. The Nazi leaders pointed once more to the need of Living Space in the East to make up for the deficits in food.

As the Nazi Government stockpiled supplies in preparation for the war and requisitioned agricultural workers and craftsmen for war-related industries, more foodstuffs became subject to official rationing:

- Butter and other fats had since long been restricted.

- Early spring 1939, the Government rationed fruit and coffee; Germany began to lack hard currency, so there could be no import of coffee.
- As workers had been drafted in the towns, apples and other fruit remained unpicked; people were urged to grow their own fruit and to make preserved fruit for the winter; 1938 was a particularly cold spring, and fruit blossoms froze.
- There was a shortage of wheat and rye, so controls on bakers augmented and bakers were instructed to bake what was called 'homogenised bread' made of inferior flours; White bread could only be bought on medical prescriptions.
- As of 1 January 1939, all milk had to be brought to central milk depots.
- In the Ruhr Region, workers had meat only once a week.
- In 1938, there was a foot-and-mouth disease in cattle.
- Queuing in shops became a daily occurrence.

The Nazi leaders thus sought to control and manage the market economy, rather than by nationalising farms or directly taking over farms.

On 14 December 1933, the Nazi Regime pressed I.G. Farben to produce synthetic fuel and oils for motors through the hydrogenation of coal. When a company refused to follow the Nazi rules, the Government brought it to heel, if necessary with the help of the SA and the SS. Germany was to remain a free-market economy, in which the state only provided leadership and set the primary goals. Hitler always sought the willing cooperation of businesses. Nevertheless, the State intervened. For instance, Hugo Junkers had attempted to resist the Government calls to convert his aeroplanes from civil to military purposes. The Nazis forced him to sell the majority interest in his two companies to the state.

On 30 June 1933, Kurt Schmitt was appointed to Minister of Economy. He became an SS officer, and was the director of the Allianz Insurance Company. This was after the departure of the National-Socialist Alfred Hugenberg. Schmitt was a Bavarian. He had met Göring in 1930, and was impressed by the man. The Nazi theorist for economy in the NSDAP Party was Gottfried Feder. Many of Schmitt's ideas were opposed to in the party. On 30 January of 1935, Schmitt resigned. He had suffered a heart attack months earlier. He now realised his incompetence as a politician. Hjalmar Schacht replaced Schmitt. As Schacht told to Hitler he would regard rearmament as his first priority, Hitler gave Schacht almost dictatorial powers on the management of the German economy.

Schacht almost immediately created seven *Reich Industry Groups*: industry, trade, banking, and so on, further subdivided into specialist and regional subgroups. The State and the Army then boosted domestic industrial production for the rearmament. Schacht caused the industry to switch from export-oriented consumer goods to what a useful for rearmament. Soon, Britain and the USA imposed trade sanctions on Germany in protest against the persecution of the Jews. This led to a fall in exports from 1932 to 1934, whereas imports grew, such as for rubber, oil and cotton. The prices obtained from German exports fell by 15%, and imports of raw materials rose by 32%. The result was a catastrophe, as Germany's balance of payments went into deficit. The foreign debt of Germany rose. On 14 June 1934, the *Reichsbank* imposed a stop for 6 months of the repayment of all long-term and medium-term foreign debts. Hjalmar Schacht had to present a *New Plan*. He announced his on 19 September 1934, with trade on a bilateral basis, a sort of barter. For imports, he focused on

the Balkans, for import of arms-related raw materials and food that could not be obtained in Germany. He cut back in overseas trade. 25 Surveillance Officers enforced the policy. The German imports from European countries diminished indeed in this way, from 7.24 billion *Reichsmark* to 2.97 billion in 1938. In Hitler's view, then the time had come to introduce far more radical interventions in the economy.

### *Rearmament continued*

On 4 September 1936, Hermann Göring explained in a long speech the bankruptcy of the *New Plan*. The economy had to be better prepared for the war. Hitler still thought Bolshevism's victory would mean the annihilation of the German people. The leadership in the world would be taken over by international Jewry. Preparing for the battle against Bolshevism was thus an absolute priority. A New Economic Plan had to be drawn up. The interests of the German businesses had to be subordinated to the interests of the nation. Göring then fiercely attacked Schacht and Goerdeler. Because of their views, he shouted, the economy had been blocked, so that the rearmament plan of Germany had to be scaled down. Hitler agreed to define a New 4-Year Plan at the Party Rally. The switch from the former New Plan to the now called *4-Year Plan* happened thus in 1936.

On 10 October 1936, Göring's supremacy was made official. Germany was to have a new organisation to prepare the economy for war. The plan defined 6 departments: the production and distribution of raw materials, the coordination of the labour force, the control of prices, foreign exchange, and agriculture. Göring appointed the top civil servants in the Ministries of Labour and Agriculture. He bypassed Darré and Seldte, the two responsible Ministers and undercut Schacht, who was sent on forced leave. The policy decisions would be made without the involvement of the Ministry of Economy. On 8 October already, Schacht wrote to Hitler there could be only one head of Economic Affairs. He threatened to resign.

On 5 November 1937, Hitler, Admiral Raeder and the Head of the *Reich War Ministry*, Werner von Blomberg, met in the *Reich Chancellery*. Also present were the Commander in Chief of the Army, General Werner von Fritsch, Göring, and the Foreign Affairs Minister Konstantin von Neurath. Hitler's Military Adjutant Colonel Friedrich Hossbach took notes. They came to a series of intentions and decisions. The aim of the German Foreign Policy would have to be to secure, preserve the racial stock (*die Volksmasse*) of Germany, and to provide it with more living space. The conquest of East-Central and Eastern Europe was therefore essential. This was to be done in 3 generations, before new expansion overseas could start. The autarchy of Germany in food and in the economy could not be guaranteed. Hence, more territories had to be won by conquest, and the people who had been living there had to be removed or reduced. This problem for Germany would have to be solved by force, by war, by armed conquest. Hitler wanted to solve the issue by 1943 to 1945. The priorities in the objectives were the absorption of Austria and Czechoslovakia. By the removal of 3 million people there, additional food supplies would be freed for Germany. France and Great Britain were unlikely to intervene, Hitler surmised. Poland would remain neutral. As a result, Hitler refused to reduce the rearmament efforts. He needed to accelerate it, to the conquest of additional living space!

On 26 November 1937, Hjalmar Schacht resigned. Hitler accepted. Schacht warned that overstretching the public expenditure for arms would rapidly augment inflation. Schacht also wrote this in a letter, signed on 7 January 1939 by all the directors of the *Reichsbank*, of which he had remained President. On 20 January therefore, Hitler also sacked Schacht from the *Reichsbank*, with the entire board of directors.

The successor to Schacht became Walter Funk, the former State Secretary in the Propaganda Ministry. Funk had also been appointed to Reich Minister of Economics on 15 February 1934. The habit of unrestrained spending of the public finance for rearmament could continue. On 15 June 1939, a new law removed all limits on the printing of money. This realised the worst fears of Schacht, but the Nazis did not care. They counted on the invasion and the conquest of Eastern Europe to cover all deficits in finance. In February 1934, Hitler had said the rearmament of Germany had to be complete by 1942. He moved the date forward to 1940!

Göring had been a pilot formerly. He had very little understanding of economics and finance. As a result, the *4-Year Plan* went on rather chaotically. The organisation was a jungle of conflicting interests. There was a fundamental contradiction in the drive to autarchy in the anticipation of a long war versus the massive, reckless, rapid rearmament. No statistical information was available for a rational planning system. So, the 4-Year Plan amounted to a series of piecemeal initiatives, despite the existence of a General Council that was supposed to harmonise the whole and coordinate it. Nevertheless, the plan had its successes, such as in coal production, so that Germany had less to rely on imported fuel by the production of synthetic oil. In 1937, Hitler could also announce the building of two huge synthetic rubber factories.

Ultimately, however, the plan could not but fail. Germany's chronic imbalance of payments continued, as imports still exceeded exports. Massive growth of demand continued, especially made by the Armed Forces, as General Ludwig von Beck, the Chief of the general Staff demanded the creation of an ever more mobile Army, with more tank brigades and motorised infantry. These needed steel and fuel.

The expenditures for the German Navy were huge. Hitler expected a clash with the US Navy. Hitler increased the number of battleships to be built from 4 to 6, to be completed in 1944. He ordered 4 pocket battleships to be built, though changed in 1939 to 4 battle cruisers. The expenditure for the Navy skyrocketed from 187 million *Reichsmark* in 1932 to 2,390 million *Reichsmark* in 1939. The fleet needed 6 million tons of fuel per year, and 2 million tons of Diesel oil. But Germany's own total consumption was 6 million tons then, less than half of which could be produced in Germany only. Similar problems had to be faced by the German Air Force.

On 10 May 1933, Hitler had created the Reich Aviation Ministry under Hermann Göring. His State Secretary was Erhard Milch, a former director of the civil *Lufthansa*. Milch understood many more long-range bombers were needed for the *Luftwaffe*. His plan was therefore to build 2,000 fighter planes, 2,000 bombers, 700 dive bombers, 1,500 reconnaissance aircraft, and thousands of training aircraft, by the end of 1938. But the aircraft production dove into issues because of the lack of steel. In 1937 already, the Air force received only half the steel

it required. In 1939, the *Luftwaffe* had thus only 4,000 aircraft ready for action. This remained far below the targets set by Göring.

In 1939, the shortage of raw materials led to strange consequences for the life of the Germans. For instance, Reich Commissioner Wilhelm Ziegler was allowed to call on the forced requisition of scrap materials. Metal garden fences, iron railings, lamp posts and the like, were removed. Coal for domestic use got rationed.

The rearmament effort led to shortages in the labour force. Decrees of 1936 and 1937 therefore withdrew the requirements that a woman receiving a marriage loan would have to give up her job. Hitler still refused to allow women to become judges or lawyers. But women returned to work in factories in larger numbers. There were more female physicians, more women working in the industry, more female labour in farms. In February 1938, the *4-Year Plan Council* announced all women under 25 years old who wanted to work in industry, had first to complete a year of duty on a farm. The scheme was successful, but not much more was done anyhow to draw women into the rearmament production before 1939. Hitler knew too well the results of hardships for women at home during a war. This haunted all his Nazi preparations for war in the late 1930s.

The Nazis had to turn to foreign, male, labour. The bulk of the foreign workforce would at first be made up of seasonal Polish and Italian workers. This meant a drain on the economy, as the workers sent their hard-earned currency back home. Thus, Germany had also to keep these numbers in check. The solution could only come by the war itself, in forcing the conquered countries to send labour to Germany. The *4-year Plan* thus created its own tensions and bottlenecks! The result was, that Germany had to enter war when it was less than fully prepared. Germany and Hitler needed therefore short, swift and decisive operations, the *Blitzkrieg*. The German economy, without and even with its conquests, could not sustain a long war.

Actually, the *4-Year Plan* meant a massive escalation of the state intervention in the economy. The priorities for production were set by the Nazi Regime and not by the industry. The Nazi economic planning could not be designed in the interests of the working class! And the objectives of the state diverged from the objectives of the industry, which had to optimise its earnings and its benefits in a still capitalist system.

One of the first men to criticise the plan was Fritz Thyssen, an industrialist as wealthy and powerful as any man of the von Bohlen-Krupp companies. He condemned the state's direction of the economy. He prophesied the Nazis would soon start to shoot industrialists who did not fulfil the conditions of the 4-Year Plan. Thyssen fled abroad after the outbreak of the war, but he was caught later in France and sent back to a German concentration camp.

Göring had to nationalise! He nationalised private deposits of iron ore. He took control of privately owned steel works. A new concern, the *Hermann Göring Works* was founded in July 1937 to manage the nationalised factories and enterprises. Its headquarters were at Salzgitter. It was originally a state-owned and state-managed enterprise designed to produce low-grade iron at an economic price, a product that the private industry had been unwilling to produce. The concern by and by took over other firms. In April of 1938, the *Göring Works* took over the Rheinmetall-Borsig armaments company. When United Steelworks began

intriguing against the 4-Year Plan, Göring had their telephone conversations tapped. The industrialists rapidly caved in.

Essential in the German steel production was the Krupp Family of Essen, led by Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Holbach. Alfred Hugenberg was the chairman of the company's Supervisory Board.

Krupp was in fact a paternalist manager. He cared for the welfare and housing of his workers. Krupp had been severely hit by the 1929 world economic crisis. Its output of steel and coal had halved since 1927. The Krupp workforce in Essen had been reduced from 49,000 men in 1926 to about 28,000 in 1933. Moreover, Gustav Krupp was no supporter of Nazism. When in 1933 Paul Silverberg, a Köln industrialist had been deprived of his functions because he was Jewish, and forced into exile, Gustav Krupp visited him in his Swiss home. But Krupp was a powerful man, even the *Head of the Reich Association of German Industry*.

Krupp understood soon the Nazi regime did not allow his company the freedom of action he thought was a part of and needed in a capitalist system. The *4-Year Plan*, with the downgrading of basic heavy industry, its hostility to international trade, its promotion of state ownership, meant no leeway for his own plans and therefore less profits for the firm. In 1941, Gustav Krupp suffered a series of strokes. He lived on until 1950, though isolated and oblivious of what truly happened in the world.

Also I.G. Farben was forced to reorient increasingly its production to meet the military demands of the Nazis. It produced the synthetic rubber, called the *buna*. But in September 1939, its stockpiles were still only sufficient for 2 months of war. The *4-Year Plan* did not depend from I.G. Farben, and I.G. Farben did not depend from the Plan.

Thus, by 1938, the Nazi Party and its affiliated organisations were creating large economic enterprises that could bypass conventional capitalist operations in the pursuit of the Nazi Regime's political goals of power. The automobile industry was thus to be outflanked by Volkswagen and the iron and steel production was outflanked by the Göring Works.

Moreover, in 1939, a series of laws were issued by the Nazi Regime on credits, mortgages, on loans and on the banks, to severely cut the freedom to invest in any products but for the rearmament effort. On 2 March 1939, Colonel von Schell, Göring's plenipotentiary for the automobile industry, restricted the number of different models that could be manufactured. The production of spare parts could thus be rationalised, produced less expensively, more efficiently, and the automobiles could be repaired more easily and more quickly. These efforts presaged the later simplification efforts introduced by Speer.

### *Corruption*

Corruption started actually with the Führer. When he took over power in Germany, Hitler had laid his hands on the funds of von Hindenburg, the *Reichspräsident*. No more controls existed on these funds. He began to dole out money with increasing liberality. Hitler paid out special monthly pensions to Nazi individuals for services rendered. Over 100 men and women received money from the Party in this way. Amounts were also distributed to Army officers. Officers got their rest cures paid by the state. The pensions for admirals and field-m Marshals of the past war increased suddenly. August von Mackensen even received a landed estate in the Prenslau District, plus a gift of money.

Hitler disposed of a fund of about 24 million *Reichsmark*. He received in 1933 alone about 1.2 million *Reichsmark* from the publication rights on *Mein Kampf*. He claimed rights on the use of his portrait on postage stamps and from the publication of his speeches. Grateful Nazis who had died left him legacies in their will. As a result, Hitler had really no need of his salary of 29,200 *Reichsmark* and of his annual expense allowance of 18,000 *Reichsmark*. He publicly renounced early on both salary and allowance, in a gesture of selfless dedication to the country. But he had other, sufficient funds that came in!

In fact, a vast and growing network of corruption, disguised as patronage, nepotism, bribery and favours bound the system together. Already in July 1933, Rudolph Hess promised employment to all who had joined the Party before 30 January 1933. In October, the *Reich Office for Unemployment Insurance and Jobs* centralised the campaign to provide jobs for everyone with a Party membership card numbered under 300,000.

The quantity of money and properties flowing into the Nazi Party from 1933 on, was so vast, that few proved able to resist the temptation to grab some of it for themselves. Nazi officials at every level of the hierarchy could soon enjoy a lavish lifestyle. Goebbels, for instance, bought a villa on the Berlin island of Schwanenwerder, which the previous owner, the Jewish physician Charlotte Herz, had been forced to sell. He had another property in the Bogensee. He sold on his Schwanenwerder property to the industrial Alfred Ludwig, who lent it to him, rent-free.

The most notorious corrupt Nazi was Hermann Göring. Göring acquired the hunting lodge Carinhall. He refurbished it for 15 million *Reichsmark* of taxpayers' money. Göring equally owned a hunting lodge in East Prussia, a villa in Berlin, a chalet in the Obersalzberg, a castle called Burg Veldenstein, five more hunting lodges, a private train and he received a yacht. He had a collection of artworks. Most of the leading Nazis bought works from old masters. Generally, the Nazi leaders plundered the Jews, the Communists, other Marxists, and any enemy of the Reich they could put their hand son, to plunder them at will.

### *The Aristocracy*

By the summer of 1939, the preparations for war by the Nazis had remained inadequate, as the Army Staff generally complained. Targets for tank production, for ships, airplanes and other war weapons had only been remotely met. Germany simply was not ready to lead a war. All this was exacerbated by Hitler's own inability to set stable and rational priorities within the rearmament programme.

Hitler could count on some support from the German aristocracy. Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm urged people to vote for Hitler, even against von Hindenburg in the presidential elections. The leading Nazis, such as Himmler, the *Reich Leader* of the SS, showed growing enthusiasm for the aristocracy. Himmler especially thought centuries of planned breeding must have produced a steady improvement in racial quality of these men. Even before 30 January 1933, aristocrats such as the hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg and Prince Wilhelm von Hesse, joined the SS. The same did other Prussian old nobility. The Barons von der Goltz, von Podbelski, Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, Ludolf von Alvensleben, and Baron



Karl von Eberstein joined the NSDAP and the regime. By 1938, about 20% of the higher ranks of the SS were taken by members of the old German nobility. Those aristocrats who enrolled in the Army, would become bitterly disillusioned about the regime, but not just yet.

### *The Farmers*

The Minister of Agriculture Darré had an ideal of a Germany covered by large farms, big enough to be self-sufficient and provide self-sufficiency for the new Germany. He thought farms should pass to the strongest and most effective of the heirs of the farmers families. Natural selections would strengthen German peasantry.

On 29 September 1933, Darré published the *Reich Entailed Farm law*. It claimed to revive the old German custom of entailment, of inalienable inheritance. All farms of between 7.5 and 125 hectares could not be bought or split up. They could not be foreclosed because of debts. The properties could not be used as securities in loans. The law made it more difficult, however, for farmers to invest in expensive machinery and to buy up pieces of agricultural land adjoining their own farms. It left the unsuccessful sons and daughters of farmers no option but to leave the land and migrate to the cities. Successful and rich farmers could grow. Of course, the removal of automatic inheritance laws created serious tensions in the farmers' families, and embittered sibling wars. It was one more example of the survival of the fittest, adopted in Nazi policies.

On 11 May 1934, Darré spoke out harshly against the current owners of large estates, who had destroyed the peasantry east of the Elbe river and reduced many of their status to become landless labourers. The Nazis had abandoned expropriating the large estate-owners and divide their lands up. Darré urged the state to do nothing to high-estate owners whose land had been abandoned because of financial difficulties. He held this position not far from Hitler's own idea. Hitler did not want to destroy the economic basis of the Prussian landed aristocracy. The Prussian nobility had successfully rationalised and modernised their production and management, so that they had become far more efficient as food producers than the small farmers.

But by the summer of 1934, the peasant farmers had turned against these Nazi agrarian policies, and that especially in Bavaria. Also, instead of selling their milk for instance directly to the consumers, the farmers now had to go through the elaborate structure of the *Reich Food Estate*. Black markets were the answer of the farmers! Farmers complained of low prices. The peasant farmers felt they had lost the freedom to buy and sell goods wherever they wished, and in the cases of the Reich entailed farms, also their property in land and buildings. Still, even the older farmers were aware their situation was not a bad in 1939 as more than 5 years ago.

The Nazis promised a united community, managed by reason. The slogan won them many supporters among the peasants. Village communities remained largely intact, even though village mayors were appointed and not elected directly. Most older farmers, heads of the families, remained opposed to Nazism, but on the whole, many sons saw Nazi Party

membership as an assertion against the authoritarian father generation. The older farmers tolerated some form of arrogance of the younger generation and the tensions between generations were often dispelled by humour. The village structures and village life were thus not fundamentally affected by the Nazi regime. What really mattered to farmers and peasants was that they could make a decent living and grow their fortune and their lands.

The aims of the Nazi Party and of Darré were not completely realised. The regime aimed for self-sufficiency, yet this objective in the end also played against the farmers, who grew no richer. The farmers remained in the middle class, in the German *Mittelstand*. They worked hard, were independent, but they got pushed aside in the class war that raged around them.

### *The Middle Class*

The Nazi economic programme of the 1920s and 1930s was a typical product of the German middle classes. On 12 May 1933, a law for the Protection of Individual Trade forbade the chain stores to expand further, to open new branches or add new lines of products. In August of 1933, the department stores were forbidden to bake, to make sausages, to repair watches, to develop photographs, to service cars, the things small shops had been doing so far. The Nazis introduced even parts of the old guild system. As of June 1934, artisans had now once more to belong to a guild. The guild system was considered necessary to regulate also this branch of the trade. The guilds stood under the control of the Ministry of Economy. After 1935, artisans had once more to pass a master's examination to be officially registered in a guild, and to receive a permission to open a workshop. This system was strongly promoted also by Hjalmar Schacht. The number of artisan enterprises increased splendidly during the economic recovery of 1931 to 1936 by 18%. But from 1936 to 1939, it declined again by 14%. Many artisans grew poorer even than the industrial workers, as they became subjects to very many Government regulations. Small businesses had it tough to survive by the loss of labour through the conscription for the war. By a decree of December 1938, artisans became required to insure themselves, and this without Government assistance. The artisan Chambers finally had to pick out unviable small enterprises in the consumer industries, for the owners had grown so poor they had to rely on welfare payments to survive. The artisans thus came to complain bitterly. The grumbling was not enough to fundamentally criticise the regime.

The lower middle class were the white collar workers of Germany. The leaders of the three political wings of their unions had been arrested in 1933 and sent to concentration camps. The unions were absorbed in the one and only *German Labour Front*, a Nazi institution. The white collar workers remained mostly politically apathetic. They were the university-trained professionals, such as lawyers, doctors of medicine, teachers, engineers, university professors, etc. The Nazis downgraded most and upgraded other professions, such as the doctors. The growing power and prestige of the Army drew many of these men to the armed forces, as they sought careers as officers. The professions themselves soon seemed dull and unrewarding in comparison. At the 1938 Nürnberg Party Rally for instance, were presented the 2<sup>nd</sup> German Art and Science Prize, a kind of Nazi substitute for the Nobel Prize. The prizes that year were given to Fritz Todt, the engineer who was building the German highways, to Ferdinand Porsche, Wilhelm Messerschmidt and Ernst Heinkel, the first was building tanks and the other two airplanes! All professional, university-educated groups lost

substantially in autonomy, a victim of the Nazi wish to control and organise every profession. Their professional associations were closed down and brought under Nazi leadership.

In 1935, a *Reich Physicians' Ordinance* and in November 1937 a *Professional Statute for Doctors in Medicine*, defined the Nazi rules for the profession. The doctors now had to breach patient confidentiality by reporting serious cases of alcoholism, drug dependence, hereditary or congenial disabilities, and sexually transmitted diseases to the authorities. Doctors were required to follow new training courses in racial hygiene and in hereditary biology. In 1936, more than 5,000 doctors had to attend these courses, given by Nazi ideologues, persons with qualifications the doctors regarded as far inferior to their own. The Reich Leader Heinrich Himmler set up an SS military Academy in Berlin to provide ideological training to SS and other doctors. It led to the title of SS Reich Doctor. The *Leadership School of German Physicians* in Mecklenburg was a special Nazi training camp for doctors. It provided a two-week training programme in Nazi ideology.

Moreover, at least 14,000 non-university trained men, called *quacks* by the real doctors, were accepted as doctors by the regime. The *Nazi Physician League* with membership of about one-third of all real doctors, lacked the influence and the prestige to change anything to this state of matters. The *Reich Physicians Chamber* allowing this, was stronger. Its head was Richard Wagner, and he supported the so-called *New German Healing*. The Nazi leaders, including Hitler, felt quite sympathetic to the alternative medicines. In February 1939, all healers had to be registered with the *National Healers Union*. No new recruits would be accepted. The title *Physician of National Healing* counted to be called a doctor! University-trained physicians could now even be required to assist natural healers, if the latter asked for help.

Thus, the German medical profession had to endure loss of professional status, increased Government interference, and the erosion of the traditional ethical values of the doctors. Nevertheless, health was central to the Nazi Regime, whose main priority remained the racial fitness. The doctors' pay increased sharply after 1937. The average pay skyrocketed from about 9,000 *Reichsmark* in 1933 to even 20,000 *Reichsmark* in 1939.

As for the Civil Service, a Prussian pride since ever, the struggle between the two arms of the Dual State, the official one and the Party one, continued unabated. The Interior Ministry warned civil servants not to accept instructions from Nazi Party agencies without any formal capacity and prerogative in the state. Hitler, on the other hand, insisted that when the state institutions proved ineffective in implementing his party's policies, then the party, the Nazi movement, would have to implement them instead. As a result, the Civil Service began to lack the prestige of yore. It seemed less attractive to ambitious young graduates. As of 1937, the Civil Service had known growing problems of recruitment of smart young men. By 1938, staff shortages plagued most of the civil servants' departments. The Nazis thus destroyed the long, honourable tradition of the civil service.

*The German Proletariat and the Workers' Welfare*

The largest social class in Germany remained the Proletariat, with about 40% of the economically active population. Out of a census of 1933, there were furthermore 17% civil servants, white-collar workers and soldiers, 16.4% self-employed workers, 16.4% also of unpaid family assistants, and 9.8% of domestic servants. From the same census, about 13 million people were active in the industry and in artisanal trades, 9.3 million on agriculture and forests, 6 million in trade, 2.7 million in public transport and in private service, 1.5 million in domestic service. So, in German society, the industrial working class was still very significant, though in decline. The service sector was still relatively small in scale, but it was rapidly growing. In the modern industries, one-fourth to one-fifth of the workers were women.

In the people active in industry were one-fourth in metallurgy and engineering, about 3 million people in 1933. Two million workers were engaged in building and construction, about 870,000 in timber and woodworking, 700,000 in mining and salt-digging, over 600,000 in quarrying and stone-working.

Between March and July 1933, the Nazis destroyed the long-established labour movements. They closed down the Trade Unions and banned the two main workers' political parties, the Communists and the Socialists. The existing Nazi Trade Union, the *National-Socialist Factory Cell Organisation*, was viewed with suspicions by the employers, as well as by the employees, who began to complain the NS Trade Unions Agents were interfering in the running of the businesses. Reinhard Muchow, not yet 30 years old in 1933, led this *NS Factory Cell Organisation*. He was a Propaganda assistant to Goebbels. It was probably his idea to create one large union to impose his will by. But the Nazi leadership certainly did not want class conflicts to be imported from the Weimar Republic institutions. In April of 1933, Rudolph Hess had already warned and ordered the *Factory Cell Organisation* not to interfere in the running of businesses. The reorganisation nevertheless came from the Nazi highest party leaders.

On 1 May 1933, all the existing Trade Unions were taken over by a new institution called the *German Labour Front*.

Its leader would be Robert Ley, a farmer's son who had obtained in 1920 a doctorate in food chemistry, and who was by then an employee at the Bayer Chemical Group in Leverkusen. In June of 1925, Ley had become the regional Party Leader for the Southern Rhineland. He was a supporter of Hitler. Hitler later would repeatedly overlook complaints about Ley's financial mismanagement, about his high-handed attitudes towards subordinates, and also about his administrative incompetence. When Georg Strasser had suddenly resigned as Reich Organisation Leader, Robert Ley had stepped in his shoes. In early 1933, Ley's task was to fulfil Hitler's vision of integrating the working class into the new Germany, in order to win over the most calcitrant, anti-Nazi part of the German people to support the new order, the Nazi order.

But Robert Ley lacked the experience and the knowledge of the work front to realise these aims on his own. Until then, the Labour Front had 5 subdivisions: the old Trade Unions, with their press office and newspapers, the white-collar unions, the retailers, the professions, and a section for businesses. In the new Labour Front, Muchow and the *Factory Cell Leaders* were still the main leaders. They wanted a kind of super-trade-union, representing the interests of the workers. It regulated with the employers matters such as paid vacations, wage agreements, equal pay for women, health and safety provisions. But matters were running out of hand.

On 19 May 1933, Hitler's Government published a *Law on Trustees of Labour*. It appointed 12 State Officials, who had to regulate the wages in Germany, the work conditions, the labour contracts, and whose task it would be to keep the peace between workers and employers. The Trustees were officials of the Reich Ministry of Labour, 2 were still members of the Factory Cells organisation, there were 5 corporate lawyers and 4 civil servants.

Another measure was the *Law for the Ordering of National Labour* of 20 January 1934, written by a higher civil servant. The law stated there would be no bargaining and regulations anymore between the employers and the Trade Unions. A new structure was put in place to avoid the antagonism between workers and employers. They had to work in harmony. The Labour Trustees were to set up Councils of Trust for the individual plants. The manufactories or enterprises were to be led by a *Betriebsführer*, the General Manager. The workers were his *Gefolgschaft*, his 'retinue'. The new system gave all power to the bosses, in collaboration with the Labour Trustees. The workers could no longer elect their representatives in the enterprises. It meant a major victory for the employers, backed by Hitler and the Nazi leadership.

On 12 September, Reinhard Muchow was shot in a tavern brawl. His death opened the way for Robert Ley. He re-established his authority and reorganised the *Labour Front*. He got rid of the remnants of Trade Unions culture and traditions and attitudes, abolished the last vestiges of the *Factory Cell* organisation. On pressure from the Labour Ministry and of the new Labour Front, he told the *Factory Cells* had not anymore to play a role in the negotiations for wage agreements. Then, after the *Night of the Long Knives*, all *Factory Cell* officials were dismissed, so that all revolutionary elements in the Labour Front had been eliminated! Thus, by autumn 1934, in the battle for the control of Labour relations, the employers had won the upper hand. But this was at the expense of massive interference in labour by the state, through the Labour Front dominated by the National Socialist Party. There were no Trade Unions anymore, but the employers were also no longer master in their own house!

Headed by Ley, the *German Labour Front* gained a reputation as one of the most corrupt institutions of the *Third Reich*. Ley had a large salary. He received rights on books and pamphlets, on large funds confiscated from the Trade Unions, and more. He bought grand villas in Berlin, for instance in Grünewald. He was fond of expensive automobiles and he was the owner of a landed estate near Köln. He was a drinker and a womaniser. Hitler remained forgiving for anything Ley did, so long as Ley remained loyal to him personally, an attitude Hitler held with all his subordinates, also such a Hermann Göring. Ley set an example on

how to head organisations for personal gain. The standards for morals in the *Labour Front* fell to very low.

On 27 November, Ley founded an organisation for workers called *Strength through Joy*. It was a subsidiary of the Labour Front, aiming to organise the workers' leisure time. A similar organisation existed already in Italian Fascism, called *Dopolavoro*, Italian for 'after work'. The German organisation provided for physical education, gymnastics, classical music performances, and so on, in factories. It was intended for the 15 million members of the Labour Front and their families. It organised mass tourism for workers, foreign trips to countries such as Italy, Finland, Bulgaria, Turkey and Istanbul, and Portugal, allowing the workers to escape at least for some time from the tedium and repression of everyday life in the manufactories. It wanted to provide cheap opportunities to workers to receive simple relaxation.

By 1939, the organisation owned 8 cruise ships and had 4 more in rent. It managed a model resort in the Baltic Sea on the Island of Rügen, at Prora, a construction headed by Speer, Hitler's architect, scheduled on 3 May 1936 for completion by 1940. This had been designed by Clemens Klatz, the architect of the Order Castle at Vogelsang. It never really opened, due to the outbreak of the war, which led to the immediate suspension of the works. It was nevertheless finished later, to provide for evacuees from houses bombed and destroyed by the English airplanes in the German cities. After the war, Vogelsang became a trainee centre for the Allied Armies.

The *Strength through Joy* organisation sent *Gestapo* and SS Security agents with the workers on the cruises. But only about 10% of the passengers on the cruise ships were actually workers! The rest were party officials, worth spying on. The workers themselves were unable to afford even the simplest additions to the basic food and shelter provided by the cruises. Many people complained of the organisation. *Gestapo* agents reported frequent mass drunkenness on board of the ships, so that a popular nickname for *Strength through Joy* became *das Bonzenbordell*, the bordello of the big guys of the Party.

Ley had founded *Strength through Joy*. Despite the prioritisation in Germany on rearmament, the Nazi regime saw itself unable to stop it. The basic intention of the organisation remained to compensate for low wages and long working hours.

Another such organisation was *Beauty of Labour*. It was a subdepartment of *Strength through Joy*. It provided for washing facilities and clean toilets, changing rooms and lockers in factories, improved hygiene, better air, less noise, proper work clothing, tidiness and order. It too arranged for concerts and cultural events on the workfloor. It encouraged sports and provided for recreation facilities. It pressured employers to provide for decent canteens, clean up debris and waste lying on the workfloor.

An organisation like *Strength through Joy* was necessary, for the rearmament had meant also large economic sacrifices for the German people. Average industrial wages were below general levels in 1927 to 1937. Many workers in the consumer goods industries continued to earn less than they had before the depression! In July 1934, moreover, *Trustees of Labour* were given the right to increase working hours to more than the legal 8 hours a day. As a percentage of national income, wages fell by 11% between 1932 and 1938. The closure of the

Trade Unions had taken away from the workers their role in formal wage bargaining. Also, it was not rationalisation of work that led to increased production, but simply extra work. The main period of rationalisation and mechanisation in Germany had been the 1920s. The trends continued now, but at slower paces. All the efforts went into the rearmament industry.

On 22 June 1938, Göring published a decree on the duty of service, allowing the President of the Institute for Labour Exchange and Unemployment Insurance to draft workers temporarily into specific projects for which labour was in short supply. This was later extended, to make labour conscription as long as the Government wanted. About one million workers were thus conscripted for work in the munition factories, or for work on the *West Wall* (formerly the Siegfried Line), and so on. On 6 October 1936, the Ministries of Labour and of Economics sent a letter to Hitler, stating that labour shortages were leading to delays in the rearmament programme. In some factories, employees were already working more than 14 hours a day, up to 60 hours per week. Workers ran away from the *West Wall*, as construction was on in 12-hour shifts per day and in very tough living conditions, at low pay, without safety measures, in frequent accidents, etc. The regime increasingly sought to enforce its measures by means of terror. It threatened alleged troublemakers with dismissal and immediate transfer to the *West Wall* works. The Gestapo was spying on the work-floors, eager to catch under-performing workers. On 25 June 1938, Göring allowed the *Labour Trustees* to fix maximum wages in an effort to keep costs under control.

The Nazi ideology did not necessarily support the idea of social welfare. They said social welfare encouraged the preservation of the weak and the degenerate. In order to strengthen the German race, charity and philanthropy were evils to be eradicated. The weakest elements needed to be weeded out of the race, in a process of natural selection. Goebbels remarked the economic situation was still generous enough for many people to live and survive below the poverty line in the first winter of 1933-1934 in the Reich.

On 13 September 1933, nevertheless, Hitler and Goebbels announced the *Winter Aid Programme*, with a number of relief schemes already launched by the Regional Party Leaders. They distributed food to the poor. The donations that winter amounted to 358 million *Reichsmark*. Goebbels declared the distribution of money, a form of charity, was a form of racial self-help by the German people. The donations were not so free. Those who did not contribute would be regarded as enemies of Germany. On 5 November 1934 was issued a *Collection Law*. It allowed the Ministry of the Interior and the Party Treasurer to suspend any charities or funds that competed with *Winter Aid*. On 4 December 1936, *Winter Aid laws* formally put the scheme on a permanent, legal basis. *Winter Aid* donations would account for nearly 3% of the average worker's income at the time. There was a specific campaign to give funds for one meal of maximum 50 Pfennig, and the difference to be given to SA Stormtroopers or SS men.

In the winter of 1935 to 1936, Jewish poor were no longer allowed as donors or receivers. Germany then was in need of charity!

Erich Hilgenfeldt, a man from the Saarland, reshaped the private charity. With Magda Goebbels as a patron and with Hitler's backing, he extended his grip on party self-help groups. Hilgenfeldt took over virtually all the private welfare and philanthropic organisations in Germany.

From 25 July 1933 on, only 4 non-state welfare organisations continued to exist. These were the Nazi People's Welfare, the Protestant Inner mission, the Catholic Caritas Association and the German Red Cross. These were increasingly disturbed in their work, harassed by the SA stormtroopers. No assistance was given to alcoholics, to the work-shy, to the asocial people, to habitual criminals, to the hereditary ill, and to members of other races than the Aryan. By 1937-1938, the police arrested members of the lower classes, social deviants, petty criminals, and so on, in large numbers, to send them to concentration camps. The Nazis regarded them as no use to the regime and its aims.

With *Strength through Joy*, the *National-Socialist Welfare* was probably the most popular party organisation in the Third Reich. It had 17 million members in 1939. Yet, the poor feared and disliked it, as they resented the intrusiveness of the questions, the moral judgements, the ever-present threat to use compulsion, and the threat to bring in the Gestapo when the poor did not fill the designated criteria of race.

Unemployment benefits had always been severely cut by Governments before the Nazis took power. The new regime cut them even more severely. The local authorities had to diminish the level of benefit payments with any means. This all increased the pressure on the unemployed. Welfare payments were gradually cut back. The National-Socialist organisations such as *Winter Aid* and *Strength through Joy*, aimed at obliterating class and status distinctions, as well as to improve the lives of the most ordinary people. But the better-off were most attracted to the ideology of the People's Community. The poorer workers were too imbued with Marxist ideas of class conflict, to yield directly to the appeal of these Nazi creations.

By 1939, disillusion became widespread over the welfare schemes implemented by the Nazis. Already by early 1936, this had reached such a low level, that even Hitler's popularity was beginning to wane. The Nazis had promised in 1933 a new, national and racial community based on co-operation and not conflict within, of material support. Class differences would disappear in this community, and the interests of the German race would be permanent. The Nazis played in on the basic desire of the vast majority of Germans for order, jobs, improved living standards and career advancement. This seemed to have been met.

In 1933 the Nazis organised the first *Day of Potsdam* and the *Day of National Labour*. These were two major propaganda demonstrations. Hitler declared Nazism conceived Germany as one corporate body. Hitler spoke of himself as a worker by origins, a humble man of the people, who had never lost touch with his lowly origins. The *Third Reich* propagated the notion that all class distinctions had been abolished in the new Germany. The bourgeois men should stop feeling as a pensioner in the traditions of the times of rabid capitalism, separated from the workers by the Marxist concept of property. One instance of a widespread assault on Germany's many bastions of social privilege was the Nazi students' attack on the traditional duelling student groups. The decline in status, generally, of the autonomy and power of the academically trained professions in the early years of the Nazi Regime was quite real. The small businessmen and the white-collar workers too saw the social divisions between them and the working class eroding rapidly. Autocrats found themselves elbowed out of the way by young Nazis from social classes far below theirs. A new political elite tried to take over



power in the land. But the rich and the poor remained in Germany the same as they had ever been, quite apart. The power of the aristocracy remained very real. Young men of the nobility for instance, found a new leadership possibility in the SS organisations. Moreover, few were convinced the social utopia promised by the Nazis in 1933 had ever been realised or could be realised. The programmes of social change of the Nazis were always ruthlessly subordinated to the all-overriding preparation for war. Whatever could help make Germany ready for the conquest of eastern Europe was good, whatever got in the way was bad.

The German citizens had to realise that the social utopia would only be realised when Germany had conquered its Hitlerian idea of living space in the east. Hitler's all-overriding urge was and remained the conquest of the east. And after having realised that, Hitler would not have stopped after having conquered the east! Hitler would have transformed the war into a new war, waged for European supremacy, and then to one fought for world domination. Did most Germans share these ideas, did they realise such quest could start and happen? Anyway, what Hitler and the Nazis wanted was a change in the people's spirits, in their way of behaving and thinking like the Nazis themselves. This revolution was first cultural, rather than social.

The Nazis always claimed the principles on which the Nazi future would be based were scientific, from the appliance of racial hygiene to the Darwinist selectionism in human society, without regard for the tradition morality and for the religious scruples. In this, racial engineering stood central. The German people had to be turned into a new breed of heroes all, hence their emphasis on the elimination of the weak from the chain of heredity. Actually, what the Nazi leaders sought in the first place was power, simple, raw power; to be the ones who could do in Germany whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted. These were the very ancient dreams of any dictator or oligarchy in history ever. Corruption and terror would give them all!

The educational policies of the *Third Reich* should have moved rapidly towards increasing the professional, scientific and intellectual competence of the country's future professional elites. The Nazis worked to the contrary of this principle! The professional elite declined in numbers by 1939, in favour of soldiers.

### *Racial Hygiene*

During his stay in the Landsberg prison of Bavaria in 1924, Hitler had read racial hygiene tracts. He concluded the Germans could only become strong again, if the state applied to society the basic principles of racial hygiene and racial engineering. The nation had become weak, had lost the First World War, because society had become corrupted by the infusion of degenerate elements in its blood. Therefore, the strong and the racially pure had to be encouraged to have more children, whereas the weak and the racially impure had to be neutralised.

In Germany, Alfred Ploetz was one of the moving spirits in the eugenic movement of the times. He was now in his seventies of age.

Walter Gross headed the *Racial Political Office* of the Nazi party. The existing *Racial Hygiene Society* was taken over by the Nazis and purged in 1933. The Nazi Doctors' League and the SS played important roles. Already in 1933, the Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick announced the new regime was going to concentrate public spending on racially sound and healthy people. It would reduce the expenditures on inferior and asocial individuals, on the sick, on the mentally deficient, on the insane, on cripples and on criminals, and prevent the reproduction of severely handicapped people. Everybody seemed to forget Goebbels was club-footed.

On 14 July 1933, the Nazis issued the *Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Diseased Offspring*. It proposed the prescribed, compulsory sterilisation of anyone who suffered from congenital feeble-mindedness, from schizophrenia to manic-depressive psychosis, hereditary epilepsy, Huntingdon's disease, hereditary deafness, blindness, deformities, severe alcoholism, and the like. The decision on the elimination of individual cases was to be taken by 181 specially established Hereditary Health courts and by Appeal Courts of a lawyer and 2 doctors. In 1932 already, a law had stated that doctors were required to register every case of hereditary illness, except in women of over 45. These last were not considered to be able to procreate anymore. And on the advice of the German Medical Association, a law had been proposed the same year of 1932 to allow voluntary sterilisation. The Nazi Regime now used sterilisation to purge those areas of society that did not conform to the new man and woman as regarded by the Nazi Party officials.

In 1934, 4,000 people appealed against the decisions of the sterilisation authorities. About 3,540 of the appeals failed. Each year, in the first 4 years of the law, about 50,000 people were sterilised. From 1933 to 1939, the total number of sterilised people rose to about 360,000 individuals. 3/4<sup>th</sup> of these orders was for congenial feeble-mindedness. Many kinds of social deviances were considered. Prostitution was a form of moral feeble-mindedness, and so was alcoholism. Hitler and the leading Nazis were strongly in favour of including habitual criminals in the list of people to be sterilised. But the Reich Justice Minister Franz Gürtner blocked such a move. Despite pressure from Eugenists such as Ernst Rüdin, he found sterilisation of such individuals unnecessary, for habitual criminals were now incarcerated for life under the new rules for security confinement, and therefore they could not reproduce. Vasectomies were performed on men, tubal ligations on women. The operations could be painful and came with complications. The death rate was about 0.5%, low, but still about 2,000 people died. 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the sterilised were the inmates of the mental hospitals. The better the chances of young patients were for recovery, the more likely they were to be sterilised! The asylums then simply discharged them, thus lowering costs. Sterilisation appeared foremost as a punishment, rather than as a measure of social control.

Sterilisation laws were not just a Nazi phenomenon. Similar laws existed in Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and Sweden. The Catholic Church objected to measures such as forced sterilisation. The Nazi ideologues replaced Christian morality by a system of ethics that derived good and bad solely from the perceived collective interests of the German race.

The harassment of people who could be candidates for sterilisation continued. On 26 July 1933, a regulation blocked access to marriage loans for people who suffered from hereditary

mental or physical ailments. The physically handicapped were considerably less severely affected. State support for these people was to be abolished, for they were no use to the community.

Doctors pleaded, pointing out that so long as the physically handicapped were of sound mind, they could be employed in many appropriate jobs. And indeed, on 12 October of 1937, on a meeting of local officials, many agreed that the shortage of labour made it advisable to integrate the physically handicapped better into society. Otto Perl, the founder of the *League for the Advancement of Self-Help for the Physically Handicapped*, lobbied for the pejorative official designation of cripple or *Krüppel* to be replaced by the more neutral physical handicapped, or *Körperbehinderte*. Perl's League was later incorporated into the National-Socialist People's Welfare Program under the name of *Reichsbund der Körperbehinderten*. But on 17 March of 1935, physically handicapped children were banned from progressing to secondary education.

On 14 July 1933, the Nazi Regime had started compulsory sterilisation for Germans suffering from hereditary weaknesses, including moral feeble-mindedness. By the time the war broke out, 360,000 people had been sterilised. Moreover, in 1935, abortion on Eugenic grounds had been legalised. After the invasion of Poland by the German armies, the inmates of Polish asylums, capable of work, had been spared of being killed and had been taken off to Germany. The rest were considered as nothing but unworthy of life, to be killed as quickly as possible. The Nazi leaders in Berlin were quite aware of what was going on in Poland, the mass killings of such handicapped people. They provided the ideological reasons for the killings. They considered it necessary, indeed, to eliminate 'degenerates' from the chain of heredity. Hitler had considered putting a provision for the killing of mental patients in the law of 14 July 1933, but he had withheld, because such a paragraph would have been too controversial.

### *Women's' Welfare*

For the Nazis, a high birth rate was essential for the nation's health. Declining birth rates meant an ageing population. A total of 86 births per 1,000 population in 1900 nevertheless fell to a mere 15 per thousand in 1932. For Fritz Lens, women's emancipation was to blame. He advocated a ban on women going into higher education.

The Nazi government also reinforced more rigorously the existing laws on abortion, except on medical grounds. They reduced the officially sanctioned abortions from 25,000 a year in the begin of the 1930s to fewer than 2,000 per year in 1939. But they had allowed abortion on Eugenic grounds from 1935 on. In November 1938, a Lüneburg court legalised abortion for Jewish women.

Racial Eugenists argued a healthy woman could and should give birth to 8 or 9 children during her life. The Nazis closed down all associations of woman activists. They were incorporated in the *NS-Frauenschaft*, the Nazi Womanhood. The *NS-Frauenschaft* was led since 1934 by Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, a mother of 11 children. Its aim was to convert the entire womanhood in Germany to the Nazi ways of thinking. The group had founded the

*Reich Mothers Service*, which provided courses on childcare, cooking, sewing and, of course, racial hygiene.

Mothers were not allowed to use make-up or lipstick. They had to wear their hair in pigtails and look like dirndls, especially if they were blonde of hair colour. But international fashion was hard to resist. Prominent women in the Nazi high society scorned the attacks on fashion. Magda Goebbels, Winnifred Wagner and Eva Braun smoked.

On Mothers' Day of 1939, 3 million women who had given birth to 3 or more children, were invested with the title of *Mother of the Reich*, in special ceremonies all over Germany. The mothers also received honour crosses: bronze for 4 children, silver for 6, and gold crosses for 8 children or more. Wearers of such crosses were allowed to jump queues in stores. Hitler was always the godfather of the 10<sup>th</sup> child! And the name of the male child was then to be Adolf.

The *Labour Front*, the *Reich Food Estate*, the *National-Socialist Welfare* soon took over all the major areas of women's welfare. They too offered a wide range of women's leisure facilities. The Nazis offered benefits and tax reforms for families with children.

The decline in the percentage of marriages with 4 or more children nevertheless continued unabatedly in Germany. The economic cost of having more than one child was simply too great for the *Third Reich* to counteract. The leap in the number of marriages was mainly due to the economic recovery. Only relatively few births could be ascribed directly to the policies introduced by the then Government. One of such measures was a new Marriage Law issued in 1938. It became possible with this law for a fertile husband to file for divorce on grounds of infertility or on the refusal of the other partner to procreate. The Government made it thus easier for people to marry for the purpose of having children.

On 18 October of 1935, a *Law for the Protection of the Hereditary Health of the German People* was issued. It held the banning of marriage when one of the engaged couples suffered from an inherited disease or from mental illness. Anyone who wanted to marriage should after this law have to provide written proof that they qualified for procreation. The law watered down. Needless to say, illegitimacy was wholly irrelevant to the Nazi view of childhood.

In 1936, Heinrich Himmler founded a series of maternity homes under an SS-run association called *Lebensborn*, the Well of Life. It was a bizarre attempt by Himmler to encourage his elite to breed a future master-race. It proved not very successful. In peace time, under half of the mothers remained unmarried. About 8,000 children were born. In general, the 115,600 SS-men had on average only 1.1 children!

The *Aktion T4* was the program for the killing of handicapped children! It was called thus after its address, Tiergarten Strasse 4, the address of the German Chancellery. Officially it was the *Charitable Foundation for Cure and Institutional Care*, supervised from out of Hitler's personal office, the Chancellery. Its aim was to arrange for the painless death of handicapped people, who could not survive without costly care. It focused on handicapped children.

The leader of the programme was Viktor Brack. His father knew Heinrich Himmler quite well. In the 1930s, he had served frequently as Himmler's driver. He became the Chief of

Staff to the Head of Hitler's Chancellery, Philipp Bouhler, and moved to Berlin with him. His deputy was Werner Blankenburg. Blankenburg succeeded on Brack when Brack went to fight at the front in 1942.

Brack put Dr. Werner Heyde in charge of the medical side of the programme. Heyde was an Estonian. He had joined the Nazi Party in 1933 and become an SS officer in 1936. He came on the staff of the University of Würzburg in 1932. He was an advisor to the Gestapo in psychiatric matters, and a lecturer on hereditary diseases. In 1939, he became a full professor at the university. He administered the killing programme.

By 1939, the T4 programme had disposed of tens of thousands of 'useless' people. End 1936, early 1937, a secret *Reich Committee for Hereditary Health Matters* had been established within the Führer's Chancellery, with a view of drawing up legislation for a *Reich Hereditary Health Court*. Later, this had been renamed to the *Reich Committee for the Scientific Registering of serious Hereditary and Congenial Illnesses*. After the death of Richard Wagner on 25 March 1939, Leonardi Conti had been appointed to head the Party's Health Office. His title was from then on the *Reich Health Leader*.

How had this programme come to the world? Hitler's personal physician, Doctor Theo Morell, submitted to Hitler a memorandum on the possibility of formally legalising the killing of handicapped people. Hitler gave his personal approval to the idea. Several deliberations happened on the matter, and finally, the idea was then shelved, to be taken up later. Hitler originally wanted 7,000 patients to be killed. The issue then was, on how to kill large numbers of such handicapped people.

Albert Widmann, an SS officer and a top professional chemist in the Criminal technical Institute of the Reich Criminal Police Office, found a solution. He built a cell of 5x5x3 metres, actually a gas chamber. It had a gas pipe built in. From December 1939 on, gassing was by carbon monoxide. The first gassing took place in Brandenburg. Bouhler, Brandt, Conti, Brack, and other officials and physicians from the T-4 headquarters in Berlin assisted in the first, conclusive killings.

Such gas chambers were then set up in Brandenburg, Grafeneck, Hartheim and Hadamar. As of December 1939, those centres were all in use. Other centres were at Sonnenstein and Bernburg. Long-term patients such as schizophrenics, epileptics, untreatable syphilitics, senile and the criminal insane, people suffering from encephalitis, Huntingdon's disease and feeble mindedness were targeted. The key criterion was whether the patient was capable of work or not, not a medical criterion, but an economic one! The killings also encompassed epileptics, deaf-mutes and blind people. Jewish patients equally were gassed, about 1,000 of them.

The gassing happened not in a humane way. The gassed people lost consciousness after 5 minutes and were dead after 20 minutes. The bodies were generally burned. The physicians used false names to sign the death certificates, as well as false dates. In all, 20,000 people were gassed in Hartheim, 20,000 in Sonnenstein, 20,000 in Brandenburg, Banburg and Grafeneck, 20,000 in Hadama, totalling 80,000 people. About half of the murdered patients came from institutions run by the Protestant or Catholic Churches. The patients were removed for killing, often with the approval of the people who ran the institutes.

In the summer of 1940, Catholic priests began to protest against the killing of the handicapped, especially after controversial events at the Bethel hospital. This Bethel Hospital was located in the diocese of Bishop Clemens August von Galen. Galen wrote to Cardinal Adolf Bertram on 28 July 1940, providing details of the murder campaign. Conrad Gröber, the Archbishop of Freiburg, then too protested to Hans-Heinrich Lammers, head of the Reich Chancellery. On 11 August 1940, the Fulda Bishops' Conference protested against the killings in letters to Lammers, and so did Bishop Heinrich Wienken from the Caritas Association. Other opposers were Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, Lothar Klessig, Pastor Paul Gerhard Braune, and Pastor Ernst Wilm. The Nazi leaders feared taking action against the bishops. The film, 'I accuse', a film on euthanasia, was seen by 18 million people. Finally, on 24 August of 1941, a direct order of Hitler to Brandt, passed on to Bouhler and Brack, suspended the gassing of adults until further notice. Still, Hitler made sure the killing of children continued, though less visibly and on a smaller scale.

On 2 December 1940, a decree of the Vatican stated the direct killing of an innocent person because of mental or physical defects was not allowed, for against natural and positive Divine Laws. On 6 March 1941, von Galen printed this in his personal newsletter, after the Gestapo's arrest of priests and after the seizure of Jesuit property in his home city of Münster.

On 3 August 1941, von Galen gave a 4<sup>th</sup> sermon on the subject in his church. This was after a secret visit of Father Heinrich Lackmann, the chaplain of the Marienthal Institution, where patients had been taken away for killing. Von Galen denounced the euthanasia programme, and declared the murders illegal. Von Galen's sermons created a sensation. More bishops began to protest. The euthanasia programme became public knowledge. The quota set by Hitler, 70,000 people, had been reached by then. Until that time, the T-4 actions, mass murder in fact, had been operated with cruel efficiency. From August 1941 on, the T-4 program had to be executed slowly and secretly. Hitler learned it was advisable not to put such orders in writing.

In October 1939, Hitler signed an order charging Philipp Bouhler, the Head of the Führer's Chancellery, and Brandt to extend the power of doctors to be specified by name, so that sick people who by human estimation were incurable, on the most critical assessment of the state of their illness, could be granted a merciful death. It would not be a formal decree, only a policy. This legalisation of euthanasia was at first kept a secret. Hitler anti-dated it to 1 September 1939, the day the war broke out. He gave as reason the heightened need to purify the German race had been imposed by the war. The program had initially been directed at children. Hitler's retrospective *Euthanasia Order* was applied to children and to adults in the hospitals.

In another such subject, on 18 August of 1939, the Nazis had decided on the compulsory registration of all malformed new-born children, for the Down syndrome, for absence of limbs, deformities of the head or spine, cerebral palsy, etc. Up to 30 hospitals were assigned to kill these children. From March 1941 on, child allowances were no longer paid by the state for such children and after September 1941, such children could compulsorily be removed from parents who refused to release the children. The upper age limit for removal of such children in the war years was raised to 8 years of age, to 12, and finally to 16 years of age. In the killing centres, the children would be starved to death, or overdoses of the sedative

Luminal were administered in their food. The children often succumbed to bronchitis or pneumonia. In total, about 5,000 children were thus killed.

### *Gypsies and Homosexuals*

Gypsies, the Romanies, the Sinti, and so on, lived a nomadic lifestyle. They had arrived in Central Europe sometime in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, some thought of Egypt, hence the name. The Gypsies had a high intermarriage rate with Germans. In 1938, Himmler moved the Bavarian Central office for Gypsy Affairs to Berlin. It became a *Reich* authority. On 8 December of that year, he issued a decree on the Gypsies. They would be centralised under the control of the Criminal Police of Berlin. All Gypsies and other itinerants had to have an identity card. They had to be registered, and to undergo a racial and biological examination. The identity card was brown for pure gypsies, brown with a blue stripe for mixed-race Gypsies, and grey for non-Gypsy itinerants. The card was needed to obtain a job, a driving licence, benefits, and the like. The registration was carried out on the basis of police records and with the assistance of the *Reich Health Office*, as of 1936 under the leadership of Doctor Robert Ritter. Ritter held a register of over 20,000 Gypsies. For Ritter, the Gypsies were a primitive, inferior race, people who were constitutionally unable to pursue a normal lifestyle. They posed no particular threat to society, though, but they had created a dangerous layer of criminals in German society. Ritter was entirely wrong, but the opinions fitted in the Nazi obsessions.

A law of 8 December 1938 banned Gypsies from travelling in ‘hordes’ or groups of several families. The expulsion of foreign Gypsies was ordered and the police obtained the right to arrest them as asocials. The Gypsies had to provide a certificate of suitability before being allowed to marry, and such a certificate was very unlikely to be granted! In March of 1939, Himmler ordered the racial mixing between Gypsies and Germans to be prevented.

The *Rhineland Bastards* was a name referring to black or mixed-race Germans, who, it was believed, were the result of the rape of German women by French African colonial troops during the occupation of the Rhineland after 1919, and above all in the Ruhr Region in 1923. There were no more than 500 to 600 of these men and women. In fact, they were the offspring of consensual unions, not of rapes. But the African-Germans were considered by the National-Socialists as the living embodiment of Germany’s shame. In 1937, the Government decided, with Hitler’s backing, to sterilise the children, on the basis of the leader’s authority alone. Ernst Rüdin, Fritz Lens and Walter Gross among others, headed the sterilisation programme. The sterilisation was executed for boys as well as for girls.

Homosexual behaviour had since long been outlawed in Germany, though then among men, not among women. Homosexual behaviour flourished mainly in Berlin. So, the Nazis clamped down on bars and dancefloors. For the Nazis, homosexuals were degenerate, effeminate and perverted. They undermined the strength of the Aryan race by refusing to have children and by degrading the idea of masculinity. Himmler, for instance, had a pathological fear for homosexuality. He would impose the most severe sanctions on any officer or man found guilty of indulging in homosexual relations. Himmler knew well there existed a hardcore of about 40,000 homosexual men, or about 2% of the general homosexual

population. He thought they could be cured by re-education. Punishments had to be administered in concentration camps.

The former leader of the SA, Ernst Röhm, was homosexual. Hitler struck at the SA leadership by striking at Röhm. He used Röhm's homosexuality to gain the acceptance for his cruellest actions, for the killings, by the Germans overall. He claimed Röhm had intended to establish a homosexual dictatorship in Germany.

From then on, homosexuality would lead to the immediate exclusion from the National-Socialist Party. Raids on homosexuals took place by the police. After 1934, homosexuals were sent to the concentration camp at Dachau. In December of 1934, 2,000 men were arrested. By mid-1935, a whole series of prosecutions of Hitler Youth leaders was under way, with interrogations and confessions.

On 23 July 1935, a law was decreed, providing harsher punishment for homosexual behaviour. Himmler said homosexuals in the SS would henceforth be arrested, tried and sentenced. The men would be sent on their release from prison to concentration camps, and be shot 'while trying to escape'. Thus, from 1933 to 1935, about 4,000 men were convicted in Germany, but from 1936 to 1938 about 22,000 men! On 1 October 1936, a *Reich Central Office for the combating of Homosexuality and Abortions* had been established.

In Germany overall, about 50,000 men were arrested, half of these in 1937 to 1939. From 1933 to 1945, about 5,000 to 15,000 homosexuals were imprisoned. They had to wear a pink triangle, sown onto their camp uniform. They suffered from brutal and contemptuous treatment by the guards. Their death rate in the camps was about 50%, whereas the same statistic for political prisoners was 40% and 35% for Jehovah's witnesses. The total number of men who died in camps was between 2,500 and 7,500 men. About 2,00 men were castrated. Some of them accepted voluntary castration.

### *Julian Vincius and the Nazi Change of Society*

When Julian Vincius listed what he considered to be such crimes against humanity, foremost perpetrated in Germany itself, he almost had to throw up. He got his information from various sources, from the newspapers, from gossip, from stories told by friends and neighbours and from his best friend Ernst Vincius, then checked for truth. He rejected most of what he heard, refused to believe it, later only to be see it confirmed by facts or by other sources.

Julian lived with a sense of justice and historic evolution. Like Socrates, he believed an educated man had all the capabilities to exercise his own rational mind to distinguish between good and evil. More and more, he had to accept the for him terrible notion that the German people had lost their rationalism, to abide solely by the warped, sick, wrong, decadent ideas and actions of the Nazi machine. He did not understand how the leading Nazi Party members could believe the ideas of sick theorists, who spewed out ideas without any true scientific basis. Yet, this was what was happening in Germany! Germany for Julian, had been the country most dedicated to reason and to real science in the world. It was the foremost land of the *Enlightenment*. And yet, the obscene, unscientific, irrational beliefs were poured over the



German people as truths, though he ideas remained without any basis in reason and honesty and rightfulness!

Julian began to wonder in what kind of aggressive, wrong, warped community of men and women he had arrived. Was there not one country on earth that had still dedicated its beliefs to truth, checked by science? How could Germany have fallen so low? Julian could find no other explanation than in a kind of evil evolution, all the bad feelings and resentments of the Germans who had lived through the World War of 1914-1918, never had forgotten that war and its humiliations forced upon the people. The Germans had fallen from unheard of economic, scientific and rational principles to the rantings of a not very intelligent and brave, wrongly-inclined man, to the spell of a non-entity such as Adolf Hitler! Julian was certain this evolution would lead Germany into the abyss, into more humiliation and disaster. Julian had been certain there existed a well-meaning force in the universe. One might that force call God or whatever. He was sure the force was benevolent and meant to lead over time to goodness and pity for people less well-endowed than the most intelligent. He could not count the Nazis and Herr Hitler among the men who were part of this benevolent force. Yet, he knew the force would direct humanity at some end to better life and conditions than the Nazis proposed. The force would destroy the Nazis.

Julian remained astonished at how fast a tight community such as the German nation would be moved in the wrong direction. And that only under the influence of so few people, mainly even of one, the man called the Guide, this Adolf Hitler. He had always refused to believe in the incarnation of evil in some sort of creature. Now, he came to the brink of believing indeed such a counter-force existed and was being re-created in Germany. Maybe, Julian thought, God had let the World War of 1914-1918 happen, only to teach the humanity of afterwards to recognise the full horrors of modern wars. Maybe a second such war was necessary for humanity to learn how terrible, insane and cruel it could be for a community to be led into further wars by people such as Hitler, Göring, Goebbels and Himmler! How to avoid such people to overtake a country? Would that not be a finest lesson for the future? Yes, he thought, there might be a warped sense in showing what horrors could be brought to a community when left in the hands of malevolent, incapable criminals, incapable of any feelings, such as Hitler? What a terrible prospect to have been entrapped, Julian and his family, in the centre of such evil, to serve as an example for humanity entire, to never again accept such horrors! Yet, here he was, a Vincius who had fled to the centre of horror! What could he do? Julian felt tired. Others should fight, then. He could only hold the flame of hope, of love and empathy and show the example by doing good, rather than bad, and live some time longer.

Julian had also an issue with the deeds of God. How could the God of the Jesus, the only God, allow all this pain, this misery, these crimes? Was the purpose of all the suffering just to show a point had to be made? How just was such an action of God? It meant sacrificing a generation in pain and suffering! Julian then remembered how, according to the Christian Faith, God had even sacrificed his own son, a part of his own nature, to redeem and save humanity. Was God now sacrificing his own people, the people with whom he had made a pact, sealed with the symbol of the rainbow, to show humanity how bad it could be to impose so many cruelties on a part of humanity? Would humanity be better after the example had

been given? If not, how depressing, cruel would the whole exercise look to humans? God was taking risks! Humanity might turn away from Him! What would the future bring?

Julian's thoughts then went to the people to whom the Nazis had sent him closer than ever, to the Jews.

## The Extermination of the Jewish People

### *The Nazis and the Jewish Doctors*

When at the end of 1933 the NSDAP, the Nazi Party, locked up all true and active Communists and Socialists, all Marxist-ideology organisations, and when the members of those organisations had been taken out of public life, because incarcerated in concentration camps, the Nazis also stepped up their cruel antisemitic actions. As of March 1933 already, the Nazi repression was unleashed against the Jewish part of the German population on racial grounds alone. About 1% of the German society was Jewish. According to Nazi ideology, to recreate a pure Aryan Germany, it was necessary first to evict all the East-European Jews who had fled the increasingly antisemitic Russian Soviet Regime. The other Jews in the country had to be made politically and economically harmless, before being physically exterminated.

A few days after the elections of 5 March 1933, the SA had marched and run in the Kurfürstendamm, hunting down Jews and beating them up. Synagogues were attacked and destroyed. Jewish judges and lawyers were beaten with rubber truncheons.

On 9 March 1933, the Secretary of State of the Chancellery, Hans Heinrich Lammers, wrote on Hitler's request to the Ministry of the Interior, that it was important to take legal steps to curb the increasing influx of East-European Jews, and to remove those Jews who had entered the German territory lately, but had not been naturalised properly. Actions thus began to throw Jews from public life.

For instance, at the Moabit General Hospital, all Jewish doctors were expelled from the hospital. How did this happen?

On 13 March 1933, Göring appointed the former NSDAP leader on the Berlin City Council and editor of *Der Angriff*, Julius Lippert, to State Commissioner for Berlin, the most powerful function in the capital. Lippert appointed in his turn a Nazi Party member and dentist from Wiesbaden, Wilhelm Klein, as the city's medical advisor.

On 20 March 1933 already, Klein began purging the Moabit General Hospital, suspending Jewish doctors and a whole series of Jewish trainee doctors. The next week, he prepared the dismissal of every hospital member of Jewish descent, as well as the members of Marxist political parties. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, the SA raided the hospital and took away a first contingent of Jewish doctors still in office, still wearing their white coats. The SA men drove the doctors away in lorries, some to the barracks of the General-von-Papen Strasse in Schöneberg. Of the 47 doctors still employed in the Moabit Hospital, 23 doctors were

dismissed and 3 more by the end of the year. Similar raids happened in other Berlin hospitals. For example, 27 Jewish doctors working in public welfare in the Berlin-Mitte District, were relieved of their duties as of June 1933. In the Friedrichshain Hospital, all Jewish doctors were dismissed as of 18 May 1933. The hospital was then renamed to the Horst Wessel Hospital.

There were many Jewish doctors in Berlin! At the end of 1922, at a census, about 85% of all doctors in Berlin were Jewish! Hitler argued the doctors occupied functions they did not deserve. He said there were enough young students, ready to replace the Jewish doctors, and also the Jewish lawyers.

On 7 April 1933, the Nazi leaders decreed laws to re-establish and redefine the professional class of the civil servants, and to decide on who could or should be admitted to the legal profession. It allowed and even encouraged the dismissal of Jewish civil servants. Yet, President von Hindenburg managed to add a clause protecting the Jewish war veterans, and the Jewish civil servants appointed by the former Emperor before 1914. On 29 March, Hitler invited party members to engage in a defensive struggle against the appalling which-hunt conducted by the Jews against their profession. The Chancellery decreed on 28 March a first boycott of Jewish doctors, retailers and Jews of other professions. The SA posted even one man in front of each Jewish-held shop in Berlin. These men would have to discourage Germans from buying in the Jewish shops! The NSDAP Party allowed the SA to regard itself as the instrument of the national revolution and as warriors of Hitler for the purification of the German race from the Jews.

On 16 March, Hitler received Theodor Lewald, the head of the German Olympic Committee, for Lewald to present his report on the preparation for the Berlin Olympic Games. Lewald had come under attack in the NSDAP for being a half-Jew. Hitler, however, instructed to stop any further attacks in the Nazi press against the man. He feared worldwide protests from the International Olympic Committee or IOC. On 3 May, this IOC reminded the German delegates that the Games should not have a political, racial or national character. That was not the spirit of the International Olympic Games! It would be better, the directors argued, for Berlin to withdraw its candidacy if this principle did not meet the German Chancellor's approval. Hitler's reaction was furious, but he had Berlin's mandate be confirmed at an IOC meeting in Vienna on 7-9 June of 1933. The German delegation gave the necessary assurances. In particular, German Jews would not be excluded from the Games, and from the German teams. Hitler even postponed the actions that logically should result from the Nürnberg Race Laws.

The actions of the National Socialists, the Nazis, against the Jewish press began almost immediately after Adolf Hitler came to power! The Jewish Publishing House of Rudolph Mosse published the well-known newspapers the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Berliner Tageblatt*. These were internally the most prestigious of all German-language newspapers. The leading political editor Wolfgang Bretholz and the editor-in-chief Theodor Wolff had written articles in support of the Weimar Republic, and against the National Socialist, the Nazi onslaught. On 10 March 1933, the *Berliner Tageblatt* was banned for 4 days, 'in the interest of public safety and order'. The two editors were forced to flee the country. The paper sank to the brink of bankruptcy, but the Rudolph Mosse Foundation saved it.

The Hermann Tietz Department Store was equally in financial crisis, and Jewish. The National Socialists took no decision on its survival on 23 June 1933. On 31 March 1933, also the Karstadt chain's financial stress had been discussed in the Government. This was a non-Jewish organisation. It needed 1.5 million Mark of extra credits to survive, and threatened to close without additional funds, with the loss of 20,000 jobs. The Government provided for sufficient funds to Karstadt, but not to Tietz. Hitler didn't like in principle the department stores, but he facilitated their planned Aryanisaton.

On 23 March 1933, Hitler spoke once more in the *Reichstag*. He spoke of the moral renewal of German society, of the nation. Every aspect of education, theatre, cinema, literature, press and radio would have to be a means to this end. He called it *the Gleichschaltung*, the alignment. A vast redistribution of wealth had to be realised. Jews and other politically unreliable individuals in higher and middle management had to be removed. Also, businesses that were part of the organised workers' movements such as Jewish publishing houses, had to be impounded of their assets. The unconditionally authoritarian leadership in the country was needed to create conditions of trust and stability. Hitler said profitable concerns were to be placed under the control of the party or of the state.

The Ullstein Verlag, more important even than Mosse's publishing house, with profit-making and influential newspapers such as the *Bildzeitung am Mittag*, *Die Berliner Morgenpost* and the magazines *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, *Der Grüne Post* and *Die Dame*, were allowed to exist until Berlin had lost its status and renown as a city of newspapers. The financially ailing *Tempo* was stopped on 5 August 1933 and *die Vossische Zeitung* appeared only once instead of twice a day as from 1 November 1933. It stopped publication altogether on 31 March 1934. The Ullstein Verlag finally came to be led by NSDAP party members. The Nazis made it clear to the Ullstein Brothers it was time to voluntarily end their business, which was done on 7 June 1934. Another Jewish publishing firm thus disappeared.

The same trust company that had bought the Mosse Verlag only a short time previously, took over the Ullstein Verlag for a risibly low sum. The sale had been ordered by Hitler and the NSDAP leaders. It became a Nazi industry. From then on, the NSDAP dominated the newspaper scene of Berlin.

In the period of 1931 to 1939, the number of newspapers in Berlin sank from 44 to 15. And of those, the National Socialist Press trust owned 10.

The first clamping down on the Jewish people also fell in the purely cultural domain. The Jewish conductors Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer were dismissed. Bertholt Brecht and Thomas Mann had to stop publishing. The modern artists Max Beckmann, Paul Klee, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Vassily Kandinsky, were fired from all official posts. They emigrated out of the country.

The same happened in the sciences. Researchers such as Albert Einstein, Gustav Herz, Erwin Schrödinger and Max Born left Germany for the United States of America. By 1934, about 1,600 on in all 5,000 university professors had been forced out of their jobs, over 500 because they were Jewish and the rest because they were opponents to the Nazi regime.

For the Nazis, race was a scientific concept, a concept Hitler had eagerly picked up from the sciences, and made to one of the bases of his ideology. He explained it as the application of scientific methods to human society. On 10 May 1933, further Nazi demonstrations took

place in about 20 German universities. Large numbers of books by Jewish and left-wing authors were piled up and set alight.

On 13 March 1933, Goebbels was Minister for Information and Propaganda. He assured the surveillance of the radio stations of Germany. On 6 July 1933, Hitler issued instructions to place all the radio networks under the control of Goebbels.

A decree of 1 April 1933 contained the nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses. A first series of legislation excluded Jews from the civil service, and discriminated them in the legal and medical professions. In 1935, the famous or infamous Nürnberg Laws outlawed marriage between Jews and people of German blood. It excluded the Jews from Reich citizenship. The next wave of antisemitism was unleashed in 1938, with as culminating point the *Reichskristallnacht* of 9 to 10 November 1938.

As a result, tens of thousands of Jews fled from the country. Almost the same happened to other social outsider minorities, from gypsies to homosexuals, the mentally ill, alcoholics and beggars, the habitual criminals, who were all equally excluded from the main Aryan community. The SS, the *Schutzstaffeln*, originally Hitler's Pretorian Guard, the protection squads and the most ideological dynamic part of Nazism, were committed to the pursuit of the racial cleansing to improve the political health of the nation, and to provide the elite for the future German domination on Europe. In 1936, the SS ran the concentration camps. They received the leadership over the security and the criminal police. They developed a huge surveillance network, and developed a military wing, the Waffen-SS.

The German concentration camps developed at first relatively slowly. In 1935, there were 3,000 people in the camps. Expansion plans for the camps were laid out. At end 1939, there were already 21,000 people imprisoned in the camps. They served to imprison the internal enemies of the nation, and the racial purification of the people's community.

By end June, SA Stormtroopers stood at the doors of Jewish shops, menacing and warning people not to go in. The actions were called off by Goebbels after a few days. Due to the growing menace, 37,000 Jews already had emigrated from Germany to other countries. In the summer of 1933, Hitler felt obliged to tell his followers to stop the witch hunt. Germany was in need of stability to push through other changes to society. The *Third Reich* was now firmly in power. With the power grew the corruption.

For the Nazis, the Jews formed an all-pervasive power in society that threatened the mere existence of the nation. The Jews and everything Jewish were a poisoning of the German culture, an undermining of German values, a corruption of the racial purity of Germany. Moreover, the Jews formed a malign international power by their domination of capitalism and by Bolshevism for the masses.

### *Jewish Businesses and Aryanisation*

Most visible in German towns were the large department stores. They were centres where very many people bought what they needed in their homes. The Nazis and Hitler in particular, regarded them as competing unfairly against the small businesses and shops. The

most famous department stores were those of Ida and Abraham Wertheim and of Hermann Tietz and his nephew Oskar. Both these families were Jewish.

The Wertheims had thought of a new system of retailing, a place of high turnover, low profit margins per product, fixed prices, over a broad selection of merchandise, a right to return or exchange goods, and payments strictly in cash, no credit. The Wertheims originated from Stralsund. They had their first store in the famous Oranienstrasse of Berlin, and 3 more stores in the capital.

The Tietzes owned 58 department stores, among which the KaDeWe or *Kaufhaus des Westens* in Berlin. In all, more than 31,000 employees worked for them, and thus their business was much larger than that of the Wertheims.

NSDAP was the abbreviation of *National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei*. The word of socialism in there stood for the hostility of the Nazis to big businesses, and that was now mixed with a strong dose of antisemitism. The Nazis nurtured a continuing hatred for the role of the Jews in the German economy. The economy of the Third Reich was inseparable from the Nazi Regime's expropriation of the possessions of the Jews, which was no more than a large campaign of plunder.

The department stores owned by Jews came already under attack in the 1920s. The attacks culminated in 1932 and the next years. Despite Hitler's personal aversion for department stores, they could not be closed down, as they employed so many people in still difficult times, their closure would have been extremely unpopular and could call to vivid resentment, less memberships, and even strikes against party policies. Rudolph Hess in particular, understood this very well, and tried to protect the stores to some extent. Hjalmar Schacht did not oppose to driving the Jews out of the economic life. Had not the Jews brought an alien, non-German spirit into German culture in the Weimar Republic?

Among the victims of these actions fell the Goldstern & Vincius Publishing Firm, held by members of the larger Vincius Family. The current owners were beaten, their offices destroyed, the premises taken over by a Nazi company, all the Jewish workers thrown out. At the end of the ravage, the Vincius owners were lying in a pool of blood, unconscious and dying, beaten to death. The rest of that branch of the family had given note to Julian Vincius they had secured some funds, and would leave for the USA in an already plan of escape. Also the Bamberg Family living in Castle Hubertushöhe had been expelled from their home. They too had to abandon their property, without any deed of selling their large store in the centre of Berlin. This family too had left in a hurry for the USA.

The nationwide boycott on Jewish-owned shops as of 1 April 1933 thus had no impact on the large stores. Nevertheless, the department store owners began to experience discriminations in less obvious ways. For instance, marriage coupons were not allowed to be redeemed in Jewish businesses. Sales figures plummeted. When the Tietzes needed bank loans, these loans were provided on the condition the management was Aryanised.

Gradually, the Jewish owners were removed from their stores. The stores of Hermann Tietz took the name of *Hertie*, and the stores of Leonard Tietz became the *Kaufhof*. The Propaganda Ministry of Goebbels ordered all the Wertheim book departments to be closed in early 1936. The Wertheim stores were called AWAG for *Allgemeines Warenhaus Aktion*

*Gesellschaft*. Hess's office asked for the divorce of Georg and Ursula Wertheim, possible for she was not Jewish. They did so in 1938. When Georg Wertheim died on 31 December 1939, his widow, in 1940, married Arthur Lindgens, a non-Jewish member of the board of this AWAG.

The smaller Jewish shops suffered more. Local Nazi groups harassed and attacked Jewish shops and businesses. For instance, in 1933, during the Christmas shopping time, gangs of local SA stormtroopers stood outside Jewish-owned shops, trying to discourage non-Jewish clients to enter. Anyone who went inside was considered to be a traitor to the German race. Since autumn 1937, The Nazis placed signs outside Jewish businesses, designating them openly, publicly, as such. It seemed an invitation to harassments, boycotts and even attacks. The SA, the SS, the Labour Front, used their purchasing power to expel Jews from the places these held their businesses. They bought the Jewish-owned businesses. In some towns, the number of Jewish shops were very high, such as in Hamburg, where over 1,500 Jewish-owned companies thrived in the city. The actions had economic effects. So strongly, that Hitler had to issue a declaration begin October 1933, expressly permitting civil servants to buy goods in Jewish-owned shops and department stores. The word and examples being out, more and more, local authorities broke up their business relations with Jewish-owned businesses. The Nazis allowed demonstrations of antisemitic-minded people in front of Jewish shops. Nevertheless, very much so in Catholic areas, people continued to buy things in Jewish stores. But events of antisemitic people destroying Jewish property became more frequent, especially around Christmas. Then, the shops organised to allow their Jewish owners to survive. For instance, from January of 1938 to October of the same year, 800 Aryanisations of Jewish business had taken place, and also in 340 factories and 22 private banks.

The Jewish owners could flee to the neighbouring countries, but on 1 August 1936, the *Devisenfahndungsamt*, the German Foreign Currency Search Office, established under the control of Reinhard Heydrich, allowed the local authorities to take over into their own administration companies all the shops the owners of which might be suspected of assisting the flight of capital from Germany. Thus, in Hamburg, from December 1936 to October 1939, more than 1,400 recovering orders were filed against Jewish businessmen.

In the ongoing Aryanisation of Jewish businesses, the Regional Economic Consultants of the Nazi Party in the office of the same name, took the lead. They appointed trustees to Jewish firms, and insisted all remaining Jewish employees had to be dismissed. They set the purchase prices of such firms deliberately very low. Usually, the members of these offices were young and quite ruthless men.

The *Third Reich* evolved more to a dual state. Normally, it had legal norms and laws upheld by the traditional institutions, but also a quasi-legal apparatus of Hitler's state existed side by side, without fixed rules, and antisemitic to the core.

On 16 October 1934, a tax reform was introduced. All taxes were to reflect the Nazi world-view. In individual cases, Nazi principles had to be used in assessing the issues. Jewish companies were suddenly faced with new demands for supposedly unpaid back-taxes. The tax regulations were freely interpreted to disadvantage the Jewish businessmen. End November 1935, Hjalmar Schacht banned Jewish stockbrokers from performing their trade,

and on 14 October 1936, the *Reichsbank*, still led by Schacht, ordered its branches to inspect foreign currency dealings if others failed to do so.

In 1936, Hitler had published a memorandum on International Jewry in the *4-Year Plan*. In it, he identified the Jews as the hidden face behind the Bolshevik menace. Hitler openly demanded laws making all Jews financially responsible for all damage caused by Jews to the German economy, especially their accumulating of currency reserves abroad. Hitler even demanded the death penalty for such an offence.

The Raw Materials and Currency Staff law of Göring had made the transfer of Jewish-owned funds abroad illegal! The mere suspicion of the crime was sufficient for confiscation of large amounts. This led to a growing number of expropriations of Jewish possessions in the following months and years.

There existed an older emergency rule of Heinrich Brüning over amounts of capital brought out of Germany. Instead of 200,000 *Reichsmark*, this was brought to 50,000 *Reichsmark* and the Brüning tax of 25% was now brought to much higher. The tax income from such transactions rose from in 1922-1923 of 1 million *Reichsmark* to 342 million *Reichsmark* in 1938-1939. For transfers of capital abroad, the German Gold Discount Bank levied an additional fee of 20%. This fee gradually rose to 90% in June 1938!

By 1 January 1936, many Jewish bankers were squeezed out of business. They closed and chose to emigrate. About 300 Jewish private banks thus closed in Germany on a total of about 1,300. One-fourth of all Jewish bankers gave up banking overall. More financial decrees followed. On 26 April 1938, Göring, in his role as Minister of the Interior, decreed that every Jew or spouse of a Jew had to declare all assets held at home and abroad over the value of 5,000 *Reichsmark*. Later still, other decrees banned Jews from acting as auctioneers, from possessing or selling arms, from accepting commissions from public corporations.

The Aryanisisation continued during the years 1933 to 1939. In Hamburg, more than 2,000 shops stood empty as a result of the Aryanisisation. Most of these were small-scale Jewish shops. Modest-sized non-Jewish enterprises benefitted most from their closure.

Overwhelmingly large German companies gobbled up the Jewish businesses. As a result, the industrial and financial power of these larger companies grew, though not those of the largest concerns. The Nazi regime never dared to pressure the largest companies. Also, in the largest concerns sat still many Jews in the boards. On the boards of Mannesmann, of IG Farben, the Deutsche Bank, were still many Jews until 1938. The gradual removal of Jewish managers from German businesses assisted the rise of a new, young managerial elite, that was beginning to take over from the older generation by the time the war began. But, for instance, the Allianz Insurance company had no active pursuing of a policy of dismissals in her board. Until about 1938. In 1938 also, came additional bans on Jews acting as travelling salesmen, estate agents, and so on. By 1937, the very large businesses began to drop scruples in the profiteering from taking over fine Jewish companies. Mannesmann grabbed several such smaller firms. So did Salamander Shoes, Aryanisised already in 1933, buying other Jewish shoe companies and tanneries. By 1937, virtually every large company in Germany was joining in the division of the spoils, with increasing cynicism. Equally the German banks were competing in this system.



Paying a fair price for Jewish businesses in the *Third Reich*, especially in the late 1930s, and thereby maintain basic business ethics, was almost a criminal offence. Many men, including many active NSDAP members, encouraged the Aryanisation of Jewish businesses and drove down prices of Jewish businesses as hard as they could. In the meantime, many foreign-owned businesses in Germany drove out their Jewish employees too. Göring, Hess, Himmler, Robert Wagner (the Regional Leader of Baden), told in public not to seek financial advantages from the Aryanisation, but most party leaders wanted to profit! They claimed plunder was but a just reward for the sacrifices suffered under the Weimar republic. Chances were too beautiful, easy and simple. They reasoned Jewish-owned property and funds had been stolen anyway from the German race. But Aryanisation was only one part of the vast system of plunder, expropriations and embezzlements in the *Third Reich*.

### *The Nürnberg Race Laws*

The minority of people in German society that appeared to the Nazis as a vast threat and that Adolf Hitler hated, were of course the Jews. These, the Nazis claimed, seemed idle, inferior, degenerate, actively subversive, engaged in a massive conspiracy to undermine and destroy all that was German. The Jews worked in a conspiracy that operated on the worldwide scale. Yet, they were no more than a mere 1% of the German population. Antisemitism was connected and driven by several aspects of the Nazi racial idea.

The *Law for the Prevention of Hereditary diseased Offspring* was conceived as a series of laws that removed the German citizenship from the Jews and banned marriages and sexual relations of the Jews with Aryans. The laws were at first temporarily withdrawn for they could have a bad effect on public opinion abroad, an effect Hitler and other Nazi leaders at first dreaded. The policy on Jews did not include sterilisation or castration of the Jewish people.

On 7 April 1933, then, early on then, a law banned Jews from occupying posts in the civil service, in the universities, in judiciary and other state-funded institutions. As the Government was then worried about the effects of such laws and antisemitic actions on the fragile economic recovery, and also on the foreign diplomatic relations, a pause set in after 1933. Paul von Hindenburg, the then still *Reichspräsident*, had equally insisted on exempting former front-line soldiers from such laws. By end 1933, however, the SA still repeated local boycotts of Jewish businesses. After the purges of 1934 in the SA, this activism remained on a low burner for some time. But by Christmas 1934, the boycott actions resurged. Jewish businesses were once more marginalised.

One of the reasons for the recrudescence of attacks on the Jews were the growing unpopularity of the Nazi Regime. Material conditions remained miserable, levels of unemployment did not diminish, and prices of food and other daily necessities had risen sharply. The people had become disenchanted by the Nazis' constant demands for adulation, acclamation, support, and money. At the same time, the SA sought to stand out from the shadows and back into the light. How else could they justify their existence? The Nazis

seemed to have lost the early enthusiasm for the NSDAP, for Hitler, so they began to lose support. Some action was needed.

By 1935, the Nazis wanted to introduce new measures for banning marriages and sexual relation between Jews and non-Jews, for accelerating the chasing of the German Jews from economic life, and create a special status for the Jews in Germany. In May 1935, a new Defence Law banned mixed marriages between German soldiers and non-Aryan women. In May too, a new law governing citizen applications for foreigners ruled out Jews and other non-Aryans.

All this culminated mid-1935 in more numerous and violent boycotts of Jewish shops by the SA and SS men. At the entrance of many villages appeared signs with slogans such as, 'Jews not wanted here!' Other such signs of antisemitism appeared. In certain towns, Jews were not wanted on trams. In others, Jews could not use the city library. In yet other towns, inns and restaurants got closed to Jews, also swimming pools and baths, as well as cinema theatres. Jewish cemeteries and synagogues got desecrated and non-Jews who had relationships, if only in friendship, were paraded as race defilers. In many towns, the atmosphere became threatening for Jews, so that Jewish inhabitants scarcely dared leave their houses anymore. In Berlin, antisemitic violence was clearest on the Kurfürstendamm, where Jews were attacked in shops and bars. Joseph Goebbels whipped up his followers. He sought to justify antisemitic violence in his speeches.

By Christmas of 1935, antisemitic violence reached new heights. Widespread antisemitic propaganda excited the minds of the common people.

One example was in *der Stürmer*, the newspaper owned by its editor, the millionaire Julius Streicher. Streicher was also the Party Regional Leader for Franconia. The *Labour Front* placed copies of his paper in the factories.

On 30 August 1935, in Hamburg, Julius Streicher led a rally, preceded the day before by SA stormtroopers throwing blazing torches in the roads and crying, 'Let the Jews perish!' Streicher also inveighed against foreign correspondents who criticised Nazi antisemitism.

Such waves of denigrating and even terrorist actions, nor the accompanying campaign against the Catholic Church had the desired effect on the public support for the regime! Many Catholics still sympathised with the Jews. They were hostile to the idea that race and religion should be the guiding drive for actions against individual people. Moreover, the middle classes were upset by the disorder in the streets. Still, propaganda and violence also could not but fail to make an impression, especially on people who leaned on the Government and its representatives and structures to shape their opinions.

In September 1935, the actions against the Jews began to subside. They did not stop altogether, though. Abroad, public opinion began to stir. In New York, dock workers tore down a Swastika flag. Hitler then decided the time had come to declare the swastika Germany's national symbol. On 11 September 1935, the Communist International in Moscow declared war on Fascism. Hitler repeated in speeches it was time to tackle the Bolshevik menace, which he considered a product of international Jewish conspiracies.

On 9 September 1935 began the annual NSDAP Party Rally at Nürnberg. Hitler summoned the *Reichstag* to a session on the final day of the Party Rally in that town, on 15 September 1935. This would be the only *Reichstag* session held outside Berlin under the Nazi Regime. Hitler officially introduced the state flag with the swastika as the national symbol for Germany. He introduced new rules for German citizenship and he launched a speech against the Jews. The Jews were stirring up trouble in the tense international relations for Germany, he claimed. He fustigated the provocative behaviour of Jews in the world. He demanded these provocations to be answered. Hitler asked for and obtained new laws against Jewry. He left the detailed justification of the new laws to Göring. They should protect the German blood against pollution of the Aryans by other races, such as by the Jews. The *Reichstag* passed 3 laws in general acclamation. The laws were printed the next day in the daily newspapers.

Of the laws, the first was called the *Law for the protection of German Blood and Honour*. This forbade marriages and extramarital intercourse between Jews and Germans, as well as the employment of German females under 45 in Jewish households. Persons violating the marriage laws could be imprisoned, then re-arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Nazi concentration camps.

The second, the *Reich Citizenship Law*, declared that only the persons of German or related blood could be called *Reich* citizens. The others were state subjects, without any citizenship rights. That demanded a definition of who was Jewish and who was not.

The definition was provided in a supplementary decree, declared on 14 November 1935, date at which also the *Reich Citizenship Law* came into force.

On 26 November then, these laws were expanded to include the Roma and Black people. The Roma people were defined as enemies of the race-based state, in the same category as the Jews.

Prosecutions on these laws only began after the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games of August 1936. The laws completed the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft* of the Nazis and Hitler, the people's community, defined on race.

The *Reich Citizenship Law* defined the citizens of the *Third Reich* as people of German and kindred blood. Only people who were recognised as Aryans could enjoy forthwith full political rights. Jews and others were merely called 'subjects of the state', with obligations, but no rights. Two Nazi directives outlined the implications of the laws. The *Reich* citizenship was acquired through the granting of a *Reich* citizenship certificate.

Within 2 weeks, the Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick, had ordered the dismissal of all civil servants of Jewish ancestry as defined by the Nürnberg Race Laws.

How was a Jew defined? As a person with at least 3 out of 4 grandparents who were Jewish, defined as persons practising the Judaic religion. The Nazis made it clear that the purity of the German blood was the essential condition for the existence of the German nation. The laws made the distinction between 6 classes of citizens, based on the racial laws:

*Deutschblütiger*, or German blooded were people belonging to the German race totally, and thus approved for Reich citizenship.

*Deutschblütiger* though 1/8 Jewish, were considered as belonging to the German race, approved for Reich citizenship.

*Mischlinge zweiten Grades*, or mixed race 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, 1/4<sup>th</sup> Jewish, only partly belonged to the German race, but were approved for Reich citizenship.

*Mischlinge ersten Grades*, or mixed race 1<sup>st</sup> degree, were 3/8 or 1/2 Jewish, only partly belonged to the German race and had to be approved to receive Reich citizenship (which almost never happened).

*Jews*, if only 3/4 Jewish, belonged to the Jewish race and to its community.

Not approved for Reich citizenship.

*Jews*. Belonged to the Jewish race, not approved for Reich citizenship.

There were issues with this simple definition. In 1935, about 50,000 Jews in Germany had converted to Christianity, or they were the children of Jewish parents who had converted. From 70,000 to 75,000 people had only 2 Jewish grandparents and about 125,000 to 130,000 people had only one Jewish grandparent, of which many were married to non-Jews. In 1939, there were over 20,400 mixed marriages in the Third Reich, then including Austria and the formerly Czech Sudetenland. These formed dilemmas for the Nazis, for they too understood too well that all solutions arrived at for the definition of mixed-race Germans and mixed marriages were in the end entirely arbitrary!

On 14 November 1935, in a new law, such people were classified as of mixed race 1<sup>st</sup> degree – unless they practised the Judaic Faith or were married to a full Jew – and thus counted as fully Jewish. They were called *Geltungsjuden*. People of mixed race 2<sup>nd</sup> degree had 1 fully Jewish grandparent.

Provisions were included for Hitler to grant exemptions whenever and for whomever he pleased. These persons received a stamp bearing Hitler's signature on a document called the *Declaration of German Blood*. The *Ahnennachweis* was a document of ancestry proof, the essential prerequisite for a career in the civil service or for virtually any other job in Germany.

End 1936, Julian Vincius got a stamp on his identity card, a red rectangle in which were inscribed the words '*Jüdischer Abstammung*'. He was thus again marked as a Jew. The same card mentioned he had fought for Germany at the Battle of Verdun. His children were classified as *Mischlinge* or mixed race 1<sup>st</sup> degree, even though they were a little less Jewish than this.

Jews were no longer permitted to work in the civil service or government-regulated professions such as medicine or education. The owners of businesses, however modest, and professionals of all sorts, had no other alternative for living than to take on menial employment.

The Nazis presented the Nürnberg Racial Laws as a stabilising measure that would help the Jews in Germany to settle down, living a quiet life. But the laws opened the way to massive discrimination against the Jews.

On 14 November 1935, two weeks after the promulgation of the laws, Hitler already retroactively annulled the provisions that banned extensions of the measures, to ensure the purity of German blood beyond those contained in the law. This authorised non-governmental organisations to apply the Aryan paragraph to their employees and members, not only to the Jews, but also to the persons of mixed race.

People with 2 Jewish grandparents had to ask for a special permission from a *Reich Committee for the protection of German Blood*, if for instance they wanted to marry a non-Jew. Mixed-race persons could still study in Germany, but they too were banned from sexual or other kinds of relationships with non-Jews. For the rest, they could live a relatively unrestricted life.

The Nürnberg Racial Laws banned men of mixed race from doing military service. Thousands of potential recruits were thus banned from the Army. The *Wehrmacht* had counted there were 150,000 male half-Jews and quarter-Jews of military age in the country. By end 1935, the Army had cashiered all remaining fully Jewish officers and men. Early summer of 1935, the Army reached yet another agreement with Hitler: half- and quarter-Jews had to perform their military service, but they were no longer allowed to hold positions of authority in the Army, unless granted specific and personal exemptions by Hitler. The Nazi Genealogy Office sent information to the Army about officers who were not purely Aryan. But checking on the ancestry of thousands of men was an impossible task. Many officers managed successfully to conceal their part-Jewish ancestry until the outbreak of the war, and in some cases even longer. What mattered to the Army, of course, was that the men were fine soldiers, sailors or airmen.

Many Germans disapproved of the Nürnberg Racial Laws. For example, in the Palatinate, the working class rejected them. Many businessmen feared the laws would lead to a boycott of German goods in other countries.

The people were from then on constantly exposed to antisemitic propaganda. Antisemitism became a principle not just governing public life, but also private life. Judges, prosecutors, policemen, the Gestapo, and other law-enforcement agencies spent increasing amounts of time on enforcing the antisemitic legislation. The antisemitic regulations from then on skyrocketed. Libraries, inns, restaurants, swimming pools, etc. were blocked to Jews. Although some owners turned a blind eye to the laws, Jews were banned from shops, cinemas, and other organisations. Further laws then banned marriages between Jews and Germans or 'kindred blood'. They banned sexual relations outside marriage between the two categories defined by the law. Jews were not allowed to employ female domestic servants under the age of 43 if they were Germans, etc. The laws were to be defended by the regular courts.

Cases of racial defilement or *Rassenschande*, social shame and disgrace flooded in to the courts. In the period of 1936 to 1939, the annual average of conviction of this kind were about 420 a year, of which 2/3<sup>rd</sup> by Jewish men. They received lengthy imprisonments in penitentiaries, rather than in ordinary prisons. And then, on 8 March 1938, on order of the Reich Minister of Justice, Jews sent to prisons for defilement were re-arrested by the Gestapo when they left prison, to be sent to concentration camps such as Buchenwald. There, they could be marked down by the camp doctors for castration, but still only with the man's consent.

This all led to increasing emigrations of young and middle-aged Jews. Other laws provided many new opportunities for the harassment and persecution of the German Jews, especially men.

Prostitutes were particularly vulnerable to denunciations by neighbours for entertaining Jewish clients. Many of the denunciations were false and denounced innocent people. People could be denounced simply for being friendly to Jews, such as shaking hands regularly. The Gestapo and other law agencies thus slowly dismantled all social contacts between the German Jews and their fellow Germans in the 1930s.

### *More Harassment of the Jews and Jewish Emigration*

When Jews were young enough to be able to start a new life, or wealthy enough to finance emigration, they left Germany. They fled into exile to escape conditions which had for many Jews become entirely intolerable.

A few statistics illustrate the emigration movement, away from Germany. There were somewhat more than 430,000 Jews living in Germany in 1933. By the end of 1937 they had diminished to 350,000. In 1933, 37,000 Jews emigrated, in 1934 about 34,000, in 1935 still about 21,000, in 1936 35,000, in 1937 about 23,000. More than 70% of these Jews stayed in Europe. Only 8% travelled to far destinations such as the USA. 19% of the emigrating Jews settled in Palestine. Over the period 1933 to 1939, overall, about 52,000 German Jews travelled to this country, the Jews' Promised Land. From 1933 to 1938, 6,000 Jews emigrated to Canada, 102,000 to the USA, 63,500 to Argentina, 8,000 to Brazil and 3,000 to Cuba. More than 30,000 Jews sought a living in France, 12,000 in Belgium, 52,000 in Great Britain, 7,000 in Switzerland, 5,000 in Italy, 25,000 in Poland, 5,000 in Czechoslovakia, 3,000 in Spain, 7,000 in Yugoslavia, 7,000 in Hungary, 2,000 in Norway, and 4,200 in Sweden. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1933, Representatives of the Zionist movement in Germany and the Nazi Government signed a pact endorsed by Hitler called the *Haavara Transfer Agreement*, by which the Jews could take with them a significant portion of their assets. Those who left for other countries than the Haavara list had to leave much of what they left behind. Germany received by the *Haavara Agreement* much-needed goods such as citrus fruit from Palestine in return.

The Jewish Affairs Division of the SS Security Service arranged for such emigrations in 1935. A radical group of young SS officers led the emigrations: Dieter Wisliceny, Theodor Dannecker, Adolf Eichmann. These progressively became more anxious about the movement, as they began to feel encouraging the Jews to move to Palestine would accelerate the formation of a Jewish State in the Near-East, which could have dangerous consequences for Germany in the long run.

On 12 February 1933, a Jewish national organisation saw its foundation. In September 1933, it evolved in the *Reich Representation of the German Jews*, led by the Berlin Rabbi Leo Baeck. The aim was to regroup and defend Jewish life in Germany, in dialogue with the Nazis. They emphasised the patriotic service rendered by the Jews in the First World War. They fustigated the financial penalties laid by the Government on the German Jews, as well as the Aryanisation of German businesses, and the restrictions ordained by the Government on the export of currency. Many Jews definitely were German patriots. They left Germany in tears. Many Germans still saw no need to emigrate.

As the emigrants were generally poor, it became gradually more difficult to obtain refuge in other countries, which did not want to burden their own welfare system. Due to the depression also, unemployment remained high in all countries. The emigration proved a new opportunity to grow rich for corrupt German officials. In return for applying the rights stamps on the Jewish papers, the officials frequently demanded high sums of money.

On 6 July 1938, a conference of 32 nations took place at Evian, on the French shore of Lake Geneva. It discussed the phenomenon of the Jewish emigration and tried to impose agreed guidelines to all countries. It did not succeed in coming to a general agreement. Anti-emigrant sentiments grew in most countries. Meanwhile, the harassments of the Nazi leaders on the Jews continued. The *Nazi Students' League* pushed most Jewish students out of the universities.

Although there were about 3,950 Jewish students in the summer of 1932, only 590 of these were left in the autumn semester of 1933. Already in 1933, Jewish children were expelled by Nazi decrees out of the mainstream sports clubs. Fewer than 35,000 remained in own Jewish sports organisations.

Fanatical Nazi teachers and the Hitler Youth activists drove Jewish children out of the schools. More than 10% of the Jewish pupils were forced to abandon their secondary education because of the anti-Jewish laws, and about 60% broke off their studies because of the hostility of some teachers and students. In January 1938, Jewish students were officially excluded from the common university entrance examinations. All remaining Jewish school pupils were summarily expelled at the end of the year. In the classrooms, special benches were placed for the Jewish students, and they were banned from German lessons. Jews could not attend ceremonies, festivals, concerts and plays. Some teachers deliberately gave Jewish pupils bad points, and humiliated them.

In 1935, over half of the 30,000 Jewish children of primary school age were attending Jewish community schools, founded by Jewish organisations. They were housed in cramped and inadequate accommodations, with up to 50 children in one class. In 1938, a mere 1% of all the pupils in secondary Prussian schools were Jewish. At early 1937, there were still 167 Jewish schools in Germany, with nearly 24,000 pupils out of 39,000 in all. In October 1939, less than 10,000 Jewish schoolchildren were left in Germany, due to the emigration.

The Jewish former Berlin City Opera deputy Kurt Singer set up the *Jewish Culture League* in the capital. Its membership grew to about 8,000 individuals, catered exclusively for the Jewish community. It had been officially approved by Hermann Göring. Singer was quickly pushed aside and replaced by Hans Hinkel, a Nazi and a Göring man. Hinkel banned the *Culture League* from German works, such as by Goethe, Schiller, Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss. In November of 1938, the Jews were officially banned from attending German theatre, cinemas, concerts, lectures, cabarets, dances, shows, exhibitions and other cultural events. On 1 January 1939, the remaining Jewish publishing houses were merged into the centralised Jewish Culture League. The effect of the emigration became very visible. When in 1933, only 20% of the Jews born in Germany were over 50 years of age, this number was over 50% by 1939.

In 1933, there were 35,000 couples in mixed marriages in Germany, usually Jewish men and Christian women. The Nürnberg Laws redefined also their social position and actually outlawed them. Non-Jewish spouses came under increasing pressure from the Gestapo to start divorce proceedings. Jewish husbands in mixed marriages were forced to cede control over their children, their businesses, their property, etc. to their non-Jewish wives. Gradually, the wife became the principal breadwinner in the family.

On 28 December 1938, Göring proclaimed new regulations for mixed marriages. Privileged families, in which the husband was Jewish and in which the children were brought up as Christians, or marriages in which the wife was Jewish though without children, were exempted from discrimination acts of the Nazi Regime. A family in which the husband was Jewish though without children, or in which the wife had converted to Judaism and the children were brought up as Jews, enjoyed no privileges.

On 6 July 1938 the Government divulgated yet another Marriage Law. Marriage was defined as a union between two people of healthy blood, the same race and opposite sexes, concluded for the common good, with the purpose of procreating children of healthy blood, raising them to be good German racial comrades. Mixed marriages found no place in this definition, as mixed marriages had already been banned in September 1935. By a later law, German-blooded men married to a Jewish wife could apply to have the marriage annulled on racial grounds. A Jewish man who lost his job or livelihood, could be sued for divorce by his non-Jewish wife on the grounds he had failed in his duty to support the family. Other reasons on racial grounds were mentioned in the law. Divorce for a Jewish woman meant new hardships, as she came to be alone. The Gestapo regularly invited German, Aryan women, married to Jewish men into the police Headquarters for friendly chats, in which they put pressure on the women to divorce.

In late 1935, the situation of the Jews in Germany eased a little, but only for a short time. This happened because Germany was scheduled to hold the Olympic Games. The decision to hold the Games in Berlin had been taken before the Nazis came to power. The Olympic Summer Games were to take place in Berlin, the Olympic Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. At Garmisch, the Nazis had to pull down all the signs indicating the Jews were unwanted in the small town. The Nazis feared somewhat an international boycott campaign, which mounted especially in the USA. Hitler realised the transfer of the Olympic Games elsewhere could be extremely damaging to the image of Germany and of himself abroad. No Jews were part of the German teams. Also, no training facilities in which Jews were allowed existed in the country. Three half-Jewish athletes were called in from abroad, such as the blonde fencer Helene Mayer. The grand new stadium in Berlin could hold 110,000 spectators. The Games were broadcast on radio and even experimentally in television. A choir of 3,000 singers, directed by Richard Strauss, opened the Games with Strauss' newly written Olympic Hymn, a variation on the Horst Wessel song.

During the Games, an incident happened. Hitler called victorious athletes to his box, to be officially congratulated by him. The Olympic Committee had to remind him he should not offend the international spirit of the Games by discriminating between victors of different countries. Hitler should congratulate all or nobody! He chose for the latter.



In February 1936, Martin Bormann reminded Party Officials the aim of the NSDAP remained to shut out the Jews from every sphere of German life. As the situation in the streets had somewhat calmed down, many thousands of Jews who had left Germany in 1933, had returned in the following years. The depression hit France severely in 1934, so the French Government had issued restrictions on the foreign workers. German exiles in France returned. But a decree of the Bavarian Political Police had ordained all returning male emigrants to be sent to the Dachau concentration camp, and returning women were sent to the concentration camp of Moringen.

The *Gestapo* acted against the Jewish cattle-dealers who sold and bought livestock. Jewish cattle-dealers were expelled from markets and slaughterhouses. End 1937, they were driven out of business. The Jews were regarded more than ever as the enemy within. Hitler remembered the ‘stab in the back’ of World War I, and wanted to diminish such a possibility anew, even it was all but hearsay and wrong.

On 13 September 1937, Hitler nevertheless incited for more violence against the Jews. He called the Jews inferior through and through, unscrupulous, subversive, terminating those cleverer than themselves, and establishing everywhere a Bolshevik reign of terror.

By the end of 1937, everywhere, new antisemitic disturbances broke out, new boycotts of Jewish shops during the Christmas season. A new phase of persecution started.

On 25 July 1938, all but 709 of the remaining 3,152 Jewish doctors in Germany lost their licence to practise. They lost the right to be called doctors in Germany, but they could treat Jewish patients.

On 27 September 1938, the same principle was applied to Jewish lawyers. Only about 170 out of more than 1,750 lawyers were not allowed anymore to continue working with other than Jewish clients.

As of 17 January 1939, the same happened for Jewish dentists and apothecaries.

On 28 March 1938, the Government deprived the Jewish cultural associations of their status as public organisations, thus removing from them an important legal protection. The German government increased taxation on them.

On 17 August 1938, The Ministry of the Interior promulgated a new law. All Jews had to bear a Jewish name, and if they did not, they had to add the name of Israel or Sara to their names by 1 January 1939. Jews could thus automatically be identified as such from the identity papers every German was obliged to carry with him or her.

In June 1938, 1,500 Jews were arrested on Hitler’s personal orders in a large-scale police action against so-called asocials, beggars, homeless wandering people, and so on. The arrest was meant to increase the pressure on them to emigrate. They were imprisoned, and only released from the camps when Jewish agencies had made arrangements for them to emigrate.

In Berlin, Goebbels and the Berlin Chief of Police Helldorf continued actions against the Jews. They obliged Jewish shops to be daubed by the star of David, and placed such stars also on doctors’ chambers, lawyers’ chambers, all over the city. The stormtroopers were allowed to loot Jewish houses and to demolish synagogues. The same happened in other German cities, such as Frankfurt and Magdeburg.

Goebbels commissioned a report from Helldorf, who recommended a special identifying mark to be worn always by the Jews, also for their shops, and for the Jews to have a special

identity card. The Jews could be removed from a series of professions, be confined to separate compartments in trains, confined to separate quarters in the town, etc. These remained at the stage of proposals.

Nevertheless, on 22 June 1938, Hitler had to reign in the violence, as it had also affected foreign Jews in the city. Hitler had given his overall approval for the actions against the Jews, as he wanted all the Jews out of Germany in 10 years. How, he really didn't care! The Berlin Police issued a confidential 76-point list of ways in which the Jews could be harassed without the law being broken.

For instance, the Jews could be summoned to police stations on Sabbath, health and safety regulations for Jewish businesses could be made very strict, the processing of legal documents could take a long time for Jews, etc. Synagogues were defiled and destroyed in Nürnberg and in München, and at least in a dozen more German towns. Jewish premises in Württemberg were attacked and destroyed.

In the event of a war breaking out, the SS Security Service had plans and lists ready for the arrest of all the remaining Jews. The summer of 1938 knew a pogrom-like atmosphere. The Nazi Regime took steps to expel all non-German Jews from the *Third Reich*.

In the autumn of 1937, Aryan employers were ordered to dismiss all Jewish employees. More than 1,000 Russian Jews were expelled from the country and were sent back to the Soviet Union, which took a long time, because of the uncooperative attitudes of the Russian authorities. In 1939, about 50,000 Polish Jews resided in Germany. Of them, actually 40% had been born in Germany. These Jews were a nuisance to the Nazi Government, as they were not subject to the German anti-Jewish laws. But the antisemitic military dictatorship that ruled Poland by then, passed a new law on 31 March 1938, which allowed to remove Polish citizenship from these people. On 27 October 1938, the German Police began arresting these Polish workers. The Police transported them with their families in sealed cars over the German border with Poland. The Polish Police could block the Polish border in time, so the people were left to wander in the No-Man's Land between the two countries, without food or shelter, until the Polish Government relented and set up refugee camps. Then, the Polish authorities ordered the expulsion of all German citizens across the border, into the contrary direction. Germany stopped the action that had backfired on 29 October 1938.

### *Die Kristallnacht, the Night of the broken Glass*

On 7 November 1938, a 17-year old Polish citizen, Hershel Grynszpan, living in Paris but grown up in Germany, heard his parents had been deported from Germany into Poland. Grynszpan obtained a revolver. He marched into the German embassy and shot the first German diplomat he encountered. This was a junior official called Ernst von Rath. Von Rath got seriously wounded and was taken to hospital.

Propaganda Minister Goebbels gave instructions to the German press to give the story of the incident a prominent place in their reporting. It was called an attack of World Jewry on the *Third Reich*, which should have the heaviest consequences for the German Jews. Goebbels then ordered the regional Propaganda Chief of Hesse, to launch violent attacks on synagogues

and other Jewish buildings. The SS, SA and the *Gestapo* rushed to action. Synagogues in Kassel, in other towns of Hesse, and in Hannover, were destroyed. This was for the Nazis nothing else but the spontaneous rage of the German people against the outrage of Paris. On 9 November 1938, Hitler had sent his personal doctor, doctor Karl Brandt to Paris. Brandt phoned the Führer back that von Rath had died. Goebbels and the Foreign Office heard of the death on late 9 November.

Hitler ordered Goebbels to launch a massive, coordinated assault on the Jews of Germany, the arrest of as many Jews as could be found rapidly, and their incarceration in concentration camps. It was the ideal opportunity to intimidate and to coerce as many Jews as possible to leave Germany in a hurry. A terrifying, nationwide outburst of violence and destruction followed. It was a nationwide pogrom!

The NSDAP Party leaders had assembled in the Old Town Hall of München for an evening dinner. Hitler left early. Regional Party Headquarters and officials telephoned SA commanders and party activists to burn down synagogues and wreak havoc in Jewish shops, houses and apartments. The head of the Gestapo at that time was Heinrich Müller, a subordinate of Himmler. The arrest of 20,000 to 30,000 Jews had been prepared. Heydrich ordered the police and the SS Security Service not to get in the way of the destruction of Jewish properties. Looting of houses was not to be allowed, and foreign nationals were not to be touched. No fires were to be raised in Jewish shops for fear of damaging nearby German premises. But as many Jews were to be arrested as there was room in the concentration camps.

The German activists were still celebrating the anniversary of the 1923 putsch. They were drunk, so they did not take the warnings of no lootings, no personal violence, not too seriously. Soon, every Jewish house of prayer and worship in the country was in flames! Local firefighters did nothing, except protecting adjacent buildings from the fire and damage. In total, 520 synagogues in Germany lay in ruins, though probably over a thousand. The windows of Jewish properties were smashed in. The night was therefore called the *Reich Kristall Nacht*, the night of the broken crystal. Furniture was smashed, books were thrown around, and valuables were looted.

The Jews were threatened and beaten. Jewish cemeteries were broken into, gravestones smashed, corpses dug up. Jewellery, cameras, electrical goods, and so on, were stolen from the Jewish houses. About 7,500 out of 9,000 remaining Jewish shops in Germany were destroyed and looted. It was a widespread and destructive rage of the Germans against the Jews, especially in Berlin and München. There was some popular disapproval as also the *Hitler Jugend* joined in.

In the morning of the next day, 10 November 1938, policemen appeared in the streets to prevent further thefts. The Confessing Church, the Protestant Church, took no stand and remained silent. Some Catholic priests hinted cautiously and obliquely at their disapproval of what had truly been a devastating pogrom. They did not dare to protest openly. The *Third Reich* had thus unleashed a massive destructive fury against the Jews in its lands. They had not encountered any meaningful opposition. They knew then they could take any awful steps against the Jews without anyone trying to stop them.

On 10 November 1938, Goebbels phoned Hitler and discussed how the action could be curbed. The official report mentioned 91 Jewish people killed. Many more were seriously injured. Among the Jewish population, 300 suicides followed. Probably in total, 1,000 to 2,000 Jews were killed. For many Jewish men, the violence continued long after the pogrom was officially over. In all, about 30,000 Jewish men were arrested between 9 November and 16 November 1938, and transported to Buchenwald, Dachau and Sachsenhausen. In Buchenwald, 20,000 men now lived on the hut floors without washing facilities, with only 2 makeshift latrines. The SS guards beat people and committed atrocities. The death toll at Dachau exploded from between 20 and 40 a year to 115 in November 1938, 173 in December, and 286 for the year.

Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry explained the events of the *Kristallnacht* as a spontaneous outburst of the righteous anger on the part of the German people. A fury, pent up for generations had been unleashed. The German propaganda ministry had learned a lot from the Russian explanations of the pogroms in the Pale at the turn of the century! On 11 November 1938, in the *Racial Observer* newspaper, Goebbels attacked the foreign Jewish press for overreacting on the pogrom. For Goebbels, the Germans were an antisemitic people by nature. They had been provoked as a nation by a parasitic Jewish race. But for many foreign observers, the outburst of rage in the events of November 1938 came as a turning point in their estimation of the Nazi Regime.

Hitler and Goebbels then finalised the draft of the decree bringing the pogrom to an end, and they discussed what to do next. Hitler wanted a law to make the Jews of Germany collectively liable for damage caused to the German people. Hitler wanted now even tougher measures against the Jews. He wanted the gradual expropriation of all Jewish businesses. The Jewish assets had been registered recently, so Hitler's 'compensation' order could be implemented immediately.

Göring too held a conference with about 100 participants for actions to be undertaken. Goebbels was present, Heydrich, the Finance Minister Schwerin von Krosigk, the Economy Minister Walther Funk, representatives of the Police, of the insurance companies and of the Foreign Office. Göring told the 'demonstrations' of November had harmed the economy. Consumer goods belonging to the people had been destroyed. Göring, Hitler, Goebbels and Himmler wanted the segregation of the Jews from the rest of German society to be complete.

Jews were to be banned from going to the cinemas, theatres, concerts and exhibitions. The Jews were to surrender all firearms, and forbidden to carry offensive weapons. Municipalities could ban the Jews from the streets or entire districts at specified times. Driving licenses and vehicle registration documents could be withdrawn from Jews. As of 6 December 1938, Jews were prohibited from sports or playing fields, public baths and outdoor swimming pools. No special compartments would be foreseen for Jews on trains, but Jews were banned from sleeping cars or dinner cars on long-distance express trains. Jews were banned from the well-known restaurants, luxury hotels, public squares, much frequented streets and smart residential districts. They were banned from attending university courses.

On 30 January 1939, the German Jews were stripped of their rights as tenants, thus paving the way for their forcible ghettoization. They could be evicted without appeal if a German

offered them alternative accommodation. All tax concessions were removed from the Jews, all child benefits, and they would be taxed at one rate only, the highest one. The Jews were ordered to pay a collective fine of 1 billion *Reichsmark* for the murder of von Rath. All Jews were ordered to pay 20% of their assets as declared in previous April. In October 1939, this sum was raised to 25%, as the atonement total sum estimated had not been reached. The Jews had to clean up the mess left by the pogrom at their own expense, and to pay for the repairs on their own properties by themselves. The insurance payments were confiscated by the state, to a height of 225 million *Reichsmark*. The total sum finally plundered from the Jewish community amounted to well over 2 billion *Reichsmark*. A law of 12 November 1938, the *First Decree on the Exclusion of Jews from German Economic Life* banned the Jews from almost all remaining occupations in Germany from which the Jews would be able to gain money. It ordered all the Jews still engaged in companies to be dismissed without any compensations or pensions. And this was not all!

On 16 November 1938 already, Heydrich ordered all assets of Jewish men to be stopped. All Jews over 60 years of age, sick or handicapped Jews, and Jews involved in the Aryanisation process, were to be fired immediately. Releases of other Jewish men were conditional on their promise to leave the country.

The Nazi regime thus forced the Jews to emigrate. Indeed, in January 1939, Heydrich ordered all Police authorities of Germany to release all concentration camp prisoners who had migration papers in their possession. They had to emigrate, and would be sent to camps again if they returned to Germany. They were given 3 weeks to leave the country. Jewish agencies worked together with the officials of the *Third Reich* Interior Ministry of the emigration. On 30 January 1939, Göring, as head of the 4-Year Plan, passed the task of arranging for Jewish emigration to the *Reich Centre for Jewish Emigration*, founded on 24 January 1939 under control of Heydrich.

On 3 December 1938, the Government issued a *Decree on the Utilisation of Jewish Assets*. It ordered the Aryanisation of all remaining Jewish businesses. By 1 April 1939, about 15,000 of the 39,000 Jewish businesses still in existence had been Aryanised. The press called this ‘a justified retributive measure for the cowardly murder of Ambassadorial Counsellor von Rath’.

In February 1939, all Jewish cash, securities and valuables such as jewellery, were ordered to be deposited in special blocked accounts. Official permits were required for withdrawals from those deposits. Such permits, of course, were rarely if ever issued. The result was, that almost all Jews who stayed now in Germany were virtually penniless and had to depend on the charitable activities of the *Reich Association of Jews in Germany*, created on 7 July of 1938. Hitler ordered this association to be left in place, so that the state had no obligation to give any support whatsoever to destitute Jews.

On 20 December 1938, the *Reich Unemployment Agency* instructed regional labour exchanges to ensure that such Jewish people should be put to work, freeing up German workers for armament production. The Jews were only good for farm work or other menial tasks. In May 1939, about 20,000 Jews were thus employed in heavy constructions work on the new motorways.

As Jewish funds were blocked, the Jews could not pay their tickets for instance to the USA. The Nazis' slogans were 'send the Jewish beggars over the borders, the greater the burden on the receiving countries.'

According to Jewish statistics, by the end of 1937, there were still 324,000 German Jews in the country. At end 1938 this number had fallen to 269,000. By end May 1939 to 189,000. Official German census figures were for September 1939 of 233,646 racially defined Jews still in Germany. Minus about 20,000 Jewish members of the Christian Churches, and 26,000 were foreign Jews. So, at the outbreak of the war, there were still officially 207,000 German Jews in the *Reich*, of whom 187,000 practised the Jewish cults. From November 1938 to September 1939, about 115,000 Jews had left Germany. Since 1933, about 400,000 Jews had fled from Germany! They emigrated to the USA with about 115,000 Jews, 62,000 to Palestine, 40,000 to Great Britain, 10,000 to Argentina, 7,000 to Australia, 5,000 to South Africa, 9,000 to Shanghai. About 1,700 children were sent to the Netherlands, and 9,000 to Great Britain. In all, 7,000 Jews fled to the Netherlands. The USA refused to take in children.

By the summer of 1939, the remaining Jews in Germany had been completely marginalised, and deprived from their means to earn a living. This was not enough for Heydrich. In a meeting of November 1938, he had insisted on a badge for all Jews to wear. Hitler himself vetoed a proposal to concentrate Jews in specific houses and to oblige them to wear a yellow badge in public. He did this out of consideration for the international public opinion. Hitler presented the *Kristallnacht* pogrom still as the expression of the universal and fanatical hatred of the Germans for the Jews, which he was doing his best to reign in. On 30 January 1939, Hitler repeated yet further threats against the Jews in public, in the *Reichstag*. This was in his speech of the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his appointment as *Reich Chancellor*.

Hitler said that if International Finance's Jewry in Europe and beyond should succeed once more in plunging the peoples in a world war, then the result would not be the Bolshevisation of the world and the victory of that Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe. Hitler sought the neutralisation of what he conceived as a Jewish threat during the coming war. For him, clearly too, International Jewish finance was working with International Communism, steered both by the Jews. In such a European war, Germany would win, and the USA would be brought in. The only way for the Jews to stand a chance of success would be lost. By such a time, Germany would have the European Jews in its power. Then he would hold the European Jews hostage, as a means of deterring the USA from entering the war. If the USA would yet enter the war, all European Jews would be killed. Hitler's programme was ready! The radicalisation of antisemitism in 1938, formed a part of the preparations for the war for German dominance and for the racial re-ordering of Europe.

These events happened in 1938. By that time, the process of conquest and reorganisation of Europe, had already started with the annexation of Austria. Germany needed hard cash for its rapidly growing rearmament bill. The anti-Jewish pogrom of November 1938 seems thus to have been part of the Nazi general preparation for the war. Indeed, the Nazis had eliminated the internal threat (the Jews) that had made them lose the First World War. They had confiscated much new money for their rearmaments programme, and they exercised already

some items of blackmail towards the USA by the imprisonment of the Jews and the threat to exterminate them if the USA entered the war.

## The Situation in other European Countries

### *Poland*

A rabid antisemitic party called *Endeks* of Roman Dmowski was the first in Poland. *Endeks* presented a fascist ideology in the 1930s. After 1935, *Endeks* was thrown into the opposition, and a military junta ruled over the country. Still, *Endeks* organised widespread boycotts of Jewish shops, and that using considerable violence. In actions of *Endeks*, over 350 Jews were killed and 500 injured in new-style pogroms between December 1935 and March 1939. The Polish Government was weakened by the national hero Marshal Pilsudski's death in 1938. It considered then antisemitic measures to try to stop *Endeks* from growing. Measures included so-called ghetto-benches for Jewish students in the universities, restrictions in the number of Jewish students, restrictions on the Jewish export businesses, an outlawing of ritual slaughter of animals according to Jewish kosher prescriptions, bans on Sunday shopping, and so on. Increasingly, the Polish government took on board policies first advanced by the Nazis in Germany. In January 1939, some of its representatives put forward a Polish equivalent of the Nürnberg Laws.

End 1938, Poland annexed Teschen, a part of south-eastern Silesia with a diverse population. This territory had been awarded to the Czechs in 1920. The Polish Government continued to refuse to cede the return of Danzig to Germany. And that, although Danzig was almost entirely ethnic German. It also refused a transport corridor to East Prussia from out of Germany. Poland remained obstinate in these refusals.

The Polish Jews formed about 10% of the population, much higher than in Germany. The vast majority of these spoke Yiddish, rather than Polish, and they adhered strongly to the Jewish religion. They were treated as a national minority. Polish antisemitism was essentially religious, rather than Fascist and racial. In the late 1930s, the Polish Government put pressure on the international community to allow massive Jewish emigration from the country. This was a major reason for summoning an international Evian conference on the subject. One idea that was never implemented, was to send the Jews to the island of Madagascar. Such issues were discussed too in other countries of Central Europe, such as in Rumania and Hungary. The Fascist movements in Hungary were called the *Arrow Lions*, and the *Iron Guard* in Rumania. In these countries too, antisemitism was linked to radical nationalism.

On 31 March 1939, Neville Chamberlain offered Poland a guarantee of British military support should the country be attacked by Germany. The French did the same. Their aim was to deter Hitler from further acts of aggression. The effect only provoked Hitler more.

### *Rumania*

Rumania had 700,000 Jews living in the country, about 4.2% of the total population. King Carol II of Rumania formed a right-wing regime with an antisemitic legislation. Carol became the dictator of the country in 1938. By September 1939, his Government had deprived at least 270,000 Jews of the Rumanian citizenship. Most came under pressure to emigrate, as they were forced out of professions such as of the judiciary, the police, the officer corps in the Army, teaching, and so on.

### *Hungary*

In Hungary lived 445,000 Jews. They spoke Hungarian and were strongly integrated culturally in the population of the country. The largest group lived in Budapest. The prominence of Jews in the short-lived Communist regime of Béla Kun in 1919 fuelled antisemitism in the rightist parties. The state's counter-revolutionary leader, Admiral Miklós Horthy allied Hungary to Germany in the late 1930s, hoping to gain back territories handed over to Rumania and Czechoslovakia in the 1919 Peace settlements after the First World War.

The first Jewish Laws were introduced in May 1938. They provided for restrictions in the numbers of Jewish employees in businesses and in the professions. Promulgated by end 1938, the Second Jewish Law came into effect in May of 1939. It banned Jews from running newspapers, cinemas and theatres, teaching, buying land, serving as officers in the Army, and joining the civil service. These laws were racial in character.

### *Bulgaria*

In most of the Balkan countries, the national extremists saw Jews as the agents of a worldwide, probably Bolshevik conspiracy. The Jews were generally regarded as a threat to national independence. In these countries too, Jewish rights were restricted.

Germany annexed the northern part of Slovenia, south of the Austrian border. Italy incorporated the territories of the Adriatic Coast, some of the Dalmatian Islands, and Montenegro.

Bulgaria moved into eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace. The Bulgarians expelled 100,000 Greeks from the area, and brought in Bulgarian settlers as an early example of ethnic cleansing. The country held more to its independence than even Hungary and Rumania. Its king was Boris II at the outbreak of the war. He was an intelligent, cunning man. He had to cope with a major uprising in Thrace in September of 1941. He needed his Army to put down the uprising. In the following months. The Bulgarian Army killed between 45,000 and 60,000 Greeks. King Boris III had also to deal with a threat of an internal revolt by fascist republicans., which he could suppress.



As of October 1940, Bulgaria had an antisemitic legislation, banning sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews. Jews had been defined purely in religious terms. This legislation was not rigorously enforced though. The Jews were by law forced to wear the yellow David Star, but the stars were simply not worn. The Masonic badges had been dissolved under German pressure, but many ministers of the Government were themselves Freemasons! King Boris III refused to provide any troops to help Germany on the Soviet Front, and Bulgaria never declared war on the Soviet Union.

King Boris refused to surrender the country's Jews to the SS after widespread popular protest against the plan. Parliament objected strongly to the deportation of Bulgarian citizens, although they had accepted Germany's pressure to introduce antisemitic legislation. Nevertheless, 11,000 Jews in the Thracian and Macedonian territories annexed, were deprived of their citizenship and handed over to the Germans for killing. There was then widespread outrage, when 6,000 Jews from the pre-war Bulgarian kingdom were listed for deportation by an over-zealous antisemitic official. The Orthodox Church stepped in to protect the Jews.

On 2 April 1943, King Boris visited the German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. They agreed the remaining 25,000 Jews in Bulgaria would be put in concentration camps, but not delivered to the Germans.

### *France*

On 3 May 1936, the French general elections seemed an outright triumph for the anti-Fascists! A front composed of Socialists, Communists and Radicals, calling themselves the Popular Front, won a victory of 376 seats in Parliament, whereas the Right National Front got only 222. Actually, the left won only 37.3% of the votes, and the right 35.9%. The Radicals lost from 157 seats in 1932 to 106 seats in 1936. The Socialists grew from 131 to 147 representatives and smaller leftist parties got 51 seats, winning 14 seats more. The Communists went from 10 seats to 72! The Socialists had won!

The leader on the left was Léon Blum, a Jewish intellectual and an early supporter of Albert Dreyfuss. On the Far Right in France stood Charles Maurras and his *Action Française*.

Antisemitism was a characteristic of the right-wing parties in France. The Rightist parties were fuelled by hostility and opposition to the Popular Front Government of Léon Blum, a Jewish and Socialist President of France. France became thus a very divided country. Election promises of the Popular Front in France were: a program of public works to push down unemployment, a reduction in the hours of the working week, retirement pensions, and the establishment of an unemployment fund. The social revolution would have to wait. There was to be no nationalisation of the economy, no soviets or worker councils to be installed, no peasant collectives to be introduced, no nationalisation of the *Banque de France*, yet this bank's management was to be broadened to tear it out of the hands of the controlling oligarchy, and the Franc to be upheld in order to save the middle class. The right of women to work would be guaranteed, yet no mention was made of women to obtain the vote!

Léon Blum became the first Socialist and Jewish Prime minister. The Communists provided support for the Government, but stayed out of it. Yet, France remained divided and revengeful. In February of 1936, a Nationalist mob attacked Léon Blum physically. Charles

Maurras, the leader of the rightist *Action Française*, had denounced Blum as a man to be shot in the back! After the attack, big strikes were organised, bigger than France had ever known before. Thousands of strikes began, all over the country, spontaneous strikes of over 2 million workers and large numbers of women. There were factory occupations, sit-ins, in a massive strike wave. On 7 June of the same year, the Prime Minister met the Trade Unions and the Government on the right of joining a Trade Union, which was granted, in the collective bargaining. Other measures were on the recognition of shop stewards, on a ban on primitive repressive actions against strikes, allowing for wage rises of about 15%, on the 40-hour working week, and 2 weeks of paid holidays per year were granted. The strikes subsided. Further measures were, as mentioned already, the reform of the *Banque de France*. The school-leaving age was raised to 14 years. The paramilitary leagues were banned and the armaments industry nationalised. The farmers received big increases in grain prices. A Ministry for Sports and Leisure was founded, example taken on the Fascists for such organisations, and the public health services would be improved.

By the end of 1936, Blum's limited Socialist experiment rapidly ran into strong headwinds from the international market forces. The largest businesses moved their investments out of the country. The introduction of the 40-hour working week led to price increases, and to growing inflation. The French Franc came under pressure and hence equally the gold reserves of France. This lowered the support for the leftist Government. In June 1937 already, Léon Blum had to resign, for Parliament and the conservative Senate refused to grant the Government emergency powers to handle the country's financial issues.

The new Prime Minister was the Radical Camille Chautemps. The government was dominated by the Radicals. These had political inclinations to the Right, towards greater Conservatism. Camille Chautemps raised taxes, and he ended the social reforms. Yet, prices continued to rise and public debt continued to grow. The French Franc continued losing value. Confidence in the Franc was lost. Productivity stagnated. The unrest and strikes continued to foment. When Léon Blum's government fell, the new Finance Minister was George Bonnet. He tried to stabilise the state finances. The defence budget for 1938 was cut. The Armed Forces chiefs complained in vain.

Indeed, in 1937, France built 370 modern airplanes. Germany built in the same time over 5,600 new airplanes! The Air Minister for France was then René Cot. He needed a 60% increase of his budget to augment aircraft production, but the Government refused him the money. In 1938, the military budget for France should have augmented, lest in a war the French Air Force would be annihilated in a few days. On the contrary, it had been reduced!

In March of 1938, Léon Blum returned as Prime Minister. France was then beset by worries in its Foreign Policy. Blum had to be dismissed once more, merely after 26 days of having been Prime Magain. Politics thereafter shifted to the Conservative Right under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, the radical Edouard Daladier. He promptly terminated what was later called the *Revolution of June 1936*.

## Part II. The Road to World War II

## Adolf Hitler

Adolph Hitler in 1939 was not only the *Führer*, occupying the role of President of Germany, but also the Reich Chancellor or Prime Minister. His State Secretary, Otto Meisner, ran what was once the President's Office. The head of the Reich Chancellery, his administration as Chancellor, was Heinrich Lammers. Hitler's principal link with the Propaganda Ministry of Joseph Goebbels was Walther Frank.

Hitler's retreat lay on a mountain, the Obersalzberg in the Bavarian Alps. It was at first a small hilltop chalet, later expanded into a large complex of buildings called the *Berghof*. Hitler lived there with an attractive young woman, Eva Braun, 23 years younger than Hitler, a former employee of Heinrich Hoffmann. He refused to marry her until his last day. Eva Braun was Hitler's private companion, not his official consort. Unsavoury rumours had circulated about Hitler's relationship with his niece Angela Raubel, who had been killed in a car accident.

Hitler was erratic rather than busy in his working habits. He knew no hours of the day. Here was a man who was certainly intelligent, but that up to a point, and who had not studied. Just to where did his intellectual capacities reach? He was a fanatical and compelling speaker. From his brain came the broad, general principles on which the NSDAP thrived. He laid down the few, basic ideas of the Nazi ideology. These were simple.

Germany had to reconquer the territories she had lost in the last World War and which had unjustly been taken from her at the Versailles Treaty of 1919. Hitler had fought in that war, lost too, and still hated the Allies for the humiliation. Hitler was convinced Germany had lost the war because she had been betrayed at home by International Jewry and its derivation, the Russian Bolshevik ideology. The Jews and Bolshevism therefore had to be destroyed, in Germany and abroad. The Germans needed new territory, which could only be in the east, to provide for *Lebensraum*, the living space, for its citizens. Ultimately the Aryans, superior among other races, should rule over the world. But the Germans were all but starving!

The *Lebensraum* call, necessary for the nourishment of the German people and its future generations, was not at all based on any current or future shortage of arable land! Not more than Japan did not need half of China to fuel its industry! Germany went to war to gain global power, and to be recognised as a global power. Hitler's irrational thoughts were not based on scientific approaches. The desire to gain material power at other countries' expense and pure vanity were much more the cause of the war. Germany and Hitler and the Nazis, did not feel appreciated and feared enough for their intelligence, industry and military power. And above all, rearmament, being achieved at the expense of achieving social justice, even if that word of 'socialist' was part of the name of the NSDAP.

The war Hitler envisaged to come, was thus to be far more extensive than a limited series of battles in Europe. As he once said himself, he would lead the German people in bloody action, not only for an adjustment of its boundaries, but to save it in the most distant future by securing so much land that Germany would receive back in the future many times the value of the bloodshed. Hitler had a vision, and that vision of victory and power appealed to the

German people. It was a vision of extreme vanity, however, and Germany had to pay dearly for the vanity.

In August 1933, Hitler had told American businessmen he not only wanted to annex Austria, for an Aryan and German-speaking people, but also the Polish corridor to Danzig, the German-speaking parts of Denmark, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania. He didn't add then he intended Germany in the long run to dominate the world. Hitler fustigated the fact that although countries like Poland had gained their independence, millions of people speaking German had been refused the rights on the lands they lived in, as parts of Germany. Hitler realised clearly that for the two greatest enemies of Germany, France and Great Britain, the depression had meant financial retrenchment and a huge reluctance to spend more money on arms. He saw clearly too, that most of the post-war politicians in Great Britain and France were second-rate figures. They were reluctant to go to war, and would rather rely on other solutions of solving conflicts, notably by diplomatic negotiations, holding on to what they had gained. A minimum of goodwill was all that was necessary to avoid a new war. War would only be renewed carnage in trenches, massive aerial bombardments of towns and industrial sites, huge destruction and huge loss of life, and possible social revolution to what could only be the dominance of Communism.

The Germans embarked in a race against time to defeat the Soviet Union before the USA's economic power could decisively affect the conduct of the war. This race in war, Hitler would ultimately lose.

All Hitler was to do now, was preparing for war in a phase of rearmament, and appease the international public and political opinion.

International disarmament negotiations, the contrary of what Hitler wanted, had begun in Geneva in early 1932. Great Britain and France had been unwilling to allow German parity with them. The leader of the German Foreign Office then was Baron Konstantin von Neurath. The defence Minister von Blomberg persuaded Hitler to pull out of the Geneva talks on 14 October 1933. Germany had been humiliated by the Peace Settlement of Versailles, and had plunged into economic disaster. To add insult by refusing to grant equality in disarmament, was too much to bear for Germany.

Poland was a large country. On 26 January 1934, The Nazi Government of Germany concluded a 10-year non-aggression pact with Poland. Poland covered Germany's eastern flank during the delicate period of secret rearmament. The region of Danzig was ruled by a local National-Socialist, a Nazi, with a government under League of Nations suzerainty, so in principle secured. Hitler had his hands free for internal rearmament.

Hitler also met Mussolini, the Italian dictator, in June of 1934. Hitler admired Mussolini. But the meeting with Mussolini remained rather frosty, for the Italian leader remained suspicious of Hitler's intentions with Austria and parts of northern Italy.

### *Austria*

Austria remained in those times far from the glory of the old Habsburg empire. It had lost most of its associated territories, such as Hungary. It had severely been hit by massive

inflation in the 1920s, followed by the deflation and then the worldwide depression. The traditional great groups in politics were the Socialists, especially in the capital Vienna, and the Catholic oriented Christian Social Party of the middle-classes and the rather conservative farmers. In February 1934, a Socialist armed uprising had been suppressed by brutal force of the Army. The Christian Social Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss worked as in an authoritarian regime. He used the army to confirm his power over the land, and outlawed his main opponents, the Socialists. Thousands had been arrested. On the right now, the paramilitary *Home Defence Brigades* sought to apply a more radical Fascism on the Italian model. A tiny Austrian Nazi Party began to grow, but it was formally banned by Dollfuss in July 1933. This had little effect, although the aim of the Austrian National Socialists was already clear: unification with the *Third Reich*.

In early summer of 1934, Fridolin Glass, the leader of a group called SS Standard 89 in Vienna, tried to overthrow the then current Austrian Government in Vienna. About 150 of his men entered the Austrian Chancellery in borrowed Austrian Army uniforms. They shot the Chancellor Dollfuss, invaded the radio station nearby, and proclaimed the Government had resigned. The Austrian branch of the SA refused to intervene. But the Army rapidly suppressed the revolt, and the Austrian Nazis helped even to stop the putsch. The then still Minister of Justice, Kurt von Schuschnigg formed a new Government. He arrested the rebels. Schuschnigg reconstructed the Fascist dictatorship on a new and firmer basis. He curbed the power of the *Home Defence Brigades*, and sent the Nazis underground. In June 1933, the Nazi Party was even banned in Austria.

Hitler organised the underground activities of the Nazis from out of München. He sent Theo Habicht, a German *Reichstag* representative to Austria, to lead the Austrian Nazis. Clandestine propaganda accused the Austrian Government henceforth of having installed a regime run by Jews. Habicht fomented a new putsch, which failed in its turn. As a result, Hitler was beside himself with rage and embarrassment. He dismissed Habicht and closed down the München office of the Austrian National-Socialist party. Hitler then thought of his former Deputy-Chancellor von Papen, who was since the Night of the long Knives still under house arrest. He appointed von Papen to German ambassador in Vienna. Von Papen moved to Vienna, accompanied by his still also imprisoned secretary Günther von Tschirschky-Bögendorf.

### *Germany and Hitler*

In the years 1934 and 1935, Germany's isolation on the international diplomatic scene was almost complete. On 13 January of 1935 then took place the plebiscite in the Saarland, as specified by the Treaty of Versailles. The Saarland had never wanted to become separated from Germany in the first place. In all, 445,000 Saarlanders then voted to stay in Germany, about 90% of the voters. The Catholic Centre Party still strong there, had equally supported the return to Germany. Goebbels had launched propaganda campaigns. The NSDAP organised massive intimidation and violence behind the scenes. Social Democrat meetings were broken up by SA men wielding steel bars. The publicity against the reunification scarcely existed. Nevertheless, most Saarlanders voted for the return to Germany, irrespective

of Hitler and the Nazis. The plebiscite injected a new boldness in foreign affairs for Hitler. He felt personally strengthened by the victory.

By 1934, Hitler had won the total power in the state. His relentless ideologic actions remained the removal of the Jews from Germany, the conquest of new living space – entailing the preparations for military conflict to secure the future of the German people, though without at that time a coherent plan or timetable – and the racial cleansing in general with the drive to impose racial purity.

Prussian officials moved immediately into the Saarland, to take over all important political offices and jobs. People suspected of pro-French sympathies were dismissed. The Jews in the region were allowed to emigrate on more favourable terms than for the Jews in other parts of Germany.

Hitler had come to a point, where he was increasingly unable to conceal the pace and extent of the German rearmament programme. The German Army had already expanded to over 500,000 soldiers. The Nazi Government introduced again the General Conscription on 16 March 1935. All this began to worry the former Allies. On 11 April 1935, the British, French and Italian diplomats met at Stresa in Italy. They declared their determination to defend the integrity of Austria against the by then clearer intentions of the German threat. A little later, the League of Nations censured the German rearmament programme. France concluded an agreement of cooperation with the Soviet Union. On 18 April 1935, an Anglo-German Naval Agreement was still signed. The Germans were allowed to build up their Navy to 35% overall of the British Navy, and the Germans could reach parity with the British in numbers of submarines.

The negotiations for this in London were led by Joachim von Ribbentrop. Von Ribbentrop spoke good French and English, and had been awarded the Iron Cross in the last World War. He was very ambitious, and married to Annelies Henkell, the daughter of the German *sekt* or sparkling white wine manufacturer, the Champagne way. An aunt from the aristocratic branch of his family adopted him to allow him to use the aristocratic ‘von’ in his name. Von Ribbentrop was socially pretentious and a snob, called by his peers ‘von Ribbensnob’. He had met Hitler in 1933. Doubtless with Hitler’s approval, von Ribbentrop had set up his own independent office. With this, he developed his influence on the policies of the Foreign Affairs. Hitler had given him a staff of 150 to lead negotiations. In late 1936, Hitler appointed von Ribbentrop to ambassador in London. But Ribbentrop’s harsh German style, brusque, peremptory, authoritarian, did not go well with the British diplomats. Soon, Ribbentrop resented the slights by the British High Society. The ‘old fighters’ in the Nazi Party, such as Goebbels and Göring, also despised him. He exercised his influence on Hitler to obtain his moving up the Nazi ladder.

End 1935, Benito Mussolini launched the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, current Lybia. He also found no serious opposition in far-away Ethiopia, against the army of Emperor Haile Selassie. The Italians enjoyed total supremacy in the air. Italian planes obliterated the Ethiopian forces, bombing them incessantly. The high explosive bombs destroyed the Ethiopian cavalry. Poison gas was used to wipe out the Ethiopian infantry. Haile Selassie

appealed for support to the League of Nations. Public opinion forced the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to enforce economic sanctions on Italy. Mussolini and his pro-German son-in-law Count Galeazzo Ciano, turned to Hitler for help. In 1936, the German Ambassador in Rome, Ulrich von Hassel, and Hitler, wanted to rush to Italy's aid. Germany refused any international sanctions on Italy. Mussolini in gratitude could tell Hitler from then on Austria would lay within the German sphere of influence. The Stresa conference conclusions had been dumped, and the war in Abyssinia forgotten and Italian. These developments moreover convinced Hitler and Mussolini they had nothing to fear from London and Paris. Mussolini dismissed his pro-French Foreign Minister, and replaced him by Count Ciano. This was also the time when in France, the Popular Front won the elections.

### *Germany's March into the Rhinelands*

In 1936, Germany renewed with its hardships. Food shortages happened again, and the regime moved into a worsening conflict with the Catholic Church. Grumbling and discontent grew in Germany. The Nazis understood nothing but a further diplomatic victory could cheer up the people. But the German Army was still no match for the French Army, should France choose to act upon German provocations. Hitler gambled France and Great Britain would still not try to prevent for instance the German Army from marching into the occupied and demilitarised Rhinelands. Germany's pretext could be the forthcoming ratification of the French-Soviet pact by the French *Chambre des Députés*. In view of this ratification, the *Third Reich* felt no longer bound by the Pact of Locarno of 1925, which regulated its relations with France. Hitler would move to the remilitarisation of the Rhinelands. This was essential for western defence, and important for the rearmament of Germany. The invasion of German troops was of course flagrant assault on the 1925 Locarno Treaty of the post-war peace settlement in Western Europe.

The preparation for the operation in the Rhinelands took place in the utmost secrecy. Troops moved into their pre-arranged positions overnight. On 7 March 1936, Hitler summoned the *Reichstag* to meet in the Kroll Opera House for a noon session. Since dawn, however, German troops had already entered the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland. 3,000 German troops marched to deep into the Rhinelands, backed by 30,000 more soldiers remaining on or near the eastern banks of the stream. French politicians actually thought the German military presence was ten times higher than it actually was!

Hitler declared he had no territorial demands in Europe. He offered peace acts to reassure Germany's neighbours. He then dissolved the *Reichstag* and called for new elections. He also called for a plebiscite to agree with his actions of 29 March 1936. Germany was in jubilation at Hitler's coup.

The French Government chose inaction. Great Britain restrained from any precipitate response. After all, what had happened was merely a recovery of German sovereignty over its own acknowledged territory. This act was not worth risking a new, general war. No military confrontation would issue. France did not react either! French politicians ruled out the use of force to remove German military from the Rhineland. Such an act was deemed financially and politically too dangerous for France. French public opinion was opposed to the military



retaliation for the Rhineland. Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, merely mentioned the British Government wanted appeasement. In March 1936, Hitler staged a plebiscite to ratify the Rhineland action; he won the plebiscite with 99% votes of support. His popularity soared to new heights. The remilitarisation ended the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno. Hitler had ruthlessly grasped the initiative, and he had won.

Hitler had taken his biggest gamble yet, and got away with it, to the delight of the German people. The initiative confirmed Hitler in his belief he could not fail in his actions. He was a kind of genius. The remilitarisation of the Rhineland profoundly altered the balance of forces and of international relations in Europe. France could not anymore imperatively march into the Ruhr and occupy Germany's biggest industrial region. From 1936 on, France's position was merely a purely defensive one on German actions. The *Third Reich* had a free hand to move against smaller countries in Europe.

The dictatorship in Germany now meant many initiatives without resistance: first of all, the elimination or the severe reduction of pluralist forms of political representation, the severe restriction of personal freedoms in Germany, the control over the mass media, and the termination or limitation of any judicial independence. The Nazis could continue their heavy-handed repression of the political dissidents through extended police powers. Some form of national Parliament was retained, but Parliament had no real power. All power lay in the hands of one man. His authority rested on the backing of the security forces and of the military. The military were ideologically national conservative and vehemently anti-Socialist.

After Hitler's takeover of power in Germany, the Left forces knew a tragic demise. The Right, backed by the Police, the military and the surveillance services, proved far too strong against the Left. By 1935, the Left was impotent in the hands of the rightist parties and subject to fierce persecution. In Great Britain and in France too, conservative Governments had dominated. The Left looked in the first place at advancing the interests of a specific social group, the industrial working class. That made all the other classes look in fear to the other side, trying to avoid the horror stories that seeped out of the Soviet Union.

Many countries of Europe turned to Nationalism and to regimes dominated by strong men, though kings continued to rule in name. This was the case in Greece, where in 1935 the monarchy was restored under King George II, though General Ioannis Metaxas wielded the power from April 1936 to 1941, the date of the death of the king. In Hungary, power was held by Admiral Miklos Horthy. In Portugal actually Antonio Salazar held power and in Poland the leader of the nation was General Edward Smigly-Rydz.

In all these countries and dictatorships, the regimes were similar in characteristics: they could count on the complete regimentation of society and on the adulation of a leader. The men in power terrorised opponents and minorities. The monopolist party ordered relentless mobilisation. The gain of power had meant a major upheaval by the utopia of a changing society, not necessarily better than the preceding one and a total claim on the individual. The men in power educated people to become committed believers, to claim the minds of the people as well as their body. The regimes were dynamic and revolutionary.

In the 1930s, the Nazis gained wide popular support. That was due to the economic recovery, which had really set in only after the beginning of the 1930s. The depression diminished after 1934. The new economy guaranteed the elimination of unemployment and the Nazis reached the restoration of the political order in the country, accompanied by a re-establishment of national unity and a sense of renewed strength. The Nazis won patriotic victories, such as the remilitarisation of the Rhinelands. Foremost, Hitler's own immense popularity as the symbol of Germany's new standing in the world, dynamized the masses. As of 1938, the *Hitlerjugend* became near compulsory for young Germans. The NSDAP's propaganda and terroristic repression with general surveillance formed the means for a rigidly controlled society. Most Germans nevertheless shed no tears in this atmosphere for outsiders being barred from the community, least of all for the Jews.

### *Great Britain*

Great Britain's political and military leaders fully realised the country's defence commitments were greatly overstretched. British defences had been neglected. The leaders hence sought a policy of appeasement, in which Britain led and in which France followed.

In June 1935, Stanley Baldwin became the Prime Minister for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. In March, Hitler told the British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon and the Lord Privy Seal Anthony Eden, that Germany had gained parity in air power with Great Britain. This message caused a great alarm in London. The same month, Baldwin replaced the Air Minister Lord Londonderry with the more forceful Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister. The dominant view in London now became that it was crucial to play for time, to avoid a premature war, and to step up armament. Hence, an accommodation was to be reached with Germany. A politics of appeasement was defined.

On 28 May 1937, the new British Prime Minister was Neville Chamberlain and in November, Lord Halifax, the Leader of the House of Lords, was soon to become Foreign Secretary. In December 1936 came the abdication crisis in Great Britain, as King Edward VIII renounced to the throne in favour of his brother George VI, to marry an American divorcee, Mrs. Wallis Simpson. In November of 1937, Halifax went to meet Hitler. The British Government, Halifax told, would accept a change through peaceful evolution in the current status of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Danzig. Hitler answered he had no wish to annex Austria, but behind the scenes, he was exactly working to that end! Chamberlain accepted Halifax's visit had been a great success. The British then Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden was opposed to this simplistic view. But he was ill, and recuperating in the south of France as from January 1938. Eden resigned in February of that year. His successor then became the arch-appeaser Lord Halifax. Hitler privately remarked the British Government was the chief obstacle to the German expansion in Europe.

### *The Soviet Union*

By 1935, the Bolshevik system of Communist rule in Soviet-Russia had become Stalinism. Since Lenin's death in 1924, it was no collective leadership anymore. In 1936, a new Soviet

Constitution had been promulgated, replacing the first constitution of 1924. It held universal electoral representation, civil rights, freedom of thought, of press, of religion and of assembly. The Constitution mentioned guarantees of employment, for the Government to work in the interests of the people, for the purpose of strengthening the Socialist system. Actually, it was a ruthless dictatorship based upon fear, on servility, and on careerist ambitions. Freedom did not exist, nor did protection under the law. The Russians were submitted to the unlimited and arbitrary power of a few leading people in the state. Ethnic minorities close to the Soviet borders were subjected to mass deportations and executions.

From 1928 to 1932 was the period of the first *Five Year Plan*. The plan proposed the compulsory collectivisation of the peasantry. The measures for this were massively unpopular, as the agricultural regions got impoverished. Yet, there was no shortage of enthusiasts either. Authority was brutally and ruthlessly asserted. Careers depended on targets being met, whereas failure was too grim to contemplate. The Second *Five Year Plan* was for 1933 to 1939. The material conditions of the Soviet citizens fell sharply in that period.

In the Soviet Union, the Communist Party dominated the state, and Stalin dominated the party. He was the General Secretary of the Communist Bolshevik Party. The party's Central Committee was a pliant instrument of Stalin's will. The *Politburo*, originally 15 strong, was now reduced to a handful of Stalin's closest loyal friends. Russia's Foreign Minister was Maxim Litvinov, who seemed in favour of a rapprochement with Germany. Vyacheslav Molotov was the Chairman of the Council of the People's Commissars, or the Prime Minister. The Council often only held informal meetings. The Government was the *Sovnarkom*, the Council of People's Commissars.

Stalin was 50 years old in 1928. He was a Georgian, a secretive, very private person, undemonstrative and intelligent. He spoke with a quiet voice. Stalin was essentially vengeful, coldly cruel, given to paranoia and fantasy. Stalin's regime encouraged denunciations at all levels.

By 1933, 1 million anti-Soviet persons had been thrown in camps and prisons. About 850,000 members of the party had lost their membership. In 1934, the Leningrad boss of the Party, and a member of the *Politburo*, had been shot dead in his office, shot on Stalin's orders. In 1937 and 1938, he organised more purges of opposers to Communism, and to himself, in the Soviet Union. The State Police was the NKVD.

Grigory Zinoviev was an early supporter of Stalin, but he had equally supported Lev Trotsky and Lev Kamenev. These three were sentenced to long periods in prison during Stalin's purges. First, about 30,000 real or supposed opponents of Stalin in Leningrad were deported to Siberia. Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev were sentenced to prison too. In the 5 months following their trials, over 300,000 members were expelled from the Party. In 1936, Zinoviev and Kamenev were shot after a new trial. Trotsky had fled.

In 1938, Nikolai Bukharin was put on trial and shot. Head of the Soviet police from 1936 to 1938 was Nicolai Yezhov, called the *Iron Hedgehog*. Stalin had him arrested in 1939 and executed the year after.

There were 139 members of the Central Committee, but 110 of these members were deemed unreliable by Stalin, and arrested in the purges. The Party held a congress in 1934 of the

nearly 2,000 delegates. Of these, over 1,100 were arrested! In 1937, the NKVD had to arrest a quarter of a million men as targets. Of them, over 70,000 were shot, and the rest sent to camps, to prison or to labour camps.

The purges diminished in 1938, due to the enormous disruption damaging the industrial production of the Soviet Union. The ideological driving force in the Soviet Union was thus not ready for a major conflict, due to the strain and fear of the purges.

In 1939, the total number of citizens in Soviet Russian prisons and labour camps was about 3 million people. Arbitrary executions happened all the time in the Soviet Union during Stalin's period of power. In 1937, he ordered the roundup of 140,000 Soviet Poles. They were either shot or sent to labour camps. In the period of 1937 and 1938, Stalin also demolished his military high command. The most outstanding strategist of the Soviet Union then was Michael Tukhachevsky. Stalin had him arrested and executed. In all, more than 30,000 officers were purged from the Red Army. The command of the Army was given to a rather incompetent favourite of Stalin, Kliment Voroshilov.

In June of 1934, Stalin had abandoned the *Comintern's*, the Communist International's denigration of the Social Democrats as only 'social Fascists'. This was a reversal of earlier Communist strategies in Europe. Stalin now encouraged the collaboration of the Communists with the Socialists, and even with the bourgeois parties, to build a popular front on the Left to fight the increasing menace of Fascism. The new strategy of Stalin was to work together with the formerly denigrated Social Democrats, to combat the increasing menace of Fascism in Europe.

The Soviet Union was not ready for a major conflict in 1941. Its arms production was hampered by inefficiencies and by structural problems in converting civilian to military production. Of course, also by the disastrous purges wanted by Stalin. Russia had been weakened, so that Hitler could think it was not a force to be reckoned with. The gap with Germany was widening.

Germany had been planning aggressively for a war in the very foreseeable future. It was the more advanced economy and had the most efficient military leadership. Hitler had ordered several attempts of German expansionist drive when he dictated the events to which the Soviet Union had it difficult to react.

In the Soviet leadership, war with the Capitalist powers, with Germany and Italy especially, was seen as inevitable. The question was only when just such a war would start. By late autumn of 1937, most Central and Eastern Europe's leaders were well aware of the drastically shifting power and of their own very limited options should a war begin now. They saw France was gravely weakened by internal divisions and economic issues. At about the same time, British diplomats once more visited the Germany of Hitler. They signed an anti-Comintern pact, directed against the Soviet Union. Hitler had sent von Ribbentrop as his ambassador to London.

Japanese militarism along the border with Manchukuo with the USSR was beginning to become a significant threat. As of July 1937, however, Japan had been fighting a bitter war in

China. Soviet Russia recognised Japan became increasingly militaristic and aggressive, but was at the moment unable to intervene militarily.

### *The Spanish Civil War*

Primo de Rivera's dictatorship had ended in January 1930. By 1936, the Spanish generals were conspiring to overthrow the elected, leftist Government. In November 1933 new elections were held in Spain, in which the radicals won, led by Alejandro Leroux, who became Prime Minister. A two week strike in the Asturias was bloodily suppressed by General Francisco Franco. That left 2,000 civilians dead, 4,000 injured and 30,000 men jailed and tortured in prison.

In 1936, new elections were organised. The Left, the Popular Front, was then constituted of the Republicans, the Socialists, the Communists, the Catalan Separatists and Anarchist Trade Unions. They came against a national block of right-wing parties. The Popular Front won a great victory. They secured 278 seats in Parliament, against the Right's 124 seats. The new government gave back its autonomy to Catalonia. Afterwards, the Government exerted only weak control over the most extreme forms of leftist groups. Strikes followed, and burning of catholic churches. The rightist *Falange Group* grew along the violence brought upon the Catholic Church, as more than 6,000 members of the clergy, monks, priests and nuns, were murdered all over the country, sometimes in horrific ways.

In the growing protests and in fear of rightist revolts, the Government removed General Francisco Franco from the centre of Spain to the Canary Islands. General Emilio Mola was demoted. 17 July 1936 was the date of the start of an uprising in Spain and Morocco. In Spain itself, the east and the south of the country remained faithful to the parties of the Republic, but the rest of the territories went to General Mola.

Mola, with the right-wing officers of the Spanish regular Army then launched an uprising to overthrow the republic and install a military dictatorship in Spain. They plunged Spain in a desperate and bloody, devastating civil war.

In July and August of 1936, Hitler and Mussolini provided airplanes to transport Franco's crack army of Africa, 30,000 soldiers, to Spain. The ultimate leader of the conservative rightist revolt, General Francisco Franco, appealed to Hitler for more direct help. By end 1936, Franco was accepted as the Supreme Commander of the revolted Army. Franco was a military leader entirely. He was ruthless towards his enemies. He was also against Freemasonry, against Communism and Separatism, the evils that he considered had brought decadence, corruption and the decline of Spain. His forces carried out about 200,000 executions in Spain, and threw about 1 million prisoners in jails and labour camps. General Francisco Franco led well-armed and disciplined troops. They began to push back the soldiers of the Republic.

In November 1936, Werner von Blomberg, the German Minister of War, now promoted to Field-Marshal, was in Spain. About 11,000 German soldiers, accompanied by their support troops and staff, with aircraft, artillery and armoured vehicles, landed at Cadiz. Great Britain

and France agreed together and insisted on a policy of non-intervention. Nobody of the former Allies wanted the war to escalate beyond Spain.

Before end July 1936, German airplanes had already been operating in Spain, ferrying rebel forces to the key fronts. German intervention reached startling proportions. This war proved an ideal testing ground for the German new armed forces and their equipment. Hitler sent the German Condor Legion to Spain. It was relatively small, though highly trained, and a truly professional fighting force. The Condor Legion was placed under the command of General Hugo Sperrle. It had also brought new anti-aircraft guns or Flaks for *Flugzeug Abwehr Kanonen* against the Republican airplanes.

Mussolini's assistance in the war was even greater. But Hitler and Mussolini were countered by the aid of the Soviet Union to the Socialist, Republican forces. Then also, volunteers from many countries, wanting to stop Fascist troops, formed an International Brigade. They too entered the war on Republican side.

Still, the Republican forces had to draw back. In November 1936 already, the Government left Madrid for Valencia.

In September of 1936, the Popular Front Government came under Largo Caballero. His central authority was asserted by a centralised economy, conscription, a unified army, rationing and organised civil defence. There was also increased Soviet Union influence in Spain.

On 31 March of 1937, the Junker aircraft bombers of the Condor Legion bombed the undefended town of Durango, causing 248 inhabitants to be killed. Then, on 16 April 1937, with 4 new and fast Heinkel 111 bombers and hitherto untried Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighter planes, also with a few Italian airplanes, an air force of 43 planes, the Germans attacked the Basque town of Guernica. They dropped over 100,000 pounds of high explosive, incendiary and shrapnel bombs on the small town. Refugees and peasants had assembled on the market day of the week. Over 1,000 people were killed in the raid, and more than 800 injured. The raid had been led and organised by Colonel Wolfram von Richthofen. Later on, a bid to use fast-moving tanks against the Republican forces, was vetoed by Franco.

The victory for the armies of General Franco, now called the *Caudillo*, was almost inevitable. End March 1939, the war was over. On 18 May 1939, the Condor Legion, led by von Richthofen, could march in a victory parade in Madrid.

In September of 1936, Hans Frank was in Rome to negotiate mutual support with Mussolini. Hitler signed a secret agreement with Italy in Germany, with Count Ciano. In November of 1936, Mussolini could speak of a Rome-Berlin Axis. From then on, the allied forces of Germany and Italy were called the Axis forces. They would soon be joined by the soldiers of several other countries.

In May 1937 in Spain, Largo Caballero was forced out of office, and replaced by Juan Negrin, the former finance Minister. Negrin was a shrewd politician and a competent administrator. Still, by 1938, the final agony of the republic was approaching, after a main Republican offensive on the Ebro River failed. The morale of the Republican troops

deteriorated fast, and crumbled by March 1938. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany had provided vital help to ensure the military success of Franco.

On 1 April 1938, General Franco could declare the end of the war. On the battlefields of Spain had died 200,000 men, whereas all over Spain more than a million men had been killed out of a total population of 20 million. Many men were tortured in prisons. Early 1939, Catalonia also fell to Franco. His army captured huge numbers of prisoners. After the war, a further about 20,000 Republicans were executed. Thousands more died in prison camps and in forced-labour groups. The killing went on into the 1940s. General Franco became the dictator of Spain, kept out of World War II, and died in 1975. The Spanish Civil War had lasted 3 years.

The events in Spain left the Socialists of Europe rather demoralised. Spain had brought the belief that pacifism and disarmament could not be sustained against the rightist forces. Only by force of arms could Socialism have a chance to defeat Fascists.

The German Armed Forces learnt important tactical lessons about air strikes in support of ground troops, as well as the need to improve on their tanks.

### *Developments in Germany*

On 1 January 1937, Julius Lippert became the new mayor of Berlin. In the summer, he took charge of the celebrations in the capital to celebrate the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the city. On 30 January, Hitler appointed Albert Speer to the function of *General Inspector of Building* in the city. Hitler wanted him to draw ambitious plans for the design of the new, Nationalist capital of Germany. Hitler thus abandoned many years of collaboration with the authorities of the city for the embellishment of the capital. He put his faith in Speer now, and began discussing the designs with him.

Hitler also wanted a new chancellery. The building would continue in the Voss Strasse. In 1935, to that end, the buildings of the Dresdner Bank in the street had been bought by the State. In 1936, the Ministry of Justice, in the same street, could also be used. In fact, both buildings had already been torn down, and the new building had been begun as of March 1936. The first stage was completed in January 1938.

Plans were developed with Speer to create a new north-south axis in Berlin, to run along the former *Siegesallee*, cut across the *Voss Strasse*, and form a new link with the *Kurfürstendamm* near the Emperor Wilhelm Memorial Church. There would also come a new South Railway Station and a new North Railway Station. Hitler thus realised with Speer the first ideas for a new grand Berlin, capital of Nazi Germany.

On 5 November 1937, Hitler held an important meeting with Blomberg, Fritsch, Göring, von Neurath, Admiral Raeder, Colonel Hossbach and others. They heard of Hitler's intention to take military action against Austria and Czechoslovakia. But a number of the top military leaders, backed by sympathisers in the Foreign Office, had become very alarmed by Hitler's impatient drive to war and conquest. War Minister and Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg, Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath, and Army Commander-in-Chief Werner von

Fritsch expressed their serious doubts about Hitler's intentions. The Chief of the General Staff, General Ludwig Beck, expressed his dismay at Hitler's irresponsibility. He warned a general war would be inevitable, and maybe desirable, but to launch it now would be dangerously premature, as the Armed Forces were not ready for such an undertaking at this moment in time.

Göring and other prominent Nazis concentrated their attention on Werner von Blomberg to quench resistance to their plans. On 12 January 1938, von Blomberg had married a woman 35 years younger than himself, one Margarete Grün. She seemed to be a simple woman of modest background. But she had once been registered as a prostitute, posed for pornographic photographs, and had been convicted by the Police for stealing from a client. On 24 January 1938, Göring handed over her file to Hitler. The photographs had been taken by a Jew with whom the woman Grün had been living for a while. Von Blomberg was forced to resign as Defence Minister. He and his wife left Germany for a year's holiday in Italy. Von Blomberg survived the war in this retirement, and died in an Allied prison after the war.

The second man to eliminate was Colonel-General Werner von Fritsch. Hitler recalled a file presented to him in the summer of 1936, containing allegations of homosexual behaviour of Fritsch with a male Berlin prostitute, Otto Schmidt. On 25 January 1938, Heydrich submitted the adapted file to Hitler. On 27 January 1938, the Gestapo interrogated von Fritsch. Fritsch had little difficulty in proving the allegations false. But Hitler had lost trust in von Fritsch. On 3 February 1938, Hitler formally demanded of von Fritsch to resign. On 18 March 1938, a military court tried von Fritsch, and unambiguously cleared him from all charges. Von Fritsch then volunteered for service on the then Polish front, where he was killed on 22 September 1939. In this way, the two top Army leaders who had proved to be obstacles for Hitler's plans of war, fell. All the other Army leaders had been warned.

Hitler then dismissed no less than 14 generals, including 6 from the Air Force. About 46 other senior officers were redeployed. Walther von Brauchitsch, an artillery officer, replaced von Fritsch. Göring aimed at becoming the new War Minister, but Hitler offered him merely the title of Field Marshal. As the War Ministry was now unoccupied, Hitler himself would henceforth take on the function of supreme Army commander, coordinated by a new High Command of the Armed Forces or *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, abbreviated to OKW. In this new structure, Colonel-General Wilhelm Keitel became the top administrator. Joachim von Ribbentrop replaced von Neurath. Hitler recalled Ullrich von Hassel from Rome to replace him by a more pliant man. At the Ministry for Economics, from which Hjalmar Schacht had resigned in November 1937, Hitler placed Walther Funk. Among other changes, Ernst Hanfstaengl had been moved to the position of *Foreign Press Chief* of the NSDAP in 1932. Hitler had no use of him anymore. Hanfstaengl fled to Switzerland. The changes left Hitler in absolute command of the Foreign, Military and Economic policies. Nobody could restrain Hitler in Germany any longer.

### *Italy*

Mussolini was the leader of the Fascist Italian Movement. In 1925, Mussolini had launched what he called the fierce totalitarian will of the Fascist Movement. He took over the



government of Italy. He nevertheless understood he needed the support of the established elite leaders in the country. Therefore, he also made of Roberto Farinacci, a radical regional party leader, the National Secretary of the fascist Party. Farinacci was vicious and ruthless, using too much violence, so Mussolini had to dismiss him in 1926. The Fascist Party expanded. In 1933, it had 1.5 million members on an Italian population of 42 million people. The Party had become a propaganda instrument to orchestrate the adulation of Mussolini. Mussolini was called *Il Duce*, the Leader, the same meaning as the title *der Führer* for Hitler.

Mussolini's most prominent theorist and ideologist was Giovanni Gentile, a professor of philosophy in Rome. Since 1923, he was the Minister of Education. For Gentile, the state embraced all facets of society. A prominent Fascist leader remained Italo Balbo. Primo Carnera, the boxing champion world heavyweight was a member.

Since 1926, all political parties had been banned, as had been strikes and lockouts.

Communism had faded by 1934. Domestic repression by the Fascists remained relatively mild compared to what had happened in the Soviet Union and in Germany. Still, the Communists and the Freemasons were prime targets of repression. By 1930, the Fascist Regime had consolidated its power over Italy, with support of the elites, of the monarchy, the military, the main industrialists, the bigger landowners, and even the Church. The Catholic Church was since 1929 placated by the Lateran Treaties. These were an uneasy truce of the Catholic Church with Mussolini. They meant the foundation of the Vatican State and the recognition of Catholicism as Italy's state religion. The church committed itself to political passivity. The Papal States had ceased to exist.

By 1933, party membership for any form of public employment was made compulsory. By 1940, almost half of the Italian population was a member of some type of Fascist affiliation, of Fascist youth organisations, etc. The Fascist Party organised sports, entertainment and travel by the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*.

In art, Filippo Marinetti and the Futurists glorified the revolutionary violence of the machine age. Some of the artists lauded Mussolini. They had a vision of an utopian, modern society the wealth of which was to be found in industry.

Italy voted in 1938, rather late, for a vicious anti-Jewish legislation. The Jews of Italy were only about 0.1% of the population. Racism was rather directed in Italy against black Africans. The anti-Jewish ideas were mainly not shared at all by the Italian population.

Already by the end of 1937, the problems in the Italian economy was beginning to impose significant constraints on Italy's rearmament. The state lacked the industrial capacity and the financial strength to boost rapid increase in armament. In 1937 to 1938, Italy suffered a drop of 20% in military spending!

The Nazi regime in Germany was more radical and more aggressive than its Italian example. It was more dynamic, and more ideologically driven in its actions. Hitler gained the total power in the state, whereas Mussolini remained subordinate always to the king of Italy. The penetration of society by regime values was lowest in Italy, compared with Germany. Nazi Germany won the greater level of popular support. Fascist Italy was weakest in ideological dynamism and in militarisation. The Italians better understood and feared the Italian forces

were capable at best in brief campaigns against inferior forces, as they were unequipped for a major war.

The German salute with the outstretched arm, was borrowed from the Italian Fascist salute! The two dictatorships of Italy and Germany were nationalistic and militarist, and also very imperialist. Hence the aspirations of Italy in North and East Africa.

### *The Austrian Anschluss*

On 11 July 1936, Austria seemed to have accepted it was a German State. Kurt von Schuschnigg had complied with Hitler's demand to give the Austrian National-Socialist party a share in the Government. Schuschnigg appointed a pro-Nazi lawyer, Arthur Seyss-Inquart to lead the Government.

Ernst Kaltenbrunner led the Austrian SS at that time. He propagated illegal activities in Austria, against the wishes of the German NSDAP leadership.

Göring was for his 5-Year Plan short of raw materials and skilled labour. Austria possessed both in abundance. Göring began with showing Mussolini a map with Austria inside Germany. Mussolini did not say a word, which Göring accepted as a consent. Göring henceforth pressed for a currency union with Austria, and much more. Hitler did not stop the activities of Göring. In 1937 and 1938, Hitler was feeling his time was running out. He was nearing 50 years of age. He had health concerns. Mussolini had withdrawn his earlier objections to a German takeover of Austria. Franz von Papen encouraged Schuschnigg to talk to Hitler. Schuschnigg brooded over doubts. His Government had grown steadily weaker since 1936. It could not improve the economic situation. Was the so much smaller Austria still viable on its own, with very powerful neighbours?

Meanwhile, the Austrian Nazis encouraged antisemitic actions. Also, the small Monarchist movement around Archduke Otto von Habsburg, the heir to the Habsburg throne of Austria, led to antisemitism. In 1936, in an effort to gain more authority, Schuschnigg banned the turbulent Home Defence Leagues altogether. That, however, left him without paramilitary divisions to stop an eventual German invasion. Moreover, thousands of disgruntled, protesting paramilitaries fled into the underground Nazi Party, equally banned under Schuschnigg.

Finally, on 12 February 1938, Hitler consented to a meeting with Schuschnigg at Berchtesgaden, brokered by Franz von Papen. Hitler lectured Schuschnigg for over two hours. He made it perfectly clear that military action over Austria was inevitable and would follow. The next morning already, Hitler ordered Keitel in Berlin to make the arrangements for intimidatory Army manoeuvres along the Austrian border.

On 15 February 1938, Schuschnigg complied with all of Hitler's demands. He would agree on a joint Foreign Policy with Germany. The Austrian Nazi Party would be legalised. Imprisoned Nazis would be released from prison. Austria would revoke all measures against the Nazis. Programmes would be agreed upon for military and economic collaboration, and Arthur Seyss-Inquart would be appointed Austrian Minister of the Interior. A few days later,

on 21 February 1938, Hitler summoned the 5 top leaders of the Austrian Nazi Party to Berlin. He dismissed them, as shaving been inadequate for their tasks. He forbade them to return. The party had henceforth to take a perfectly legal course. In fact, Schuschnigg's concessions had turned Austria into a German satellite state.

On 9 March 1938, Schuschnigg announced a plebiscite in Austria. On 13 March, he wanted to ask the Austrian voters whether they were in favour of a free and German, independent and social country, a Christian country, a united Austria, for freedom and work, for the equality of all people in the fatherland. He was implicitly asking the people to approve the union with Germany, rather than oppose it. Hitler raged. He didn't want a plebiscite, not now! Schuschnigg had to resign, and be replaced by Seyss-Inquart.

Schuschnigg agreed to postpone the plebiscite, but he refused to resign. Göring telephoned to Seyss-Inquart, who was nervous and reluctant to do anything. Göring told him to inform the Austrian head of State, President Wilhelm Miklas, that if he did not appoint Seyss-Inquart as Chancellor, German armies would invade Austria.

On the evening of 11 March 1938, Austrian Nazis demonstrated all over the country. An Austrian SS contingent occupied the headquarters of the Tyrol Provincial Government. A little later, Schuschnigg resigned, under the impact of Göring's second ultimatum. The plebiscite was cancelled. More demonstrations rocked Vienna.

Göring then told Seyss-Inquart to send a formal request to Germany, to restore order in Austria. Seyss-Inquart hesitated. He was not anymore the Chancellor. The request to Germany was finally sent by Wilhelm Keppeler, the Head of the Nazi Party's Austrian Bureau. It was sent in the evening of 11 March 1938, and from Vienna.

Hitler had sent Prince Philip of Hesse to Mussolini, to secure Italian neutrality in the affair. Hesse telephoned Hitler all was fine. The British also, seemed to have signalled their neutrality.

On midnight of 11 March 1938, the Austrian President yielded, and made of Seyss-Inquart his Chancellor. But at 08h45, Göring had already ordered Keitel to invade Austria with the German Wehrmacht. On 12 March 1938 at 05h30 in the morning, German soldiers mustered in Bavaria, crossed the Austrian border. As they drove and marched to and in Austria's main towns in the course of that morning, the apparently ecstatic crowds greeted the German soldiers by shouts of 'Hail!' and threw flowers at their feet.

Hitler flew from Berlin to München. A chauffeur drove him to the border in an open-topped car, accompanied by a motorised column of his SS bodyguard. Hitler arrived at 03h50 in the afternoon at his birthplace, Braunau-am-Inn, greeted by a jubilant crowd. The convoy later proceeded to Linz, where Hitler laid flowers on his parents' grave. He visited his former home.

On 13 March 1938, a law providing for the annexation of Austria to Germany had been approved by the reconstituted Austrian Cabinet of Ministers, and signed by Hitler. Austria became a province of the *Third Reich*, headed by Seyss-Inquart. Austria became the Austrian Mark or the *Ostmark*. In April of 1939, The Rhenish Nazi Party Regional Leader Josef

Bürckel became the Reich Commissioner for the reunification of Austria with the Third Reich. Bürckel was the man who had masterminded the vote in the Saarland, the plebiscite there and the vote for the list of candidates to the greater German *Reichstag*. Austria was divided into the Reich regions of the Alps and the Danube. This division and status were not what most of the Austrians and the Viennese had expected! Austria once more descended the ladder of power and authority a few degrees lower.

After a meeting between Franz von Papen and Cardinal Innitzer, the leader of the Catholic Church of Austria, Hitler promised the Catholic Church their institutions, especially the schools, would not be affected by the change in regime.

In the following plebiscite of 10 April 1938, about 99.75% of the Austrian voters supported the annexation.

The Austrian economy obtained a 4-Year Plan. The postal services, the railways, the banking system of Austria, were pushed aside by their German equivalents, and that within two days. German firms took over the management of Austrian businesses. A huge, new Hermann Göring Works was set up in Linz to receive the Austrian industries. German firms thus moved in, to take over Austrian businesses of interest.

Austria brought the *Third Reich* much sought petroleum and iron production. It allowed easier trade with the Balkan lands. The absorption into the overheated German economy brought many benefits for Austrians. Unemployment fell rapidly, and local demands increased by the influx of Germans. Göring needed workers for his economic plans. He decided to draft Austrian workers by force. He published a decree to this end on 22 June 1938. The next year, over 100,000 Austrian workers flooded into Germany, including 10,000 skilled workers.

A Nazi terror spread over annexed Austria. Ex-Chancellor Schuschnigg refused to leave the country. The German Nazis arrested him and he remained in custody. The Gestapo picked up Von Papen's secretary. His body was found dead in the waters of a canal. The former leader of the Austrian Home defence Brigades, Major Frey, who had helped put down the Nazi uprising of 1934, killed himself and his entire family.

More than 40% of the Austrian Officer Corps, over 2,500 officers, were compulsory retired and a large, other number transferred to administrative duties. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the head of the Austrian SS, was appointed State Secretary for Security.

Otto Steinhäuser became the new Vienna Chief of Police. He had played a significant role in the abortive 1934 putsch. Many agents in the Austrian Police were Nazis. The *Gestapo* moved in as of 12-13 March 1938. They made 21,000 prisoners in Austria, and sent the men mainly to the Dachau concentration camp. Heinrich Himmler had to build a new concentration camp near Linz, at Mauthausen. The city of Vienna provided the lands, on condition some of the stones of the quarry worked on by the inmates, would be used for cobbling the streets of Vienna.

The Nazi leaders were thinking of the Austrian Jews for the new camp. There were then still about 200,000 Jews living in Austria, of which 170,000 in Vienna. The Nazis proclaimed an effort for cleansing the Jews out of Austria. All of the *Third Reich* antisemitic legislation was introduced in Vienna, including the infamous racial Nürnberg Laws. A Property transfer

Office with a staff of 500 was set up to manage the Aryanisation of Jewish-owned businesses. By May 1938, very quickly, about 7,000 of the 33,000 Jewish businesses in Vienna had been closed down. In August, 23,000 more had disappeared.

For instance, the most important Austrian bank was the Creditanstalt. Its chairman, Franz Rothenberg, was put in a car and beaten up. The Creditanstalt was taken over by the Deutsche Bank.

Isidor Pollack, the director of a dynamite factory, was beaten up in the same way. He lost his firm, taken over by I.G. Farben.

Austrian Jews were assaulted without impunity. Their houses were destroyed, they ended being beaten up. The Nazis confiscated Jewish apartments in Vienna. By end 1938, over 44,000 apartments were thus 'Aryanised', out of the 70,000 counted in the city.

The Jews were expelled from their homes by raw force. Many stranded in the no-man's land along the borders. Over 50 Jews were even dropped without food or shelter on a barren, sandy island in the Danube. By end 1938, no more Jews were left in the Burgenland.

Thousands of Jews fled the country, hundreds committed suicide. In order to speed up the process of cleaning Austria of Jews, the Nazis established even a *Central Agency for Jewish Emigration*. This was run by Adolph Eichmann. Eichmann was a *Rheinländer*, whose family lived in Linz. He had arrived in Vienna as a member of a special SS unit to arrest prominent Jews. He was a coarse and brutal man.

Joseph Löwenherz was a Jew. The Nazis ordered him to produce a plan for the mass emigration of Jews from Austria. In prison, the Austrian Jews asked for exit visas by the thousands. The Nazis helped them. By May 1939, about 100,000 Austrian Jews had emigrated legally. Many crossed the borders illegally, and many reached Palestine.

In Vienna, over 40 synagogues were burnt down. Practically all Jewish shops were destroyed. More than 2,000 Jewish families were summarily ejected from their homes. On 10 November 1938, the SS destroyed the Jewish Community Headquarters and the Zionist offices in Vienna.

The Nazis confiscated major art collections in Vienna. This also happened to the collections of the Rothschild family. The art works were sold by the *Reich Finance Minister*, to meet newly imposed tax bills. Many collections were looted. The plundering of art was led by Hitler.

On 26 June of 1939, Hitler ordered the director of the Dresden Museum, Hans Posse, to assemble a collection for a planned art museum at Linz. On 24 July of that year, Martin Bormann informed the Austrian administration of Bürckel all confiscated art collections were to be handed over to Hans Posse or to Hitler directly. This included the Rothschild collection.

The incorporation of Austria in the *Third Reich* with its shameless antisemitic excesses, boosted antisemitism in Germany. Never before had antisemitism been so clear and shown so pitiless and thorough, ordered by the state. The German Nazis redoubled their efforts to speed up the forced emigration of the Jews out of Germany. The upsurge in violence towards the Jews in Germany overall in the summer of 1938, culmination in the pogroms of 9 to 10 November 1938, may be understood by the way the Jews were treated in Austria after the *Anschluss*.

With the incorporation of Austria in the Third Reich, Hitler's confidence in his genius increased. He believed he could do nothing wrong. He would be undoubtedly the actor of the rebirth of the Germany domination.

### *The invasion of Czechoslovakia*

After the annexation of Austria, Hitler turned his thoughts to Czechoslovakia. On 28 March 1938, he held a secret meeting with the leader of the Sudeten German party, a Nazi-backed organisation. Hitler spoke about the freedom of the Sudeten Germans. Their place was in the *Third Reich*! What Hitler now wanted, was the subversion of Czechoslovakia, with as ultimate objective the destruction of the country and its subsequent absorption in the German *Reich*, just as had been done with Austria. This then would create a springboard for the German invasion of Poland and Russia. The same day, Hitler told his generals he was determined to have Czechoslovakia disappear from the European map.

The Republic of Czechoslovakia was a democracy in 1938. It had deep-seated liberal political traditions. It had won its independency from the Habsburg Empire in 1919. It had also a very strong industrial base. And in the country lived a minority of 3 million German-speaking people along its western borders. These enjoyed complete individual rights in the land. They were called the *Sudeten Germans*. The economic depression had affected the German-speaking population particularly badly. Glass and textile companies had collapsed. The state's overburdened social welfare system had left many Germans to poverty and destitution. There existed a Sudeten German Party. It demanded for regional autonomy. Its leader, the schoolteacher Konrad Henlein, came under the influence of German-Nationalist groups, which had been banned in 1933.

In the 1936 elections in Czechoslovakia, the National-Socialist Party obtained 63% of the ethnic German votes, so that in 1937, the Czechoslovakian Government had to make a series of concessions to the Sudeten Germans. German speaking individuals were now admitted to the civil services of the country, and Government contracts were granted to the Sudeten German firms.

The German Sudeten Party received money from the German NSDAP. The German Government was able to bring Henlein in line with a policy of detaching the Sudetenland from the rest of Czechoslovakia. With more intimidation from out of Germany, the votes for the German Sudeten Party rose to 75% of the population. The Czechoslovakian Government had to concede the principle of Sudeten German autonomy. It also offered economic relief. Such concessions were to no avail.

In Germany, Hitler was bent on war. Still, the overall Czechoslovakian population remained opposed to Hitler and to Nazism, as well as to a German takeover. Czechoslovakia had an alliance with France and with the Soviet Union, and France was an ally of Great Britain, so attacking Czechoslovakia was a high risk enterprise for Germany. Hitler risked war with the Western democracies! Yet, Great Britain would provide no guarantee to take military action should the German Army attack, and France would not act without Great Britain. France could not offer direct military assistance to her Czech ally. Nevertheless, General Ludwig

Beck, the Chief of the German Army's General Staff, was sure Germany could not win a war against the other European Powers.

The Czechoslovakian Army was a substantial, well-disciplined and well-equipped fighting force. The Skoda Works were a major armaments industry, even one of Europe's leading arms manufacturers. The German generals were therefore panic-stricken when they heard of Hitler's intentions to destroy the neighbouring country. Moreover, Czechoslovakia was formally allied to France by military and political agreements. An invasion against such a sovereign state, was an act of unqualified aggression!

The leaders of the German Army generally hated and despised Slavs and Democrats. They considered the acquisition of the Czechoslovakian arms industry with its skilled labour and plentiful of raw materials, a boon for the *Third Reich's* rearmament. Göring realised the strategic importance in a geo-political manner of Czechoslovakia, but he and his generals were unconvinced the time was ripe for entering and conquering the country. They considered the invasion a reckless and foolhardy act, by which Germany ran the risk of starting a general war in Europe, for which the Nazis were unprepared.

On 3 May 1938, the Chief of the Army's General Staff, General Ludwig Beck, warned Hitler of the dire consequences of an invasion of Czechoslovakia. Goebbels, however, unleashed a massive propaganda campaign full of horror stories about the supposed mistreatment of the Sudeten Germans by the Czechs. In August, Hitler organised meetings with the senior generals, backed by the head of the Army, General von Brauchitsch.

The General Staff in June played war games simulating the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The country could be conquered within 11 days, including setting up special defences against British expeditionary troops. Hitler was convinced the British and French Armies would not intervene. Moreover, on the west side of Germany, Fritz Todt would have the West Wall fortifications finished and ready by the winter of 1938. On 18 August 1938 therefore, Beck had become isolated and resigned as Chief of the General Staff. His successor would be Franz Halder, a Franconian artillery officer. His allies were Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the Head of Military Intelligence, and Erwin von Witzleben, the Senior Infantry General and Commander of the troops in the Berlin district. Halder shared Beck's reservations. These generals began to foment plans to overthrow Hitler. Other young officers were already plotting for Hitler's downfall. Among these was Hans Oster, a colonel in Canaris' intelligence department, as well as the civilians Hjalmar Schacht and Goerdeler. Foreign Ministry officials adhered to the same opinions. State Secretary Ernst von Weizsäcker, the junior officers Adan von Trott zu Solz, Hans-Bernd von Haefen and the civil servants Hans-Bernd Giseviers, the assistant secretary in the Ministry of the Interior, and with Count Peter York von Wartenburg of the *Reich Price Commissioner's* Office. They concluded Hitler should be assassinated or imprisoned. The conspirators did not necessarily disapprove of Hitler's aim of dismembering Czechoslovakia. They merely deplored its haste. They were convinced the German Army was not ready for a new European war. They were nevertheless aware that if Hitler succeeded in gaining Czechoslovakia without provoking a general war, the plug would be pulled from under their arguments. They enjoyed no support from within the NSDAP.

Göring had known about the arguments of the generals. He reproached the officers for their faint-heartedness. He said they had no support in the Nazi Party, making success for them very unlikely.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia thus took a lengthy build-up against the military and international obstacles that could stand in Hitler's way. It took him several months to overcome the objections of the German generals, to win at least their grudging support and to develop the military planning for the invasion. Goebbels' propaganda campaign made it clear to international observers that an invasion of Czechoslovakia was being prepared in Berlin.

A treaty with France guaranteed the integrity of Czechoslovakia, but the British then Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, was aware that Great Britain was in no state or condition to wage a new general European war. He feared massive aerial bombardments of Great Britain. For Chamberlain, Czechoslovakia seemed further away than India, South Africa or Australia! Moreover, Hitler was only out to right the wrongs inflicted on Germany by the Treaty and Versailles, and indeed to protect beleaguered German minorities in Central Europe.

On 12 September 1938, at the traditional Nürnberg Party Rally, Hitler threatened clearly with war of the Sudeten Germans were not granted self-determination. That same month, Chamberlain flew a first time to München, to meet with Hitler. There, Chamberlain agreed to a revision of the Czech boundaries to accommodate for the Sudeten German wishes. The solution did not seem to satisfy Hitler, but the Chancellor reluctantly agreed to further negotiations.

On 22 September 1938, Chamberlain flew a second time to meet with Hitler. They met in the Hotel Dreesen of Bad Godesberg on the Rhine. Chamberlain said the French had agreed with his proposals. The Czech Government had agreed with Anglo-French terms.

But Hitler immediately laid a new series of demands on the table. He said he would have to occupy the Sudetenland almost at once. Poland and Hungary too had expressed claims on parts of the Czech territory bordering their countries. These demands too had to be met.

The result of all these demands and negotiations was, that a military Government came to power in Prague. These wanted no more concessions to be made by Czechia. The British Cabinet of Ministers also refused the Bad Godesberg proposals. The British public would regard the Hitler terms as humiliating for Great Britain. Chamberlain sent a third mission to Berlin to make this clear to Hitler. Great Britain could not tolerate unilateral action of Germany.

Hitler was furious. He insisted for Sir Horace Wilson, the leader of the British delegation, to hear a speech he would give in the Berlin Sports Palace on the evening of 26 September 1938. Hitler there delivered a violent tirade against Czechoslovakia. He shouted and shrieked. He refused to not any longer tolerate the genocide of the German minority in Czechia.

The planned date of the invasion was for 1 October 1938, but Hitler backed down under the influence of Göring. He still feared a general war over an issue in which key concessions had already been made. Göring brokered a meeting with the British, French and Italian diplomats. The Italians also had asked Hitler to wait until they had been able to discuss the issue together. Hitler agreed.



The French Commander in Chief, General Maurice Gamelin, informed the British and French leaders on 26 September 1938 that taken together, their military forces added to the Czech forces, were greater than those of Germany. France had brought 23 divisions at the border with Germany, whereas Germany only held 8 divisions there. Gamelin proposed to attack south, in an offensive across the Alps, into the Po Valley, to defeat the Italians, and then to march north to Vienna to help the Czechs. He added the Allies had done nothing politically to prevent Germany from becoming militarily so strong.

On 28 September 1938, the conference with the British, French and Italians was held in München. The Czechs had not been invited. Göring drafted a document in advance, put into formal diplomatic language by von Weizsäcker in the German Foreign Ministry. Von Ribbentrop was all for war, as he hated the English. He had not been informed of the draft document. The paper was given to the Italian ambassador, who presented it to Hitler on 28 September as the work of Mussolini.

The 29<sup>th</sup> of September, after 13 hours of negotiations, this München Agreement was signed by the four powers. On 30 September, Chamberlain presented to Hitler a declaration stating Great Britain and Germany would never go to war again. Hitler signed, but demurred. Chamberlain waved this paper in London, coming down from his aeroplane, saying 'it is peace in our time'. According to the Agreement, the occupation of the Sudetenland was to be carried out at once. For Hitler, the rest of Czechoslovakia could be taken at a later date. Peace was temporarily preserved.

There followed a great sense of relief in London and in Berlin. Indeed, a war psychosis had harassed the population, a psychosis that had lasted until the München Agreement had been signed. Most people wanted the Sudeten matters to be handled without war, but they considered the demands of the Sudeten Germans to be justified. Nobody thought Germany could win a war pitted against Great Britain and France. Nevertheless, widespread fatalism reigned among the workers. The preparations for war intensified, and anxiety had grown. Winston Churchill, an opponent of appeasement, had pleaded for a grand alliance with the Soviet Union and with the eastern European countries. The British Labour Party supported his stance. The prospect of a grand alliance would indeed have been the best option of deterring Hitler.

In the late summer and autumn of 1938, Germany knew a marked increase in the number of people brought before the Special Courts for criticism on Hitler's actions. Hitler resented Göring's intervention. The relations between them cooled. This placed von Ribbentrop and Himmler in stronger positions. Hitler was well aware of the fact that the majority of the Germans did not want war. On 10 November 1938, Hitler ranted against the intellectuals who were undermining the Germans' will to go to war. The vast majority of Germans, in Hitler's views, were falling short of giving the Nazi Regime the popular support it sought.

Nevertheless, on 1 October 1938, German troops crossed the border with Czechoslovakia. The well-equipped Czech Army withdrew from the strong defence positions it occupied in the mountains of the border regions. The German soldiers rode and marched into the Sudetenland. The Sudeten inhabitants cheered the German soldiers. They threw flowers at them, and gave the Hitler salute.

About 25,000 people, mostly Czech citizens, had already fled into predominantly Czech areas in September. Now, more than 150,000 people fled, and almost 50,000 more in the next few months. The refugees were not only Czechs, but also Jews, who expected to fall under the Nürnberg Laws. By May 1939, about 22,000 once more, and 2,000 Jews more left the Sudetenland. About 35,000 German-speaking Sudetes fled too. They had opposed Henlein's party! The *Gestapo* arrested 8,000 ethnic Germans and 2,000 Czech opposers to Nazism. Most of these were sent to concentration camps.

A month later, the anti-Jewish German pogrom of 9-10 November 1938 was extended to the Sudetenland! The Jews who had remained in Czechia became subjected to widespread violence. Gestapo and SS Security men moved in. The Nazis dismissed 50,000 employees of the Czechoslovakian State Railways, the post offices, the local administrations, all to make way for ethnic Germans. The predominantly German-speaking areas of western and northern Bohemia, northern Moravia and northern Silesia, were incorporated in the *Third Reich*, then called the *Reich Region Sudetenland*. Southern Bohemia became a part of Bavaria. Southern Moravia was assigned to the former Austria.

The Nazis appointed Henlein to *Reich Commissioner*, under the *Reich* Ministry of the Interior. New civil servants were drafted in Germany to fill in the posts in the regional and local administrations vacated by the Czechs and the Jews. The Sudeten Germans naturally flocked to the Nazi Party and to the SA. Their former associations were dissolved and incorporated into the Nazi organisations commanded out of Berlin.

About 20% of the Czech industrial production had been located in the now annexed regions. They were rapidly incorporated into the German war preparations. I.G. Farben, Carl Zeiss Jena and German banks made significant acquisitions. About 400,000 Czechs remained living in the annexed regions. But the Czech language was banned, schools were closed, and associations stopped working.

The München Agreement gave the sign for other countries to desire pieces of Czechoslovakia. On 30 September 1938, the Polish Military Government demanded the cession of the regions around Teschen, where a large Polish-speaking population lived. The Czech agreed, and Polish troops marched in on 2 October 1938. As a result, these lands were rapidly Polishised. Anti-Jewish measures were introduced in Hungary, Rumania and Poland. Poland still held on to its corridor to Danzig. The mainly German-speaking population of Danzig itself had rallied to the German cause, as had Memel, which had previously been handed over to Lithuania. Hitler wanted these towns and regions back to Prussia and Germany.

Hungary under Admiral Horthy equally wanted a strip of land which had Magyar majorities. The Hungarians negotiated with the Czechs.

On 7 October 1938, leaders of the Slovak political parties established their own autonomous region with its own Government. Officially, the Slovaks remained in the rump state left after the München Agreements. Later, the Slovak authorities of Bratislava created a one-party state too. They forced their views onto the population by paramilitary force, the so-called *Klinka Guard*. This led to a rapid deterioration of the relations between the Czechs and the Slovaks. They bickered over the issue of the financial resources.

Finally, Czech troops occupied Bratislava on 10 March 1939. The Slovak leaders flew to Berlin and received the choice of either declare the complete independence under German influence, or being gobbled up by Hungary. The Slovaks chose for independence under protection of Germany. Thus, on 14 March 1939, the Slovak government proclaimed the country's independence. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, its leaders officially asked Germany for protection against the Czech Army. German gunboats on the Danube targeted their guns on the Government buildings of Bratislava.

In this Slovak-Czech confrontation, Emil Hacha, the President of Czechoslovakia and his Foreign Minister Frantisek Chvalkovsky, travelled to Berlin to meet with Hitler. Hitler was watching a film, so Hacha was kept waiting. When Hitler saw the Czech ministers, he bullied and menaced the Czechs with bombardments. Hacha was sick. He fainted a while. He phoned to Prague, ordering his troops not to fire on the invading Germans. He signed a document agreeing to the establishment of a German protectorate over the country. This happened in the morning of 15 March 1939.

At 06h00 that day, German soldiers crossed the Czech border. The crowds in Prague cheered them. Other Czechs raised fists in defiance. In the late afternoon, Hitler arrived by train and by car. The Czech soldiers remained in their barracks, and surrendered their arms and equipment. Hitler then stayed in the Hradshin Castle of Prague, the symbolic seat of Czech sovereignty. He established the Czech Protectorate of the *Third Reich*.

On 16 March 1939, von Ribbentrop read the decree on Radio Prague, declaring the remaining Czech lands were henceforth to be known as the *Reich Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia*. Democratic institutions, including the Czech Parliament, were abolished. A minimum Czech administration remained in place, with Emile Hacha as President, with a Prime Minister and a *Committee of National Solidarity* of 5 persons under him. The 400,000 Czech state employees and civil servants remained in place, though subordinate to a mere 2,000 administrators imported from Germany. The courts remained in place too, valid only when they dealt matters not covered by those of the *Third Reich*. The Czechs were not granted German citizenship.

The Czechs dared not offending the Germans. Their right-wing subsequent governments suppressed the Communists and the Social Democrats.

A third autonomous region was created in the east, called the Carpatho-Ukraine. The German consul exercised a dominant influence there. National minorities were suppressed. Ukrainian was made the sole language. On 7 December 1938, Germany and this Carpatho-Ukraine signed a treaty of economic cooperation. The *Third Reich* gained the general control over this land's mineral resources.

The Rumanian Government offered its friendship to Germany. King Carol II carried out a coup against his own ministers.

On 2 November 1938, the Italian authorities imposed a settlement with German agreement. Hungary received 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land and 1 million people, including about 200,000 ethnic Slovaks. Great Britain and France were not involved in those transactions.

Czechoslovakia had major economic resources, such as an important arms industry, mineral resources, engineering, iron and steel factories, glass and textile factories, and so on. In the winter of 1938 to 1939, the economic situation of the *Third Reich* had deteriorated. Czechia

had large stocks of advanced military equipment. So, the gain of large parts of the Czech industry was a tempting prospect for the Nazis, and the occupation of the Sudetenland had led to the liquidation of the entire Czechoslovak state! Hitler's triumph was once more complete.

The real power in Czechia was given by the Nazis to the Reich Protector Konstantin von Neurath, the former Foreign Minister of Germany. Hitler felt still grateful to von Neurath for his role in resolving the München crisis of September 1938. The commanding general in Czechoslovakia became Johannes Blaskowitz. He held a moderate course. His deputy was Hermann Frank.

Von Neurath immediately ordered the arrest of thousands of Communists in Czechia, though most were released after interrogations. The German exiles, mostly Social Democrats, were arrested and interrogated. Most of them were sent to concentration camps in Germany. Then, steps were taken to identify the Jewish population of Czechia, and to apply the Nürnberg laws to them. Jewish firms were instantly expropriated and their assets transferred to Germany. The Nazis seized the Czechoslovakian gold reserves. In June 1938, the British authorities had allowed over 800,000 ounces of gold to be shipped from the London accounts of Czechoslovakia to the new occupying authorities in Prague. The Czech economy was, however, not undermined and the non-Jewish businessmen not alienated. Companies such as Bata shoes and Skoda continued producing. Soon, 30,000 Czech workers could be persuaded to go to work in Germany. Nevertheless, Czech workers drafted into the *Reich* were given a special, inferior status. The Czech industry was encouraged to export to South-east Europe, and Germany to the west.

On 12 March 1939, the Hungarian Regent Admiral Horthy received a free hand to annex the Carpatho-Ukrainian regions into Hungary. Hungary had been irritated by the Slovak State to declare independence under German protection, though backed by the German Nazi Government. On 16 March, Hungary sent its troops into the Carpato-Ukraine. Only 552,000 inhabitants were Magyar there, but the Hungarian Government had considered the area belonged to Hungary by historic right.

The movement of annexing territories at that moment was not over yet. On 20 March 1939, von Ribbentrop told the Lithuanian Foreign Minister who had been summoned to Berlin, that German airplanes would bomb Kovno (Kaunas) if the Lithuanian Government did not cede the port of Memel to Germany. The Lithuanians could not but agree. Germany and Lithuania signed the agreement on 23 March 1938. Hitler arrived in a German battleship to address the jubilant German crowd. For the Germans in the *Third Reich*, all these annexations remained rather indifferent to them. It did not matter, so long as the war was avoided. And that had been the case so far!

### *The Invasion of Poland*

The British Government, led by the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, had regarded the München Agreements as almost sacred. The British knew what the Germans wanted, or so they thought. On 17 March 1939, in a public speech, Chamberlain told everybody Hitler was out to dominate the world by force. The day after, the British Cabinet agreed to open talks

with the Polish Government, to discuss how best to stop the Germans from invading Poland next. The Germans wanted back the corridor to Gdansk, Danzig, which had been taken from them in the Versailles Treaty.

Great Britain and France redoubled their efforts to rearm, though reluctantly. News of the German threats on Poland was published in the British and French press. Chamberlain issued a public guarantee saying that if Poland's independence would be threatened, Great Britain would step in to defend the country. The guarantee would be effective only if the Polish Army was mobilised to resist a German invasion. The message had to deter the Germans, and Chamberlain still hoped for peace. He thought a negotiated settlement was possible. However, his guarantee lacked credibility, for how was Great Britain to come to the aid of Poland with troops? Poland lay so far away, over the channel, deep in the European continent!

Hitler thought the British leaders were spineless nonentities, whereas the Polish soldiers were poorly led and poorly equipped. In Berlin, a propaganda campaign was launched against Germany's supposed hostile intentions. However, Germany's wishes were as pure and soft as a lamb. Von Brauchitsch had already drafted an invasion plan, codenamed Case White, to be ready for the invasion by begin September 1939.

On 20 April 1939, the Nazis held a 5-hour impressive military parade in Berlin for Hitler's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. With them, they drew the heaviest artillery displayed for the first time.

On 28 April, Hitler formally announced in the *Reichstag* the abrogation of the Non-aggression Pact with Poland of 1934, as well as the Naval Agreement with Great Britain of 1935. Early April, von Weizsäcker informed the Poles that the time for negotiation over the Corridor to Danzig was definitely at an end. The Nazis and Hitler showed something of their true face!

On 23 May 1939, Hitler told Göring, Halder and Raeder, he was well aware that further successes could not be won without bloodshed. Not just Danzig was at stake, however. Germany needed living space in the East to have safe food supplies and basic resources for its industry. It was necessary to attack Poland at the first opportunity. Poland would be defeated alone and unaided. In the longer run, Hitler told war with Great Britain and France would anyway be inevitable. But Hitler also told Germany would not be ready for that conflict in another 5 years. German policy in 1939 had to remain to isolate Poland as much as possible, and to ensure the coming military actions in Poland did not lead immediately to a general European war.

On 22 May, Hitler upgraded the German alliance with Italy to a *Pact of Steel*. He concluded non-aggression agreements with Latvia, Estonia and Denmark. A treaty of March gave Germany access to Rumanian oil supplies in the event of war. Germany negotiated trade links with Sweden and Norway for deliveries of iron ore.

Hitler also realised the benevolent neutrality of the Soviet Union would be vital for success in Poland. On 6 June 1939, Hitler stopped his frequent diatribes against world Bolshevism. Von Ribbentrop began pushing in Moscow for a formal pact with Stalin and the Soviets. In a speech of 10 March 1939, Stalin declared he would not be willing to come to the rescue of western capitalist countries in a conflict with Germany. On 3 May, Stalin dismissed his

People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Minister Maxim Litvinov, a proponent of civilised relations with the western European countries. Litvinov was replaced by the hard-liner Vyacheslav Molotov. And Litvinov was a Jew, not so Molotov. In Germany, Joachim von Ribbentrop saw this as a new opening for an understanding on Poland with the Soviet Union.

Stalin was in a difficult spot in 1939, because of the purges he had effectuated on his top generals. He had few higher generals left with direct experience of warfare. He realised Soviet preparedness for war was lamentable. Stalin was aware of Hitler's intention to invade Poland in August or September of 1939. Meanwhile, negotiations on improving the German-Soviet trade relations had faltered, but been taken up anew. Early August, von Ribbentrop and von Weizsäcker, with Hitler's approval, had drawn up plans for a joint partition of Poland with the Soviets.

On 21 August 1939, Stalin agreed to Hitler's urgent request for a formal mutual non-aggression pact. The 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, von Ribbentrop was in Moscow. The Soviets signed a non-aggression pact, indeed. For Hitler, this was necessary to secure the Soviet agreement for the German invasion of Poland, to stop a broadening of the attacks on Poland into a larger European war.

In the pact, secret clauses allocated 'spheres of influence' in East-Central Europe. Stalin would take over the eastern parts of Poland, with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, Hitler would hold the western part of the country. For Stalin, it seemed an opportunity to get large parts of Poland. The pact provided a respite for him, and it opened the prospect of Germany, France and Great Britain to fight a war of mutual destruction between them. Stalin also agreed to hand over German political refugees in the Soviet Union. German citizens were therefore rounded up by the Soviet State police and handed over to the Gestapo. Among these men, now arrested, were between 1,000 to 1,200 German Communists!

Many Communists in other countries felt betrayed by Moscow. And in the front garden of the Brown House in München, the German Nazi Party headquarters, the space got covered by party badges thrown in disgust by disgruntled NSDAP members. Alfred Rosenberg, the arch-anti-Communist, blamed publicly von Ribbentrop's ambitions. Others in Germany, did understand the rapprochement with the Soviet Union was merely a matter of party tactics, and a temporary relief.

In the German-Soviet Pact of 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union committed not to start a war among them for 10 years. They would settle disputes by negotiations, and increase mutual trade. Hitler, as well as Stalin, realised the pact could and would not last 10 years. In fact, it did even not last 2 years! But the boundaries between the German and Soviet spheres of influence proved permanent, and the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States lasted until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century!

The invasion of Poland had been set for 26 August 1939. From May 1939 on, a hate campaign started against Poland in Germany and in Poland itself. The ethnic German inhabitants of the country seemed in constant, mortal and growing danger for violence by the Poles. The stories against the Poles were grotesque exaggerations and untrue. Moreover, the Nazis in Danzig provoked the Poles and caused incidents. It was a campaign like the one that

preceded the invasion of Czechoslovakia, all over again. This caused the vast majority of the German population to despise and dislike the Poles even more.

The Germans believed Hitler was a true diplomatic genius. They believed by his assurances he was a man of peace! On 11 August 1939, Hitler actually conferred with the League of Nations. The League's High Commissioner Carl Burckhardt met Hitler at the Obersalzberg. Hitler gave him his readiness to negotiate once more with the British. But he shouted he would destroy Poland completely if the Polish Government failed to comply with his demands. The Poles, on their side, were by then resolved to resist any kind of deal.

On 22 August, Hitler summoned the top commanders of the *Wehrmacht* to tell them the invasion was going ahead. Many generals told Hitler he was deceiving himself when he claimed Great Britain and France would not intervene. In the end, Hitler was proven wrong. War came indeed.

On 23 August, Chamberlain sent a letter to Hitler, delivered to him by the pro-German British Ambassador Sir Neville Henderson. Two days later, Hitler offered Henderson a vague, general settlement with Great Britain, for once the Polish question would be settled. Hitler learned of the military alliance of Great Britain and Poland. Hitler turned to Göring. Göring's Swedish friend Birger Dahlerus was sent to London. On 28 August 1939, Henderson delivered the British response. The British Government was willing to guarantee peacefully negotiated German-Polish frontiers, and to support the return of German overseas colonies, but it remained committed to back Poland by force of arms, should the Germans invade.

On 24 August 1939, the Germans and the Soviets had signed their pact, arranging for the partition of Poland along an agreed demarcation line. The borders were detailed in a new treaty of 28 September. When the German Army attacked, the Red Army equally attacked Poland from the eastern side and occupied large parts of the land.

Von Ribbentrop had informed Count Ciano early August of the planned invasion of Poland. This quite worried Mussolini, despite the German assurances in the *Pact of Steel*. On 24 August then, Hitler wrote to Mussolini personally, asking for Italian backing. By then, the German airports had already been closed, the annual *Nürnberg Party Rally* cancelled, and food rationing introduced with effect from 27 August on. Mussolini told Hitler that Italy was not in a position to offer any military assistance to Germany in the event of a war. Hitler then cancelled the marching orders. The invasion grounded to a halt, before the troops reached the Polish border. Hitler hesitated a last moment.

In a last effort to seek neutrality for Great Britain and France, Hitler once more met with Henderson. But the Germans refused to do anything that might have changed the British mind. Hitler did offer a plebiscite in the Danzig corridor. In the night of 30 August 1939, von Ribbentrop and Henderson almost came to blows over the matter! On 31 August, Hitler had his offer broadcasted on the radio, blaming the British and the Poles for its non-acceptance.

The German Nazi leaders even staged a mock assault of disguised SS-men on the German radio station of Gleiwitz in Upper-Silesia. It was presented as a Polish, murderous assault. The men assaulting left anti-German slogans before they returned, evacuating the site. Other

such border incidents were staged by SS-men, dressed as Polish soldiers. On 1 September 1939, the German battleship Schleswig-Holstein opened fire on the Polish garrison of the Westerplatte, a peninsula in the Vistula estuary commanding the entrance to the harbour of Danzig. Albert Forster, the Nazi Party Regional Leader, placed first Burckhardt under house arrest, and then gave him 2 hours to leave.

German forces drove into Polish territory on 1 September 1939.

Hitler addressed the hastily summoned *Reichstag*. The representatives of the people voted to incorporate Danzig into the *Third Reich*.

The British Government ordered full mobilisation on 31 August 1939, fearing air attacks. Chamberlain still thought a peaceful solution reachable, even when German troops entered Poland. Chamberlain hesitated and dithered. His Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, continued to negotiate with the French Government, with the Italians and also with the German diplomats. He got nowhere.

On the evening of 1 September, Henderson told the German Government that the conference proposed by the Italians, based on Hitler's offer of 29 August, could only take place if the German forces ceased fire and withdrew beyond the borders.

On 2 September 1939 at 20h00 in the evening, Chamberlain stepped in before the House of Commons. He had received no reply from Germany. The great majority of the House were now convinced the *Third Reich* were aiming at European, if not world domination. The time had come to stop Hitler. A wave of fury roared in the House. Chamberlain became suddenly a very old, doddering man with shaking hands. Later, a majority of members of Parliament met with Chamberlain. They decided he would have to issue an ultimatum to the Germans.

On 3 September then, Henderson handed over the text of a British ultimatum to the German Foreign Ministry. The ultimatum stated that unless the Germans agreed to a ceasefire and a withdrawal of troops within 2 hours, Great Britain and Germany would be at war. The ultimatum expired at 11h00 in the morning. The Germans replied in a lengthy, pre-prepared document Germany merely wanted to correct the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles. It blamed Great Britain for having encouraged the Polish aggression. France sent an ultimatum at 12h00. Germany rejected this ultimatum also.

In Germany, the Army leaders had overcome their reservations about Hitler's overall policy. There was nothing the British or the French could do to rescue Poland! As to the German population, they merely followed the events with despondency. They showed no enthusiasm for the war to come. Berlin worked and lived in silence. There was no cheering, no flowers, no war hysteria. The people waited in fear and apprehension. The fear for bombing raids on German cities spread. The war launched by Germany on 1 September 1939 was from the outset one of racial conquest, of subjugation of other peoples, and a war of extermination.

For the Germans of 1939, the post-war policies and restrictions of the Versailles Treaty forced upon the German people had been unfair, vindictive, and correctible with some tolerable sacrifices. Versailles had proved humiliating for the German enemy, but not emasculating. That was far riskier than showing magnanimity to a thoroughly defeated, but



not killed adversary. All German politicians had been able to blame their economic downturn and misery on the war reparations that had to be paid, or on the Danzig corridor, rather than on their own inept economic policies and social instability. The collapse of the German Army had been blamed on the backstabbers in the Fatherland, the Jews and the Communists. With those out of the way, surely, the second time, Germany would win at the end! Versailles was justifiably considered an injustice for the German people.

Fascist Italy had now invaded Ethiopia and Albania prior to 1 September 1939. Japan had invaded China by then too, well over 2 years before the German invasion of Poland. Hitler knew how to take some risks, and apparently he had gained fine successes. Why then not gamble over territories in Poland that had been German before? Why not gamble, win, and share in some of the spoils?

Western Europe was now in favour of free markets, in favour of private property and personal freedom, also in economics. By using the newer technologies, the German military would be able to advance against their enemies with unprecedented numbers of soldiers, at high speed, to cause death on massive scales and force other countries into submission. Europe had proven brutal and unjust against Germany. Germany could now really turn against her enemies. Did anybody thought of the heaps of corpses a war would leave behind? When World War I broke out, Germany had no realistic idea or any serious global plan to defeat its enemies. Hitler now too had no idea how to wage a war in which it would have nations such as the USA, China, India, the British Commonwealth nations, and the Soviet Union to fight the Axis Nations. Yet, Germany launched its soldiers, pilots and marines against the world.

All nations go to war, thinking they would somehow win. Hitler and the Nazis of Germany were convinced this second time, they would not repeat the mistakes of the earlier generation. Hitler bet on his non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, on a slow and temporising France, on an isolated and unprepared Great Britain, and on a still neutral USA. He had ensured he had only one enemy at a time to fight.

Hitler didn't fear. No man or woman on earth could have imagined what would be the result. For a moment, he had been surprised, astonished even, that the enfeebled Allies and the isolated British on their islands, had dared declare war over Poland. Had not the fate of Poland always been to be divided up? Had it not been partitioned already at least 4 times in recent history, and that without harsh protests of the western countries? Hitler did not well understand why then, suddenly Great Britain had declared war, nor why France had followed. The Nazis even dropped leaflets over Great Britain to convince the British people not to consider the disappearance of Poland as a legitimate cause for war.

The German Army invaded Poland with 60 divisions and 1.5 million men, spearheaded by 5 armoured tank divisions of each 300 tanks, and with 4 motorised divisions. The infantry divisions that attacked had roughly 5,000 soldiers per divisions, more than one would have expected in any army. The German *Luftwaffe* sent 897 bombers, 426 fighter planes and various sorts of reconnaissance and transport airplanes in the Polish skies. Poland had 1.3 million soldiers to resist, few tanks and armoured groups. They had only 154 bombers and 153 fighter airplanes, and about 100 anti-aircraft guns.

The Polish Army tried to stop the German onslaught, but could not. Their forces seemed too feeble. The German troops knew how to execute a *Blitzkrieg*, a fast, all-devastating invasion. Hitler's headquarters had been installed in an armoured train in Pomerania, later in Upper Silesia. When Poland had been taken, no parades or speeches were held in Berlin.

On 17 September, the Polish Government already fled to Rumania. On 30 September, a number of Polish diplomats formed a Polish Government-in-exile in London. In that same month, the Polish Government arrested between 10,000 and 15,000 ethnic Germans in their country. About 2,000 of these men were shot or died from exhaustion in forced marches. About 300 of them were killed in Bromberg, when an anti-German uprising happened there.

On 6 October 1939, the last Polish military units surrendered. The Polish losses amounted to 70,000 soldiers killed against the German Army and 50,000 killed against the Soviet-Russians. The Polish soldiers finally suffered 133,000 wounded casualties in the attacks against the Germans, an unknown number to the Russians.

The German Forces made 700,000 Polish prisoners, the Russians made 300,000 Polish prisoners. About 150,000 Polish soldiers escaped and arrived mainly in Great Britain. The German losses were about 11,000 soldiers killed and 30,000 wounded, plus 3,400 missed in action. The Soviet Russians lost a mere 700 men killed and 1,900 wounded. About 300 Polish armoured vehicles had been destroyed, 370 guns, and 5,000 other kinds of vehicles.

The German leaders despised the Poles. *Polenwirtschaft* was a common term for chaos and inefficiency, for Polish muddle. The aim of the Nazis was to depopulate the land and settle Germans on it. The Slavs would be reduced to the status of slave labourers and providers of food for their German masters. Germany won with the invasion about 10 million people, more than 80% of them Poles. The heart of Poland was then called the *General Government*, and placed under Hans Frank. Frank was the Nazis' legal expert. He was now the *Reich Commissioner for Justice*, and the Head of the Nazi Lawyers' League. Poland became nothing more than a colony, beyond the law of the *Third Reich*. The inhabitants were considered as being stateless, without rights. Frank acted as the General Governor. The head of the militia in occupied Poland was Ludwig von Alvensleben, who was adjutant to Heinrich Himmler. He was an ethnic German, leader of the self-protection militia under the SS leadership.

Before the invasion, German officers had spoken to the troops, underlining the brutality and sub-humanity of the enemy. Poles were insidious, treacherous, base, mentally subnormal, cowardly, fanatical, living in stinking holes instead of in decent homes. They had come under the baleful influence of Jewry. Everything in the country was foul, the houses damp and ugly, lice-ridden, from pots to flannels. The best to do with a village was to burn it. Hence, from September 1939 onwards, the SS Task forces, the police units, ethnic German paramilitaries and regular German soldiers were killing civilians all over Poland.

No wonder the resistance in Poland augmented. On 30 May 1940, Hans Frank initiated a pacification action, in which 4,000 Polish resistance fighters and intellectuals, half of them already in custody, were killed. More than 3,000 Poles were sentenced for criminal offences.

The occupation of Poland came harsh to the Poles. In total, in that last quarter of 1939, about 65,000 Poles and Jews were murdered, often in mass shootings of civilians.

Many Poles were called to work in Germany. In the early months of 1940, the *Reich food Ministry* demanded a million Polish workers for the *Reich* economy. In February 1940, 295,000 Poles, mostly prisoners-of-war or POWs, were working as labourers in Germany. By the summer of 1940, they were 700,000! In 1941, 300,000 more Poles went to Germany to work, so that by 1 September 1941, about 1 million Poles were at work in Germany.

Poland was despoiled during the German occupation. The Germans simply took what they wanted. Hans Frank himself took the country estate of the Potocki noble family as his rural retreat. He built an imitation of Hitler's Berghof in the hills near Zakopane.

Looting and requisitioning at will became endemic in Poland. The occupation troops had the right to do so. The German decrees of 27 September 1939, 5 October and 19 October of that year allowed the blanket confiscation of Polish property! On 17 September 1939, the Nazis created a central agency, the *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost*, which served as the head office of the Trustees of the East, the administration of the confiscated enterprises. By February 1941, more than 205,000 Polish businesses had been confiscated. By June 1941, half of all Polish businesses and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the landed estates had been taken over by the Germans. All metals were brought over to Germany. Iron and steel, railings, fences, garden gates, and even saucepans were collected to be melted down and used in the German armament industry.

The spoliation of Poland was so bad, Walther von Brauchitsch, the commander of the German Army, reproached the German officers about their rapacious conduct in Poland. He even called their behaviour in German *Landsknechtmanieren*! Senior Army officers were taking action against SS units, which they thought to be breaching the laws and conventions of war, and who thereby were causing disturbances by the Poles behind the front.

An example was General von K  chler, the commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army. He had men court-martialled who had killed 50 Jews.

But on 4 October 1941, Hitler issued an amnesty for crimes committed 'out of bitterness against the atrocities committed by the Poles against German soldiers'. The most open criticism of the occupation policies came from Colonel General Johannes Blaskowitz, the Commander-in-Chief, in late October 1939. Yet, the military rule ended on 26 October 1939, and authority passed on to the civil administration for the occupied territories. Blaskowitz sent a report to Hitler of the crimes and atrocities committed by the SS and the Police units. He condemned the killing of thousands of Jews and Poles as being counter-productive. Hitler dismissed his scruples as being childish. Blaskowitz was relieved of his command in May 1940.

The German Army took about 700,000 prisoners-of-war in Poland. There were numerous cases of guards shooting Polish prisoners, especially after having resisted the Army. Estimates go from 16,000 Polish citizens thus shot, to 27,000 men!

*A new Order in occupied Poland*

Poland was considered by the Nazis as a colony of settlement, in which the racially inferior indigenous inhabitants would be removed from the lands by one means or another, to make room for the invading Aryan master race. The *Race and Settlement Office of the Nazi Party* had been set up under Walther Darré. Moreover, on 7 October 1939, Hitler had appointed Heinrich Himmler as the *Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of the German Race*. By a decree of Hitler of 7 October 1939, Hitler ordered Himmler, the head of the SS, to

- Bring back all ethnic Germans abroad who were eligible for return to the Reich.
- To eliminate the harmful influence of alien parts of the population that were a danger to the Reich and to the German community.
- To create new German colonies by resettlement.

In the first half of December 1939, about 88,000 Poles and Jews were arrested in Posen. They were sent to Germany as forced labourers. The deportation happened in the winter! By early 1941, 365,000 people had therefore been deported from Posen. Over 1 million people were involved, and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of these were Jewish. Himmler deported over 260,000 Poles from the *Wartheland*, the territories of Poznan, Lodz, Cracow, territories in the west of Poland, to Germany. Thousands of Polish children were deemed suitable for Germanisation. They were sent to special camps in Germany, given German names and identity papers. They had to follow courses of German and heard the rudiments of the Nazi ideology. The Regional Leader in Danzig of West Prussia was called Forster. 600,000 new applicants for Germanisation were handled in Danzig. This too was a project for arbitrary Germanisation.

The two largest parts of German-occupied Polish territory then were the *General Government in Poland* under Hans Frank as General Governor, and the *Wartheland*. The *General Government* was a rough triangle holding the environs of Warsaw, Lublin and Cracow. The Poles there were explicitly excluded from the protection of German Law. A Pole had only one duty: to work, and to behave himself. He or she was subject to harsh punishments, to labour camps, corporal punishments, and even the death penalty. No appeal was possible. Poles were only second-class citizens, pushed into inferior positions. They were ordered to stand aside and remove their hats when Germans passed in the street, and to serve Germans first in shops and markets.

In the *Wartheland*, only 7% of the population were ethnic Germans. Polish schools, theatres, museums, newspapers, Polish cultural institutions, and so on, were closed down. Use of the Polish language was forbidden. Poles were banned from using gramophones and cameras. They were not to attend German theatres. Street names were germanised.

Attacks began on the Catholic Church. About 1,700 Catholic priests were sent to Dachau. Half of them did not survive the imprisonment. The Parish Catholic Church was more or less outlawed in the *Wartheland*. Polish music, such as of Chopin, was banned. High schools were closed. Teaching books were burnt. Polish writers, scientists, artists, musicians and intellectuals were mistreated and killed. On 27 October 1939, the Mayor of Warsaw was

arrested and later shot. A little later, on 6 November, 182 members of the academic staff of Cracow University were arrested and sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

In 1939 already, several thousand ethnic Germans were transferred to the areas of the *General Government*, and many transported from areas controlled by the Soviet Union, under a series of agreements negotiated with Himmler. From March 1941 on, 400,000 Poles were thrown out of their homes, without being deported. Ethnic Germans then entered Poland and the *Wartheland*: 136,000 to 150,000 from the Baltic States, 30,000 from the *General Government*, 200,000 from Rumania. By 1943, 408,000 ethnic Germans had resettled in the *Wartheland* and even 74,000 in the old *Reich*. More than 1,500 transit camps had been erected to allow these movements of people. The ethnic Germans were classified from very suitable to ethnically or biologically unsuitable. The programme of resettlement proceeded very slowly, but it existed. By December 1942, such German settlers had taken over 20% of all the businesses in the annexed Polish territories. Even families of which the husband had deserted from the German Army were rounded up in the French Lorraine region and sent to Poland as settlers. Over 110,000 Poles were forcibly expropriated from the Lublin region; 47 villages in the Zamosc areas were cleared for incoming Germans. The town of Szczepieszyn was officially declared a German settlement zone, and demoted to the status of village. The program for Germanisation of the *General Government* never reached its end, so huge was the task.

The Poles, as considered by the German occupation leaders, were second-class citizens that could be used for forced labour, and treated as if their lives meant nothing at all. Poles were a miserable, poverty-stricken people, who were incapable of forming a viable state of their own. Moreover, in the German administration, murder, theft, bribery and corruption were rife! Jews could purchase dispensation from wearing the yellow star. Certificates of Aryan descent could be bought. Emigration to Italy could be arranged.

Hans Frank's headquarters were in the Royal Palace of Cracow. His rival was the SS and Police Chief for the east, Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger. Frank terrorised the Polish population. Himmler was finally forced to start an investigation into Frank's corruption. Frank had been enriching members of his own family from state funds and looted property. He had filled two warehouses with loot! Hitler was furious. Frank was banned from public speaking, and stripped of all his party functions. Later, in 1943, Krüger was again replaced by Frank. The corruption continued.

A huge black market developed in occupied Poland. This black market was particularly important in food supplies. The German Army began registering pigs and other livestock on farms. They ordered these could only be slaughtered for the German Army, not for the local inhabitants. The Germans imposed food quotas on farmers and punished those who failed to fulfil them. From 1940 to 1944, 60% of the Polish meat production was taken off to feed the Germans, and 10% of the grain production. The German priorities were to feed the German occupiers first, then feed the Poles working on key installations such as the railways, and then still the Ukrainians and Poles. If anything was left, it could be given to the Jews. Ratios allotted to the Poles in for instance Warsaw, were for 669 cal/day in comparison with 2,613 cal/day for the Germans, and 184 cal/day for the Jews.

Under the impact of high levels of violence, of destruction and deprivation, the Polish society rapidly disintegrated. Bands of thieves roamed the countryside. Collaboration was rife. The German terrorised the inhabitants, looted the houses, raped women. Prostitution spread and girls consorted with German soldiers for food. Venereal diseases spread, drunkenness and fights proliferated.

Such dire situations also spread in the zones of Poland occupied by the Russian Army. The Red Army now occupied 201,000 square kilometre of Polish territory, 13 million people and it had made 200,000 Polish prisoners. In these territories, lived Polish officers, prison guards, military police, custom officials, etc, more than 15.000 people in all. In April to May 1940, over 4,400 of these were taken by the Soviet Secret Police, the NKVD, to Katyn Forest near Smolensk. The Soviet Russians shot most of them, or otherwise killed them in the camps, together with 11,000 alleged counter-revolutionaries. Only 450 were spared.

About 20,000 Polish people were killed by the Soviets. This extermination was part of a larger Soviet campaign to eradicate Polish national culture. Thousands of Poles were elsewhere slaughtered by paramilitaries in the Ukrainian and Belarus zones annexed by the Soviet Union. In Soviet-occupied Poland, about half a million Poles were imprisoned and many of them subjected to torture.

A campaign of mass deportation started. Members of non-Communist political parties, Russian exiles, active lay members of the Catholic Church, refugees, aristocrats, landowners, bankers, almost all Polish professionals were arrested and deported! In all, about 1.5 million people. The Poles were taken by train in vast convoys and brought to collective farms in Kazakhstan and other distant locations, to work. Tens of thousands of Poles working for pre-1940 factories, who had served with previous governments or has shown themselves unwilling to conform to the occupiers' ideology, were arrested and sent to labour camps in Siberia. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of these people died. The outcome of the Soviet occupation was about as disastrous as that of the German occupation!

## The Reich Security Head Office

On 27 September 1939, the Nazis proceeded with the reorganisation of their police services for the occupied territories. They founded the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, the *Reich Security Head Office*. It was formed of various police departments and SS troops brought together in one organisation. Originally, there were seven departments in all in the Head Office. The head of the departments was Reinhard Heydrich.

- Departments I and II formed the administration of the Head Office. It was led by Werner Best, though he was put aside in 1940 already by his rival Heydrich.
- Departments III and IV were Heydrich's Security Service, the proper *Sicherheitsdienst*. Department II was led by Otto Hohlendorf.
- Department V was the *Geheimer Staatspolizei*, led by Heinrich Müller. It had five sections. A was the section Political Opponents. B was for the Churches and the Jews. C was of Protective Custody. D for Occupied Territories. E for Counter-espionage, this led by Arthur Nebl.
- Department VI was the Criminal Police.
- Department VII was for Investigation of oppositional ideologies, led by Frank Six.

The *Reich Security Head Office* intervened in every area where Heydrich felt an active, radical presence was needed to preserve Nazism, first of all in the racial re-ordering of occupied Poland. Heydrich wanted to eliminate also all aristocrats, opposing Poles and Jews.

To reach this aim in occupied Poland, Heydrich organised 5 Task Forces or *Einsatzgruppen*, augmented later to 7, and this on Hitler's orders. The leaders of these units were appointed by a special administrative section created by Heydrich, and put under the command of Werner Best. The *Einsatzgruppen* of *Einsatzkommandos*, were led by senior Security Service and Security Police officers. Many of these were imbued with violent anti-Polish feelings. The task forces consisted of about 2,700 men each. They had to fight all elements in enemy territory agitating in the rear of the German fighting corps, to fight all people who remained hostile to the *Reich* and to the German domination. They had to kill the leading stratum of the Polish population. An example of such leaders was Bruno Streichenbach, an SS brigade leader born in Hamburg, head of task Force I in Poland. Especially Polish politicians, leading Catholics, proponents of Polish national identity, were singled out for arrest.

The Task forces had no regards for personal dignity. They performed physical abuse with sadistic pleasure and treated their prisoners, human beings, as animals. They proffered insults and mistreated their enemies. They saw the Poles as nothing more than treacherous subhumans, who had no place in German-occupied territories and hence should be eliminated. The military administration of occupied Poland ended on 26 October 1939. By then, about 530 towns and villages had been burnt to the ground. And 16,376 Poles had been executed.

## Part III. The Decision of the Vincius



## Anton Vincius

In 1935, Anton Vincius, first son of Julian Vincius and Charlotte Baraine, was 16 years old. He had almost finished his gymnasium at Berlin and would soon have to choose how to continue his studies at university. That, he wanted dearly. He wanted no career as a professional soldier, no career inside the NSDAP organisations. He knew where his father came from. He would have nothing to do with the Nazi ideology. He too had by now a good, though not complete idea of the perfidious, inhumane deeds and thoughts of the Nazis who ruled the country. He abhorred the Nazis, and was ashamed to have been born in Germany. He wanted to flee abroad, far away from all the horror he knew. How could the people live in the current atmosphere of hatred?

Anton remained as yet unsure about what to do next. Studies in medicine did not attract him particularly, not with Hitler and the NSDAP in command. He loved adventure and physical exercise. His head was filled with the German romanticism of the past century. He knew he would never be the splendid intellectual his father was. He forgot even his father had been young once, and not quite then knowing as much as he did now.

While at the gymnasium, Anton had also been a member at a Gymnastic Association. Three times in the week, in the evenings, and part of his weekends, he went to the exercises of the association. He ran, swam, did lots of gymnastics, developed his breast and muscles, and learned wrestling with the other boys. The gymnastics organisation he was a member of, was of course part of the larger organisation of the *Hitlerjugend*, but no uniforms were used. The boys and girls did not take part in the mass demonstrations of the NSDAP, and no NSDAP men came to preach Nazi ideas all the time. Anton hardly noticed being part of the nationwide organisation of Baldur von Schirach under the Hitler aegis. The group he was part of did rather stress the boys' physical strength and German health, but also did not force affiliation into the larger *Hitler Jugend* program.

Anton shaped his muscles; he let himself be admired by the girls he met, and spent his energy and enthusiasm of being young and healthy together with friends of all kinds of social backgrounds. That was what his father had wished. During the weekends, when he was at home, he travelled to the Vincius villa at Hubertushöhe, ran along the lake and in the woods, rowed a lot with his sister and brother Maxim, and sailed on the lake. He worried little about the future, and was not extraordinarily interested in the German blond beauties that showed their interest in him. He was a boy living in the present, unworried about money and about what to do next year. He liked Hubertushöhe, the territory around Storkow, its woods and lakes, all to the south-east of Berlin-Mitte.

Anton's father and mother, Julian and Charlotte, were a radiant, beautiful couple. Julian could not be more Prussian of stance and head. Charlotte was an exceptional beauty, imbibed naturally with Parisian elegance. Both held their heads high, loved beauty much more than brutality or perversion. They regularly took their adolescent sons and daughter with them to the theatre, the cinema, or to diners in Berlin. Their usual place to go out in the evenings was to the Adlon Hotel of Berlin, if merely to have a quick bite and a drink. The children had been taught how to behave, remain quiet and observing. They were educated in elegance and

fine environments. They did honour to their parents in the better circles of Berlin, always a little stunned and under the impression of the now already dimming grandeur of the Berlin bourgeoisie. Of course, with time, many more men in uniform and wearing the black swastika bracelet on their arms came to dine at the Adlon. Some of these men knew well Julian Vincius, could be his patients. Julian Vincius was a very discreet man when it came to his patients. He would never acknowledge a man as such, unless the person began to talk of this of his own admission. Was Julian not the celebrated professor of the *Charité Hospital* and the director of a University department? Did not draw the splendid and charming Charlotte Vincius them always to her with a smile? One in the crowd, who generally saluted the Vincius Family cheerfully, was a man called Robert Ley.

Ley was born in Niederbreidenbach in the Rhineland. He was the 7<sup>th</sup> of 11 children in a farmer's family. He had not been rich in his youth! He had studied chemistry at the universities of Jena, Bonn and Münster, before volunteering to the Army at the outbreak of the World War of 14-18. He had found in Julian a man with whom he could exchange memories of that heroic and tragic time. Ley fought for two years in an artillery regiment, also near Verdun, before training as an aerial artillery spotter in an Artillery Flying detachment. He was a pilot. In July 1917, his airplane was shot down over France. The French soldiers took him a prisoner. He was seriously injured in the crash, suffered damages at his leg, which was saved only after 6 chirurgical operations. Ley was equally hurt in his head, in the frontal lobe of his brain. He spoke with a stammer when he became too enthusiast or angry. He suffered from bouts of erratic behaviour. Doctors tried to heal him with dangerous drugs.

Julian proposed softer medicines, no drugs, and such treatment seemed to suit Ley better than other cures. But Ley could not stop drinking. He drank heavily when he met Julian Vincius. Was that because he was doing things his conscience could not accept and not endure? Julian hoped so, and felt some sort of pity for the man. Ley was then an arrogant man, a force of nature, though rather incompetent in the matters of the various organisations he led. Nevertheless, he was now a fine manager of anything. He was drunk often and could not change that behaviour, though he had learned also to manage himself. He knew when to leave. Julian Vincius should have loathed the man, but he could not but admire his charisma and natural power.

Ley came to consult the doctor. Julian could not do much for him, told him so, but the little he could help was more than other doctors could.

After the war of 14-18, Ley returned to university and gained a doctorate in chemistry in 1920. He was far from an idiot, but careless in who and what he picked as examples. He worked at first as a food chemist in the I.G. Farben company, based in Leverkusen in the Ruhr. Anton Vincius also admired Robert Ley, and later would do studies, mainly in chemistry, maybe on Ley's example. But Ley joined the NSDAP party after the *Beer Putsch* of Adolf Hitler in München. Ley swore loyalty to Hitler, and continued to serve the Nazi Party unwaveringly. He remained open more to Socialist than to Fascist opinions, but he would always side with Hitler in party disputes.

After the ban on the NSDAP was lifted, Ley re-joined the NSDAP in March of 1923. He became the *Deputy Gauleiter* of the Southern Rhineland, then of the entire Rhineland, and was promoted to full Gauleiter later on. In March 1928, he became the editor of the virulently

antisemitic newspaper *Der Westdeutscher Beobachter* in Köln. He was elected to the *Reichstag* in September 1930. End 1931, Hitler called him to München to become the deputy of Gregor Strasser, the then head of the party organisation. Thus, Ley got promoted to *Reichsorganisationsinspekteur*, later with oversight of about half the *Gaue* or election districts of the party. He became Hitler's *Stabschef*, the Führer's chief of staff. When Hitler became the *Reichskanzler* in 1933, Ley followed him and was offered the title of *Reichsleiter*, then the one of *Reichsorganisationsleiter*. This was one of the second highest political ranks in the Nazi Party under Hitler.

On 10 May 1933, Hitler appointed Robert Ley to the head of the newly founded *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* or DAF, the German Labour Front. The DAF took over all the existing Nazi trade unions, as well as the *Trade Union Federation*, the *National Socialist Factory Cell Organisation*. Ley purged this movement of all remaining Socialist formations, replacing the Socialist and former Communist leaders by his own men. Only one trade union then existed in Germany, the DAF, and its leader was Robert Ley!

By 1934, Ley had embezzled DAF funds to buy a luxurious estate for himself near Köln. He owned a string of grand villas in or near other cities, as well as a large art collection. The DAF quickly began to gain a reputation as probably the most corrupt organisation of the *Third Reich*.

The DAF set up the organisation *Kraft durch Freude, KdF, Strength through Joy*, to provide cultural tours on cruises for DAF members. KdF grew out rapidly to be one of the Nazis' most popular programs of leisure. It played a large role in reconciling the Nazi Regime with the working class before the war. Ley's role in Germany would decline with the outbreak of the war, but he retained always Hitler's favour. Ley remained loyal to Hitler.

At the end of 1935, the Vincius children had a quick meal as a special treat of their parents in the Adlon Hotel in the late afternoon. Robert Ley passed in the dining room, remarked by everyone. Ley in the Adlon caused a sensation, though he was a frequent guest. Attracted either by the sight of the doctor he consulted now and then, sometimes months apart, or by the doctor's elegant and very stunning wife, Ley asked whether he could join the table and his friends. He called the Vincius thus openly, though he could and should have known by then Julian Vincius would soon be reclassified as a Jew, if that had not yet been done. A seat was immediately brought for him, cutlery and plates provided.

Ley behaved decently at the table. He ordered a frugal dinner, like Julian, Charlotte, Malou, Anton and Maxim had asked for. Ley not only held his eyes on the children's mother Charlotte, but also at Malou, who was 17 years old then, and a striking redhead Viking beauty. Malou would already and always flirt with any man who granted her some attention, whether young or old, now including Ley. Ley must have been flattered to receive the interested attention of a girl so young. Malou's ample, very red hair shone as a startling light in the room, and could transfer scarlet flames of light of passion to any man. Nevertheless, Ley reacted with great politeness. He seemed sober also, which must have been a rare occasion near the evening.

After the introductions, Anton's father and Robert Ley talked about the coming Olympic Games of Berlin, about the economic situation, about the army, about how German industry expanded. Suddenly, Ley stood, excused himself to Charlotte and asked permission to speak

to her husband for a few minutes, apart. Ley and Julian Vincius left the table and went not far, to a side-room, the door of which was left open. The two men talked together for a while. Ley gestured broadly, opened and closed his arms, crossed his arms and held his chin high, seemed to interrogate Julian, and then both men returned to the table. Ley sighed and sat down again. Julian followed. Ley seemed rather pleased with himself. Julian looked livid.

Suddenly, Ley exclaimed, ‘well, my boys,’ addressing both Anton and Maxim, ‘what would you say about joining us on a boat trip on the Scharnhorst, our newest cruise ship? The next trip of the ship will sail as far as the North Pole, along the Norwegian coast. Would you like that?’

Anton immediately saw Maxim crimp and grow shorter by a few centimetres in his chair. Adventures and the movement of the waves was nothing for Maxim, at least not yet, not at his current age. But the offer appealed much to Anton.

Anton exclaimed, ‘I would like that very much, Herr Ley. The cruise should be wonderful. If my parents allow, I would gladly be on that ship.’

‘Well, my boy’, Ley exclaimed, having noticed the reticence of Maxim, and probably in a better mood now, after having spoken to Anton’s father, ‘you’ll be my guest, then! I’ll have the papers sent to your parents. I like young men who show enthusiasm and who like challenges and adventures! You’ll see a lot, learn a lot on the cruise, and meet many interesting people. You’ll be in good company, I assure you. I may travel a few first days along, but I doubt it I’ll find the time. I assure you, you’ll enjoy yourself thoroughly! That is settled then.’

Robert Ley must have remarked the worried face of Anton’s parents, and the colour of Maxim’s face returning from yellow to a healthy red. He smiled. For the rest of the dinner, the conversation remained polite and courteous. Then again, rather brusquely, Ley once more stood, pushed his chair back, proffered a few last, polite words to Doctor Vincius, a few more nice phrases to Charlotte and her children, kissed the hands of mother and daughter, and left the room, followed by his adjudants. When Ley stood, almost the entire room stood! Julian did the same. Ley left quickly, waving to right and left.

When the Vincius Family sat down again, Charlotte held a silence, then asked her husband what he had discussed with Ley.

‘Oh,’ Julian answered, trying to hold his face as reassuring as possible, ‘Ley is a sick man, as you know, though not so sick as to have to fear for his life. We spoke about how he felt. I told him what could be done further on and promised to provide him with some more medicines of my own preparations. Ley’s driver will come tomorrow afternoon to get his package. He seems to support those medicines well. He seemed pleased with what I told him. I also proposed him to come and visit me more regularly, to which he agreed, but I know he will have forgotten about that after a few days. I told him he was working himself to death, though. He laughed at me. He looked somewhat more assured after our conversation. He has other doctors of course, at least one of whom I know as a total quack. His doctors seem not to have been as optimistic as I about his ability to lead on the life he wants to lead. I suppose they think of their money.’

‘You seem to like Ley,’ Charlotte was surprised.

‘I do,’ Julian sighed. ‘Ley is a force of nature. I despise the ideas he follows, as they are Hitler’s and Rosenberg’s, but I cannot but admire the power of life he shows in his work. He is a very, very dangerous man, of course, one I would normally avoid if I could. He has power of death or life over tens of thousands of people, if not many more. And yet, I detected no real malice in him. Does he realise the wrong he can do by his Nazi ideas? I should hate him for his ideas, but I am merely sorry for him. He can fall down any second from a failing heart, and then again, he could live on for a hundred, or fifty years more. I found no evil intention in his words, but in any normal nation, his place would be in a prison for the rest of his life due to those ideas. I know he is a thief, an embezzler, quite probably a murderer, and yet I can talk with him as if he were a brother to me, or a simple patient as so many others. Human nature shall always puzzle me! Yes, he is a man to avoid, yet I admire him, too. I don’t think in other circumstances he would harm anybody because of his ambition or anger, or because of his interlocutor not being a Nazi, or anything like that. He is oddly good-natured. I suppose he fools everybody. Maybe he even fools himself!’

Julian’s children had listened to what their father told. They looked at him with large eyes. Julian sighed, and said, ‘so, Anton, you’ll be cruising to the North Pole, then! Ley told me that would be in early spring already.’

‘Yes, father,’ Anton replied with very eager, bright eyes. ‘I’d like to send him a letter thanking him, and ask him also to give me the permission to serve at the Olympic Games to come. The organisation has already asked for young boys to help at the side-lines. I sent in my eagerness to help. Could you add a word to Robert Ley?’

‘No,’ Julian refused categorically. Julian grew a little paler. ‘No, we don’t ask anything from a Nazi.’

Julian thought for a while, then, in the good humour of the day, he promised, ‘I will ask a few of my friends, no Nazis though. I’ll make good work of what you ask.’

After that, the Vincius Family also left the table. When Doctor Julian Vincius wanted to pay for the dinner, the head waiter whispered to him that Herr Robert Ley had ordered to put it all on his bill. Julian could not refuse such a courtesy. He nodded and thanked. The Adlon would refuse to accept money from him, Julian.

Once back at home, when Julian and Charlotte were alone, Charlotte came back to Julian’s conversation with Robert Ley. She had noticed from the colour of Julian’s face that there was more to it than he had told in front of the children in the Adlon.

‘Have you talked about the Nürnberg Race Laws?’ Charlotte wondered. ‘When you isolated, the two of you, there was more to the conversation than you explained at the table. Ley left quickly too, after that. You are again a Jew, as full Jews, despite your churchgoing to the Evangelist temples. Our sons are of mixed blood in the Nazi definitions. How would Anton be able to go on a pleasure cruise on a Nazi ship, or help at the Olympics?’

‘That was the main argument we discussed at the end,’ Julian confessed to his wife. ‘When he asked me for medicines, I thought it was my duty as a doctor to a patient to tell him I was a Jew again, by the Nürnberg Laws. I told him I tried to escape from that. He answered fate had caught up with me. Ley was not surprised at all! He knew! The Nürnberg Laws are not yet in execution, he told me, and would not be until after the Olympic Games. Ley told me he had known since a long time I was actually of Jewish descent. He also confirmed he couldn’t care less of which religion I vowed to. He said he understood I wanted not any longer to be a

Jew. Nevertheless, I was, he asserted. He could do nothing about that! He wants to continue coming to me as a patient. He warned me that would end before or in the autumn, but not just yet. I know why, and he confirmed to me the laws shall not be fully applied until the end of the Olympic Games of Berlin in August. Hitler fears international reactions because of the Nürnberg Laws. Once the Olympic Games finished, Ley told me he would not be able to consult me anymore about his health. He told me that straight to my face, told me he could not help me thereafter, and said he regretted that. He will have to consult other doctors, even though he understands most of them are merely quacks. He announced me I would lose my job at the *Charité* Hospital and at the university. He told then, he wanted a last time to give my children the occasion to go on that tour of his cruise ship. He likes our family, but he will have to tear himself loose from us, anyway. He told of that in many words, subdued, in words and phrases covered in honey and half-words, half-meanings, but he sounded clear enough. So, Anton will go on a cruise as a farewell to Germany. Nobody will check on his identity. Ley asked me for our children not to talk in the open about their ancestry, and not to show their papers to anybody. He will give instructions on the ship to let our children alone, now only Anton. He said he could do not more, and seemed truly sorry. Finally, he advised me to leave the country by the end of the year. It should not be so difficult, he predicted, not for somebody with money. He advised me to place all my belongings in your name. The Nazis shall not touch a French citizen. He almost got angry when he was talking about all of that, after we discussed his health. I noticed he didn't like the measures soon to be taken.'

Charlotte grew pale. 'Ley advises us to leave Berlin,' she whispered.

'Yes, he does. He suggested as much. Not just Berlin, to leave Germany! He would not be able to help after September at the latest. Ley is far from a fool. He looks like a drunk, but he was sober this afternoon. When he says something like that, get out, we should believe him and take the hint seriously.'

'And how are we going to live? Your practice with your private patients will then be gone too!'

'I'll simply have to build up a new practice from scratch, somewhere else, in another country, something we Jews have ever done. Don't worry too much! I'll think of a way. We have a few months still, practically an entire year. My guess is, we can live on as we do today, not draw attention to us, at least until September of 1936, at the latest till October or November 1936. We have some time to think this over. By the end of next year, we should have left Germany, or almost!'

Charlotte sank down deep in her chair. She kept silent for a long time. She must have felt as if a war had started anew.

Then, she said, 'so be it, then! We'll have to prepare, think about everything, schools for the children, a new house, how to leave. Nobody must suspect anything around us.'

Julian sighed, but with some relief. Charlotte had not lost her courage. She was already planning their escape! She was indeed a courageous woman, Julian saw, and there was nothing else to do. She knew already the first act. She knew she could only save her children and her way of living by planning carefully what to do, when and how. She was ready to act, she had already left Berlin and Germany in her head. Julian now especially did not want her to do rash things. She should keep her head together. Yet, he noticed now very clearly, probably for the first time in their marriage, she was a very rational woman too, who didn't

hesitate to act swiftly when necessary, despite all her emotions. He was very glad about that. There would be tears yet, but they would make it.

He said, ‘we, Jews, have always travelled in face of danger. Does one not speak of the wandering Jews? We’ll have to wander once more. It is our time, now, Charlotte! I do apologise we have to do this because of me.’

Charlotte bowed her head and held on a silence.

‘Well, let’s leave this subject to somewhat later,’ Julian continued. ‘We’ll have to prepare very soon, the sooner the better, to leave. For instance, all our money and the gold, we’ll have to get that out of Germany in a hurry. A Jew who leaves the country has to pay 90% in special taxes. We cannot have that. Luckily, you are still a French citizen, with French papers. I can transfer all our funds on your name as soon as I can. Since we are married, that can be done by a simple act. Then, we leave Germany. Where could we settle next and construct us another life? The Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark, Norway or Sweden, even Finland, are no good options. We only speak German and French, and such a move would be too hard on the children, so the Netherlands are out of the question too. We don’t know the language. How could I build up a practice? Belgium could be an option, but, as in the past World War, Belgium will be the first country invaded. The German armies need to pass through Belgium to get into France quickly.

France would be nice, but France should also be one of the very first targets of Hitler. He still hates the defeat of Germany in the last war against France. Moreover, people know us in Lorraine and in Longwy. We will not be very welcome there. Too much had happened between the Germans and the French in Lorraine, too much cruelty, too many devastations, too much plundering, too many humiliations, and too many massacres. Your father was lucky to have been able to remain at Metz.

That leaves the smaller countries of Luxemburg and Switzerland. Switzerland will probably prove too hard to get into. So many people with money will try to enter that country and stay there. Switzerland would be a fine choice. But the country will swarm with German spies and the Swiss will be very lenient towards the Germans for their own survival. The country is actually managed primarily by German-speaking people. I don’t want again to run against a wall of antisemitism. The Alemannic dominate Switzerland. Luxemburg?

The state of Luxemburg may indeed be more inclined to help us than the Swiss. The people of Luxemburg want to stay independent, though the German armies will roll over the country in one or two days. But Luxemburg is close to Longwy and to Metz. Longwy and Metz lie only at a few kilometres from the borders of Luxemburg and France. If ever we have to run to France, we’ll have two escape routes. It will be a lot easier to visit your father from out of Luxemburg, yet stay out of the eyes of the French. Think about it. I would choose Luxemburg, all arguments considered. We make a decision within two weeks! Then, we plan our moves.’

‘Jawohl, *Herr Oberst*, to Luxemburg,’ Charlotte laughed and saluted.

Julian then thought of Dora Gomol. Dora was his very special love of a lifetime. Here, the love would end, at least in its physical form. Whether Switzerland or Luxemburg, he would have to leave Berlin and Dora. A new war could last five to seven years, he guessed. He would not be able to see Dora during those years, maybe longer. He would suggest her to flee

to Switzerland. It would be much easier for her, no Jew, to enter the country and live there. He doubted she would do such a thing. She would not leave Germany. She would wait for him, however evolved the war. She would wait for him at the *Charité*, and serve the wounded German soldiers. If his life in Luxemburg remained tolerable, maybe even successful, would he, or might Charlotte want to return to Berlin after the war? He also doubted that. The answer to the issue lay in the far future. Who knew what would come? Maybe there would be no war. Maybe the Nazi Regime would fall within the next months? Maybe Belgium, Luxemburg, Switzerland and large parts of France would soon constitute the Greater Germany in Europe? Maybe Germany would be defeated quickly? Well, decisions had to be made at each moment, and for now, the best decision he could think of was to flee to Luxemburg!

And so it happened, that Anton Vincius first had the opportunity to go by himself on a cruise on the Scharnhorst cruiser ship to the North Pole. It would be a luxurious trip in 1936, along the Norwegian coast.

The ship left at Stettin. It would stop at Copenhagen and Oslo, then make its way north. Several Norwegian cities would be visited. Anton's parents brought him by car to Stettin. When he went aboard, he and his parents had first visited the town, where they had never been before. Then, Anton received all the necessary papers to get on the ship, brought to him still in Berlin by Robert Ley's driver.

When Anton stepped up the long gangway to the high ship, on the majestic, enormous cruise ship, the German officers controlling his papers did not change their faces. Anton remarked that when they noticed his name, they stopped controlling further. His identity, name and first name, apparently was all they needed. Here had passed the hand and the orders of Robert Ley! Ley must have ordered them not to fuss about Herr Vincius, however young he was. He understood that far instantly. It was the last favour Ley could grant his father. The officers waved Anton through immediately. They even called a porter to wear his two suitcases before he had the time to pick them up again himself. Anton could have found his cabin on his own, but a steward led.

Anton was astonished to find his cabin was in the first class compartment, in the middle of the ship. His cabin was large! It had a small salon to lead to the bedroom. Courtesy again of Robert Ley! Anton could have his breakfast and dinners on his own in his first class apartment, as he thought of it. A folder with vouchers for free activities on board was another courtesy, from fencing lessons to free swimming, to tennis court lessons, access to first class clubs in the evening, and free dinners all day. Even Anton, innocent and young as he was, found the attentions exaggerated. Why, he could live as a prince on board! He could get initiated in several sports and yet enjoy the sights. Practically for each port the Scharnhorst would wait in, he had free tickets for sight-seeing organisations with guide. Anton arranged his clothes and things in the cabin, and then went back outside, to wave goodbye to his parents. His parents left, though the ship would only move out of the port of Stettin the next day. Back in his cabin, he threw himself on the bed.

On board and all along the cruise, Anton had a very grand time. The message he was a protected friend of Ley must have spread rapidly. A gentle couple of elderly people, the husband of which always dressed in civilian clothes, but who must have been a military, presented themselves to Anton on his first evening. They told him Robert Ley had asked



them to accompany the young Vincius, as far as he needed them. They would be discreet, they promised him, and would only intervene when Anton asked for their help. Actually, he never needed them on the cruise, and saw them seldom around. They kept their promise.

Anton saw them generally only at evening dinners.

But they had their granddaughter with them, a girl of about Anton's age, and a beauty. Anton met her that evening, and got impressed by her immediately. Never had such a girl even a little bothered with him. She had very pale, blond hair, true blue eyes, and she was a beauty! She was also quite a flirtatious girl, aware of how fine and glamorous she was. So, she attracted the young SS-men of first class like flies to a light. Anton was a lot shier and unambitious. When it came to girls, he was a novice, and quickly shovelled aside. He did make friends with her sister, a lively brunette with many freckles around her nose, and she too showed the body of a pin-up girl. Anton made friends with her.

She refused the tall, young officers on board. These did try to flock around her too, but she and Anton exercised the same sports together, and walked on the various decks and talked. With time, a few days later, they kissed, of course, and huddled together. But their idyll stopped when the ship entered once more, after a month of unworried joy and happiness, into the harbour of Stettin. Suzi, the girl was called, had by then learned from her grandparents that Anton would not have much of a future in the new Germany, for partly of Jewish descent. Suzi stayed polite and warm to the end, but the end of the cruise meant equally the end of their idyll. Suzi had come to his cabin often, but never stepped through the door to his small bedroom. Nevertheless, in her company, the cruise had an additional tinge of magnificence and joy. It had been a wonderful present of his father's friend or patient, or of one who had wanted to show the son the splendour the new Germany could become?

When the cruise ship glided along the quays in the harbour of Stettin, Anton did not find Suzi anymore. Stewards told him she, her sister and her grandparents had already left the ship, at the earliest. Anton had no address and no telephone number of them. He only knew she lived in Lübeck or environs. When he went off the ship, he was quite alone. He knew he had to hurry to the train station of Stettin, and ask how he could get from there back to Berlin. Anton felt terribly lonely when he sat in the train to Berlin. So, this loneliness was what it meant not to really belong to the German community? The loneliness would stay with him all his subsequent life.

A few months later began the Olympic Games of Berlin, a new joy, and Anton could push his cruise to the background of his thoughts. Anton's interest was very much drawn to the Olympics, as sports was what he liked extraordinarily, now. For these events too, he received invitations to present himself at the main building of the organisation in Berlin. He received accreditation papers and badges, officially allowing him to pass the checkpoints at the various places where the games would be held. He was told to announce himself to one who led a brigade of young students that were to help at the different sites. Every morning, he would have to go to this man of the organisation, and he would be sent to a site where he should be needed. As he was conscientious, regular, good-natured and clever, he was sent to very many different sites. He served in various jobs, dressed in an Olympic white, simple uniform. He had to wear, of course, an armband with the swastika sign. Here too, as on the cruise ship, he was treated as if he were a true German-race Nazi boy. But here too, eyes followed him. He was a fine youth now, with regular traits on his face, French elegance, a straight nose, blue

eyed, light brown hair and not the German blond. Once, he ran in front of the cameras of Leni Riefenstahl, in the film she was shooting of the Olympics, and he noticed himself in the film. He was eternalised on celluloid!

The Olympic Games in Germany of 1936, the largest sports event ever on earth till then, were held from 1 to 16 August of that year 1936. Berlin had won the bid over Barcelona for the 29<sup>th</sup> IOC, International Olympic Committee, session in April of 1931. The Nazis, come to power in 1933, continued the works and preparations for the Games on the new main stadium in open air, as well as for six new gymnasiums and several smaller arenas. Adolf Hitler used the Games as an opportunity to divulgate his ideas of racial supremacy, so the German athletes had to win the most medals, which they also did. Hitler's ideals were reflected in the films of Leni Riefenstahl. Jewish athletes were at first banned from taking part, and few really tried to participate, although the international rules allowed them to do so.

Germany won most of the gold medals, 89 in total, whereas the United States of America came in second with 56 medals. The next Olympic Games were to be held only in 1948, due to the Second World War, of which nobody in 1936 wanted to think. One year before the games of Berlin, the US Olympic Association suggested holding the Games in Rome instead of in Berlin. But Hitler's regime protested, and gave assurances that Jewish athletes would be allowed to compete. Few Jewish athletes did. Hitler could not avoid black-skinned African-American athletes to compete, and with Jesse Owens, the USA had a champion who won several medals.

The main organiser of the Berlin Olympics was a German, the then head of the Reich Sports Office, the *Deutscher Reichsbund für Leibesübungen* or DRL, Hans von Tschammer und Osten, the *Reichssportführer*. Von Tschammer trusted the detailed organisation to Theodor Lewald and Carl Diem, the president and secretary of the *Deutscher Reichsausschuss für Leibesübungen*, a forerunner of the Reich Sports Office of Germany. Leni Riefenstahl made her films, with images of the games. The Olympics were the first ever event to be broadcast by television. The German Post Office used Telefunken equipment to broadcast over 70 hours, sent to special viewing rooms in Berlin and Potsdam, transmitting from the Paul Nipkow TV Station.

The Olympic Village, where Anton also regularly came and had access to, allowed by his pass, was situated at Elstal in Wustermark, on the western side of Berlin. The site was 30 km from the centre of the city. Here could be found the dormitories and dining halls for the participants, plus training facilities such as a swimming pool, gymnasiums and other training facilities. Over the buildings, arenas and grounds of the Games regularly flew the LZ129 Hindenburg, a huge Zeppelin balloon, picturing on its underside the Olympic rings flag. The village overseer was Hauptmann Wolfgang Fürstner. Only 2 months before the opening of the Olympics, Fürstner had abruptly be replaced by *Oberstleutnant* Werner von Gilsa, who commanded the Berlin Guards Regiment. Fürstner had been found out as a half-Jewish officer. The Nürnberg Laws had classified him as such. He had therefore been expelled from the *Wehrmacht* two days after the end of the Berlin Games. He committed suicide, realising his career as an officer had been ended by the Nazis.

For the 1936 Olympics, 22 venues were used, most of them located in the *Reich Sportsfeld* complex. Here were the Olympic Swimming Stadium, the Hockey stadiums, the Tennis courts, and so on. Canoeing took place at Grünau. Boxing, wrestling, weightlifting took place in the *Deutschlandhalle*. More venues were near the Wannsee. In total, over 20 places served as venues for the Olympics.

Anton was in the main stadium when Adolf Hitler, the *Führer*, opened the Olympic Games officially. The various nations paraded in their national costumes. Greece entered first. The Nazi athletes gave Hitler the Nazi salute. The United States athletes held their hats over their hearts as salute. Hitler celebrated the 11<sup>th</sup> Olympics of modern times. The Nazis even organised the very first torch run from Ancient Olympia on the Peloponnesos to Berlin! Finally, the torch bearer ran through a tunnel into the stadium under a thundering applause of the public. He ran all the way up the steps to the top of the stadium, to light the cauldron that would hold the eternal flame that would burn for the entire duration of the Games. The German organisers released about 25,000 pigeons in the air, symbols of peace. The pigeons circled over the stadium, until a German organiser had a canon shot. This scared the poop out of the pigeons, all on the straw hats of the participants! The women were no hats, and got the poop in their hair!

In all then could begin the Games in 129 events and 25 Olympic disciplines. It would be too long to cite all the performances. One event that Anton cherished was when Italy won the gold medal in football.

About 49 nations attended the Berlin Olympics! Belgium participated with 120 athletes, the Netherlands with 128, but Germany with 433 and the United States with 310.

Hitler allowed black people such as Jesse Owens, and even Jewish people to participate. He allowed one token Jewish participant to the German team, Helene Mayer. In the city, antisemitic signs such as those telling 'Jews not wanted' were removed from the Berlin streets. After the Olympic Games, the Jewish participation in German sports was limited once more. The German Nazis avoided Jewish and Roma men and women in sports.

Individual Jewish athletes from a number of countries chose to boycott the Berlin Olympics. The Spanish Government boycotted the Games and organised an alternative, its Peoples' Olympiad in Barcelona. Here, 6,000 athletes from 49 countries would equally participate. But these Games stopped because of the outbreak of the Civil War in Spain, just one day before the Summer Games were about to start.

The Soviet Union did not participate in any such Games before 1952. The two first Turkish and Muslim women athletes, Halet Cambel and Surat Vetgeri Asani refused to be formally introduced by their guide to Adolf Hitler, because of Hitler's approach to Jews.

Anton Vinci had the time of his life at the Olympic Games of Berlin, close to his heroes. He helped fetching stray balls in the tennis courts and brought in material at almost all of the gymnasiums and also in the Olympic Stadium itself. Nobody seemed to know he was actually a half-Jew now, running up and down the venues. He made many friends, though none knew his status. Most of his young colleagues were proud to declare themselves members of the *Hitlerjugend*. He was not. Since he did wear a Swastika armband, nobody noticed him as different. He remained silent as a grave when asked from which Gymnastic Organisation he was sent. He knew he would no longer be welcome there. He also did not boast he had

received his participation from his acquaintance with Robert Ley. Still, he enjoyed himself extraordinarily. When he returned from the end of the Olympics to his home, his parents explained to him his life in Germany would end soon. They told him and his brother and sister what they had decided for their future.

### *The Decision to flee from Germany*

During the Olympic Games of 1936, the Vincius of Berlin had decided they would move from Germany to the Archduchy of Luxemburg, to the city of the same name. Julian Vincius had succeeded to transfer all his money to his wife, Charlotte Baraine. No questions had been asked in his banks, though Charlotte was still a French citizen. In both banks, Julian was a well-known and appreciated client, the clerks knew he was a doctor and a professor at the Berlin university. Charlotte had placed the money in a Belgian bank and in a Luxemburg bank in the town of Luxemburg. Julian and his wife then decided to bring their gold to a Luxemburg bank too. That would have to be done by stealth, by contraband, but they devised a plan for that.

They told Ernst Vincius how they wanted to move the gold. Ernst promised to help. Over a period of three months, they intended to move all their furniture and art works to Luxemburg, in at least three trips. They didn't think they would be stopped when Charlotte and her French identity papers would be in the trucks. Ernst promised to drive. He had NSDAP and lately even SS papers.

They had planned three trips in clear day, by three different roads and entry points into Luxemburg, the gold hidden in dark places in the truck. Ernst would find such places, either in the furniture moved or in the iron cladding of the truck itself. Ernst would choose the places. They all knew the risks. They dared. During the last trip, their children would move to Luxemburg by train, also during the day. They hoped they could evade suspicions. The children would be on a trip to visit family in Luxemburg, but would say they would be moving to Freiburg-im-Breisgau and only on the last part of the trip pass to a train bound for Luxemburg. Julian and Charlotte had not yet decided who would accompany them.

As of October 1936, Anton would finish his studies in Berlin. He would then have gotten his final papers and diploma of the gymnasium, if allowed to terminate his studies normally by the German authorities. He would first work in a farm near the Luxemburg-Belgian border and work there, according to the Nazi wishes for young boys to learn something more than merely intellectual matters. By September 1937, he could begin higher studies in Belgium, not too far from Luxemburg. There were good train connections between the town of Gembloux and Luxemburg-town, and at Gembloux was a famous agricultural university of the Kingdom of Belgium. Many international students attended the excellent courses at that university. The university of Gembloux could get him a diploma of agricultural engineer and a status well appreciated in Belgium and Luxemburg. Luxemburg had not yet any university, so it seemed a natural choice when asked questions for a Luxemburger to study abroad.

The University of Gembloux taught in French, which should not be a problem for the bilingual Anton. Anton was pleased with the choice. He liked to be in the open, liked his work on the farm, found farmers open and sympathetic people, and he had already suggested himself to continue to study agriculture. Maybe Julian, his father, silently hoped for his son to

become a veterinarian, but he never proposed particular studies to his son and let Anton choose for himself.

Malou Vincius was already a young woman at 19. She could begin studying under Dora Gomol at the *Charité*, to become a nurse. Malou would be a cornerstone in the Vincius strategy. Malou refused to leave Germany. She could do so. Julian and Charlotte wanted at least to keep their villa at Hubertushöhe. Julian proposed to transfer the property deeds of Hubertushöhe on Malou, who like her mother, still had French identity papers and was still officially a French citizen, inscribed as being born at Longwy. The German authorities would not touch a French, Catholic citizen, at least not in the beginning. If in danger, Malou could jump in a train and move to Luxemburg, like her parents. So was done! Malou received all the ownership deeds of the villa of Hubertushöhe, and she stayed in Berlin. She categorically refused to leave Germany, primarily because that was where her then lover lived. Malou had lovers in the city since she was eighteen! Malou was a lusty girl, a striking and lively redhead, smart, and she loved men. She would not leave Germany in a hurry. Her parents did not know one tenth of what she had been up to! One thing they certainly did not know was that Malou was since long not a virgin anymore. Julian and Charlotte could no longer tell Malou what to do next and how. She was too headstrong, had her own mind, and no longer listened to parental advice. Julian had given up telling his daughter how to behave, one of the great disappointments of his life, but those were the facts. He had to let loose of his daughter. Malou would stay at Berlin, at Hubertushöhe, for the large apartment in Berlin would be sold. At the first sign of actions against French citizens in Germany, Malou would flee. She could flee to the rooms of Ernst Vincius in Berlin, then disappear, and be brought to Luxemburg by Ernst. In actual fact, Malou stayed in Berlin even until after the war, until late 1945.

Maxim Vincius would continue as long as possible his studies in the Berlin gymnasium, until his parents had fled and settled in Luxemburg. Then, he too would leave Germany, probably forever. He would continue his studies in Luxemburg, at a technical high school, or even be sent to Paris to continue his studies. Paris was so large he could disappear in the masses. Maxim was a boy with a very practical brain. His parents hoped, supposed, he would do well as a technical engineer in electricity, the branch he too often spoke off. He had a few months to roam in Luxemburg doing much of nothing, except study electricity and electrical applications on his own. His father provided him with the books. Maxim had already offered the idea to move to the United States of America after his studies.

In this way, the Vincius Family began to systematically execute their plans for leaving Germany. By the end of 1936, Julian Vincius indeed remarked the situation for the Jews in Germany and in Berlin became critical. He was dismissed from the *Charité*, his title of professor withdrawn, his directorship in the hospital ended. He was without a job. For a while, he felt very bitter about this. In his mind, he was no longer a German. He began to consider himself not any more as a German, however difficult that was, for he had been proud of his German nationality. He banned his patriotic feelings. He also stopped going to the Evangelic church services. Wasn't he again a Jew? Still, he could not bring himself to join the Jewish community of Berlin. He had left that community long ago, not now to re-join it. He felt more and more religion-less. Where, by the way, he despaired, where was God in this mess that was now called Germany?

Julian Vincius continued his private practice, and retained as many patients as before, mostly people from the embassies near the *Tiergarten*. He could live on as before, in some wealth, accepted even more clients, but lived withdrawn, very discreetly in Berlin. He gave up on sorties to theatres, cinemas, restaurants, disappeared from the public life in Berlin, and moved his belongings to Luxemburg.

He knew this kind of life was hard on Charlotte, but could only hope she would understand and hold strongly enough to him to not leave him and sue for a divorce. In fact, never such a thought entered the head of Charlotte. Julian had always, since very young, been the man for her. She held on to him. And then, there were the children, though she realised well they were leaving her. She would be in Luxemburg. Her beautiful daughter Malou would remain in Berlin and Anton in Belgium. She still had Maxim with her, but he could ask to live in Paris. Her family, she sometimes complained – only to herself-, had become a version of the wandering Jews indeed. She took some comfort in the realisation the children, now more and more grown-ups, would love her until her death, and somehow manage to come to see her. She still had her husband, Julian. She knew by then Julian had a mistress in Berlin, but she refused to think of that woman and of her relations with Julian. Think of that, accepting the fact, would mean the end of her marriage. And maybe the end of her too, for she could not envisage a life without Julian.

### *Luxemburg*

Julian and Charlotte Vincius knew very well where Luxemburg lay, quite near Charlotte's birth town of Longwy in France. They had at one time or other visited Luxemburg city, Charlotte in her youth, Julian later, during the great war. They both nurtured sympathetic, nostalgic feelings towards the Grand Duchy. They thought of it now as of a beautiful paradise, a peaceful haven, a land of rural harmony in the wonderful romantic, bucolic lands of the Ardennes, transformed here and there by man to large green pastures, symmetric vineyards and everywhere the vast, majestic forests of the Ardennes, which made one dream of elves and powerful spirits. Anton endeavoured to learn more of his future home.

The term *Arduenna*, for the modern denomination of the Ardennes, was an old Celtic name meaning high forest. Anton immediately thought of his parents' wish to hide in these forests as a primeval desire to disappear from the grand life of Berlin into nature's womb. The lands of Luxemburg had been inhabited since ever. Objects in gold, bronze and iron had been found by archaeologists about everywhere in the territory. The lands of Luxemburg had seduced by their special attraction the migrant tribes living around these parts of Europe. Luxemburg had been a land of migrations, all along its history. Various populations from the east and even of the Mediterranean, had passed and settled here. Celtic peoples had lived in Luxemburg quite since the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. Two main tribes had lived here in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Trevires mainly, and in the south, near the town of Metz, the Mediomatrics. They formed part of the Belgae tribes that had settled roughly between the Seine and the lower Rhine streams.

The Roman Emperor Julius Caesar, then still a consul of Rome, entered and conquered Gaul between 58 and 50 BC. It had been only after the defeat of the Trevires in the year 70 AD, that the Romans fully established safely in Luxemburg. Anton immediately detected the name of the Trevires in the name of Trier in German, Trèves in French, the name of a town in Germany quite near the country of Luxemburg, but in Germany, a famous bishopric still. The organisation of the lands in *civitates*, towns and districts, could date from these times of the *Pax Romana*, from 70 AD to about 400 AD. Trier was derived from *Augusta Treverorum*, and nearby Metz in France was then called *Divodurum*. Metz lay in the centre of the lands occupied by the Mediomatrices.

Luxemburg city, the capital of the country, had probably existed since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Roman villas had been founded all over the territory. Three main roads passed through the country. One was the road from Reims to Trier, which passed by Luxemburg city. Another road went from Metz to Trier. The third road ran from Reims to Köln in Germany, on the Rhine, passed the now Belgian town of Arlon to Bitburg in Germany. More local, smaller roads had left their traces in the landscape.

German tribes passed the mighty Rhine massively as of 406 and 407 AD, pushed in their backs by the invasions of the Huns in Western Europe, and by other eastern invasions. Later, the invading Frankish tribes used the Roman roads leading south, first into the valleys of the Mosel and the Sûre Rivers, into the lands of the Lorraine region. The Huns passed Luxemburg in 451 AD. Later, the large German tribes of the Alamans and the Franks settled in the region. The *Moselfrankisch* became the language of the region, a dialect of the later generalised German. The Ripuarian Franks remained in the Luxemburg lands, whereas the Salient Franks, under the orders of one leader called Chlodio, pushed on to Tournai, now in Belgium, and to Cambrai in France. The successor of Chlodio, Childeric, made of Tournai his capital. He died in 482 and his successor was the great Clovis. Clovis conquered the territory of contemporary France from 481 to 511. He subdued the Alamans, and threw the Visigoths over the Pyrenees. More importantly, the Bishop and Saint Remi baptised Clovis at Reims in about 496. Therefore, the subsequent kings of France were all anointed and inhumated at Reims.

Finally, Clovis fixed himself on an easily defended island in the Seine, called the Isle de France, and Paris. He really founded thus the Frankish empire, and died in 511. The Franks and their successive kings defended their territory, mainly the regions west of the Rhine, of the Meuse and the Mosel. The organisation in bishoprics of the region, also of Luxemburg, dated from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, with the dynamic Bishops Euchaire and Maximin in Trier and Materne in Köln. The Christian Church only really began to blossom under the Carolingian kings, called after their forefather Charlemagne, with the official reconnaissance of Christianity in the entire region, dominated by the Franks.

The monasteries played a very important role in the history of Luxemburg. They were founded mainly in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. First, there was the monastery of Saint Maximin of Trier, founded by Dagobert in 633. Then, ca. 650, was built the monastery of Stavelot-Malmedy by Saint Remacle. The Andigium Monastery was founded by Bérégise in 687. This was later called the Abbey of Saint Hubert. It held the relics of Saint Hubert, a bishop of Liège and the patron-saint of the Ardennes forests. Leoduin founded the abbey of Mettlach,

whereas Prün was founded in 722 by Bertha, the sister of the Frankish King Charles Martel. The abbey of Echternach, later still the most famous, was founded in the German parts of the region by the monk Willibord, who was of Anglo-Saxon origins. This last abbey prided in a library of over 7,000 handwritten books, which were pillaged at the French Revolution of 1789. The two most influential religious poles of the country seem to have been the seats of the archbishops of Trier and Köln.

At the death of the great King Charlemagne, Carolus Magnus, in 814, his son Louis the Pious inherited the Carolingian Empire, as Charlemagne had received the imperial and ancient Roman crown from the Pope. He was the successor of the Roman emperors, the Caesars, the *Kaiser* in German.

Louis the Pious died in 840. His three sons cut the empire in as many pieces at Verdun in August of 843. First, they named *Francia Orientale*, the lands called Germany, which went to Louis, hence called the German, Ludwig in that language. Then, *Francia Occidentale*, to the west, France, went to Charles the Bald. Between these lay *Francia Media or Lotharingia*, because it was given to the son called Lotharius, who also received the imperial crown. This land was rather narrow but vast, a corridor between the two other parts, running from Friesland in the north down to Italy in the south.

In 855, Lotharius divided his lands equally among his three sons. Louis II, the emperor, received Italy. Charles received the Provence Region, the south of France. Lotharius II got the lands between the Meuse stream and the Rhine, hence definitely called Lorraine. Lotharius died in 869. His uncles wanted his lands! At the Treaty of Meerssen near Maastricht, the territories of Lotharingia were split again between the monarch's sons, who received parts of the region of Trier, the town of Trier itself, the abbeys of Prün and Echternach, and the region of Metz. On the other hand, Charles the Bald received the Woëvre Region, the valley of the Alzette, and Bastogne. In 880, the eastern parts of Lotharingia went to Germany by the Treaty of Ribemont, near Verdun. The 9<sup>th</sup> century saw the end of the Carolingians, mainly by the accession to the Frankish throne of Hugues Capet in 987, actually a usurper of the throne of France. Hence followed the reign of the Capetian kings in France.

The king of Germany, Arnulf of Bayern, donated the German-side territories to his natural son Zwentibold, who became king in 895. His Duke Regnier broke his power. Regnier's son Gislebert followed on him as king of Germany. In 925, King Henri II of Germany imposed his authority. Luxemburg was then firmly incorporated in the German Empire.

The first dynasty of Luxemburg was actually founded by a man called Wigeric, the leader of a powerful family and the count of Trier in the German Empire. He possessed several lands around Bitburg, around the Mosel and in the *Gutland*, lands in the southern part of ancient Luxemburg. He also owned lands in the Western Eiffel, as well as lands around the Meuse stream at the abbey of Hastière. His second wife was called Cunégonde.

This Cunégonde descended from Louis le Bègue, a son of Charles the Bald, and hence from Charlemagne. From her, Wigeric had 7 children, 6 sons and 1 daughter. When Wigeric died in around 916 to 919, he was buried in the abbey of Hastière. His wife Cunégonde remarried Ricuin, Count of Verdun, who was assassinated in 923. From Wigeric and Cunégonde



descended the House of the Ardennes: the families of Ardenne-Verdun, of Ardenne-Bar and Ardenne-Luxemburg. The son called Sigefroid, who lived from 918 to 998, was the actual founder of the Luxemburg Family dynasty. We have now to side-step to Germany!

In 938, Emperor Otto I of Germany was anointed King of Germany at Aachen. Otto I suppressed a rebellion started by the *Lotharingian* Count Giselbrecht. He gave Lorraine to a lord of the land, but later to his son-in-law Conrad the Red, who had married the emperor's daughter Lutgardis. In 953, the emperor made of his brother Bruno the archbishop of Köln. In 959, this Bruno separated his territory in two parts. The first part was Lower Lotharingia, called *Lothier*, in the north, with the Bishopric of Liège, and in the south or *High-Lotharingia*, with Trier and the bishoprics of Metz, Toul and Verdun. *Gutland* was passed to Frederick I, brother of Sigefroid, another son of Wigeric. The initiative of continuing Luxemburg and founding Luxemburg city went rather to Sigefroid. Sigefroid himself found a place in a meander of the Alzette that pleased him, a place then called *Lucilinburluc*, or small castle. Here had probably originally been built an ancient Roman fort of the same name. From this name was derived the term of Luxemburg.

An exchange of lands took place in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century at the Abbey of Saint Maximin of Trier. The charter bore the seals of the Archbishop of Trier, brother to Emperor Otto I, as well as seals of Frederick I Duke of High Lotharingia and brother to Sigefroid. The Castellum Lucilinburluc expanded to the west and became Luxemburg city. Sigefroid died around 998, the turn of the century.

After Sigefroid, 7 male descendants took the throne of Luxemburg.

Henri I of Luxemburg died in 1026 without children. Also his nephew, Henri II, son of Sigefroid's brother Frederick d'Ardenne, died in 1019 without children. Then followed his brother Giselbert, Count of Salm, who died in 1059. His son Conrad IV stayed loyal to Emperor Henri IV. Conrad I was called the Count of Luxemburg. He died in Milan in 1086. His son Henri III reigned over Luxemburg from 1086 to 1096, followed by his son William from 1096 to 1130. William's son Conrad II died in 1136. Luxemburg had by then expanded again to Thionville and the County of Salm. Multiple other acquisitions had been made. The date of 1136 marked the end of the line of Sigefroid.

The lands of Luxemburg then returned to Emperor Lotharius II, to the imperial lands. Lotharius II had as successor Conrad II, who gave the County of Luxemburg to Henri of Namur, Henri the Blind, a nephew of the deceased count. Lord of Luxemburg then became Henri IV, son of Godefroid of Namur, married to Ermesinde, daughter of the count of Luxemburg and countess of Longwy. These made the history of Luxemburg more interesting again.

Henri IV received the counties of Namur and Longwy by marriage. He also received the county of Durbuy in 1147, and then the county of Laroche, and Stavelot-Malmedy in 1152. Luxemburg thus became a bilingual principality, German and French. Henri IV tried to expand his territory, but lost his battles. Later still, he promised all his possessions to his sister Alice, who was married to Baudouin IV, Count of Hainaut and of Flanders. The German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa gave his consent to this heritage in 1184. When Henri

IV promised his daughter in marriage to Count Henri II of Champagne, a cousin of Philippe-Auguste King of France, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa was less pleased, and decided to give to Baudouin IV also the Marquisate of Namur, with Durbuy and Laroche. The emperor kept Luxemburg as his part of the imperial lands. Since the departure of Henri IV to Italy, he had given the county of Luxemburg to Otto, Palatine Count of Burgundy, the younger brother of the emperor. Henri IV died at Echternach in 1196. Philip of Schmalen followed on him as regent of Germany.

Otto I in his turn, gave Luxemburg to Thiébaud de Bar, son of the count of Bar and to his wife Agnes of Champagne. This happened in September of 1197. In 1198, this Thiébaud married with Ermesinde! He died in February of 1214. The County of Bar then went to the son of Thiébaud from his first marriage. Ermesinde, now but 28 years old, married in that year of 1218 with Waleran, son of the Duke of Limburg and Marquis of Arlon. Luxemburg thus expanded truly with Arlon. Its lands then reached from the Mosel to the Ourthe River. Ermesinde and Waleran had three children. Their first daughter Catherine married in 1225 with Duke Matthew of Lorraine. Their second child and first son, Henri le Blondet, became the future Henri IV of Luxemburg. The youngest son Gerard, received the title of Sire of Durbuy. In 1240, Henri le Blondet married Marguerite of Bar.

Waleran died in 1226 already. Ermesinde took to her the lands of Luxemburg as countess, as well as the marquisat of Arlon. Ermesinde is now generally considered as the founding princess of Luxemburg. She died after 20 years of reign in 1247.

Ermesinde had been married to Thiébaud of Bar, later to Waleran of Limburg. Her first marriage brought her Arlon and Durbuy, her second confirmed her in Arlon. When she died in 1247, her heritage was dispersed over her children.

Gerard, the youngest, received Durbuy and the lands around.

Catherine had married the Duke of Lorraine. She received Thionville.

Elisabeth-Isabella was married to Waleran of Monschau. She received now the county of Namur and the lands of Marville-Arrancy.

The oldest son, Henri le Blondet, became Count of Luxemburg, with Arlon and Laroche. He would be called Henri V, the son of Waleran of Limburg. He married Marguerite of Bar. From this couple descended a dynasty of 8 successive sovereigns of Luxemburg: Henri VI, Henri VII, John the Blind, Charles IV, Wenceslas I and Wenceslas II, finally Sigismond.

Henri V le Blondet (1247-1281) made a war against Count Thiébaud of Bar over Ligny. He was captured in battle, but nevertheless won what he had desired. He too made several acquisitions for Luxemburg, before he died in 1281. He was buried in the Abbey of Clairefontaine.

Henri VI (1281-1288) had the same temper as his father and fought often. He engaged in the war over the succession of Limburg and was killed, together with his three brothers, in the Battle of Woeringen. Limburg went to Brabant.

Henri VII (1288-1313) was only 13 years old when he ascended to the throne of Luxemburg. His mother, Béatrice d'Avesnes, held the regency until 1292. Henri was a fine count. He

married with Marguerite of Brabant, the daughter of Duke John I of Brabant. In 1302, he signed a new Peace Treaty with Trier. Then, on 25 November of 1308, he was elected to Emperor of Germany and King of the Romans at Frankfurt-am-Main. He was crowned at Aachen on 6 January 1309. With him began a series of very successful counts of Luxemburg, who held the title of emperor of Germany.

Henri VII 's son John got Bohemia, on the condition he married Elisabeth, the younger sister of Wenceslas III King of Bohemia. John was 14, his wife 17. Henri VII gave Luxemburg to his son, to the future Emperor John the Blind. Henri VII campaigned in Italy and died from malaria. He was buried at Pisa.

When Henri VII died, his son John did not receive the imperial crown! He was considered too young and too powerful by his rivals. Ludwig of Bayern won the title, against the Duke of Austria. The election of 1314 brought a civil war to Germany, ending at the Battle of Mühldorf. The house of Luxemburg fought on the side of Ludwig of Bavaria.

John the Blind lost his eyesight at 41 years of age. He was the Count of Luxemburg and King of Bohemia. He was an itinerant prince, who consolidated his power over Luxemburg. He set up a vast system of defence and enlarged his territories with Diekirch, Dudelange, Bitburg, Reuland, Falkenstein and the fortified site of Bastogne. He built a third series of walls around Luxemburg city. He encouraged the economy. He married the granddaughter of Saint Louis, King of France, Béatrice of Bourbon. They had a son called Wenceslas. John the Blind fought on the side of France in the Hundred Years War, at the side of Philippe VI of France at Crécy in 1346. John the Blind was killed at Crécy, and buried in the Church of Notre Dame at Luxemburg.

The son of John was Wenceslas, only 9 years old then, so from 1346 to 1353, Charles IV administered the country, and finally he took the title of Count of Luxemburg for himself. He was born in Bohemia, from the first marriage of John of Luxemburg with Elisabeth of Bohemia. He had been elevated in France, was a diplomate, knew 6 languages and was interested in various sciences, also much in theology. Elected to emperor and king of Germany in 1346, he gave in 1356 the famous *Bulle d'Or*, the fundamental law of the German Empire.

He replaced the choice of German emperor by election to the principle of heredity! His two sons therefore became emperors, Wenceslas (1378-1400) and Sigismond (1400-1437). He also gave a *Bulle d'Or* to Luxemburg, to the burghers of the cities of Luxemburg, to protect them against the exactions of the lords of the nobility. He was crowned in Rome; he developed Prague and expanded Bohemia. He was but little interested in Luxemburg! John the Blind had obtained by his marriage the lands of Bohemia and Moravia. He added now Silesia (1327) and the Duchy of Goerlitz (1329) to his lands. He won the Duchy of Schweidnitz (1368), Lusace (1370) and the Principality of Brandenburg (1373). Charles IV sold in 1346 the towns of Echternach, Bitburg, Resnich and Grevenmacher to his great-uncle, the Archbishop of Trier. In 1349, in exchange for borrowed sums to Baudouin, he ceded the counties of Luxemburg and Laroche, Stavelot-Malmedy, Marche and Bastogne, Durbuy, Reuland and the Marquisat of Arlon to Baudouin. These were but small counties compared to what he could hold with the money: the Empire of Germany.

Wenceslas I, his half-brother, was Duke of Luxemburg. He had married Jeanne, eldest daughter of Duke John III of Brabant. She was the heiress of Brabant, of Limburg and of the Marquisat of Antwerp. Charles IV wanted to pay Wenceslas for the heavy debts that rocked the lands. His second son Sigismond, had married the heiress of Hungary.

Wenceslas I (1353-1383) bought back the territories engaged by his brother. In 1364, he bought the rest of the county of Chiny, and added to his titles that of Count of Chiny. He died in December of 1383.

His son Wenceslas II (1383-1419) was choleric, apathic, dissipated, drank too much wine. He won the throne in 1378, but was destituted in 1400 to the profit of the Palatine Count Ruprecht.

In 1410, Sigismond (1368-1437), Wenceslas II's half-brother, succeeded on him. He gave Luxemburg little attention, engaged the duchy to his cousin Josse of Moravia in 1388. Josse never even set foot in Luxemburg! In 1402, Josse ceded his rights of engagement to Louis d'Orléans, brother of the French King Charles VI. The men of Philip of Burgundy assassinated Louis d'Orléans in Paris. Josse became the sovereign of Luxemburg (1407-1411) and on his death the duchy returned to Wenceslas II. Wenceslas II had to fight rebellions in Bohemia, in Germany, and he gave Luxemburg to his younger brother Jean of Goerlitz. This monarch's daughter, Elisabeth of Goerlitz, married Anthony of Burgundy, duke of Brabant and Limburg.

Wenceslas needed money. He engaged Luxemburg to Anthony and Elisabeth. Anthony, however, died at the Battle of Azincourt, on 25 November 1415. Wenceslas II died in 1419. In 1419 then, Elisabeth married John of Bayern, the Palatine Count and Count of Holland. In 1425, Elisabeth was once more a widow and in 1437 Sigismond died. The Duchy of Luxemburg went to his daughter Elisabeth, married to Albert of Austria. Albert died in 1439. Elisabeth allowed her brother-in-law, William of Saxony, to de-engage the duchy of Luxemburg. William did not have the money, so he wanted to take Luxemburg by arms. But Elisabeth of Goerlitz ceded Luxemburg on 4 October 1441 to Philip the Good of Burgundy by the Treaty of Hesdin for 120,000 Florins. The Duke of Burgundy thus became also the Duke of Luxemburg.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Luxemburg had thus become the actual Luxemburg plus the Belgian province of Luxemburg, plus parts of the territories of Eupen-Malmedy, the western half of Bitburg and Prüm, to Mondscheid and Schleiden and pieces of the French departments of the Meuse and of the Meurthe-and-Mosel, equally with the towns of Arlon, Bastogne, Marche, Laroche, with the German towns of Neuerburg and Bitburg, and the French fortresses of Montmédy and Thionville. The county lay in a strategic position to enter Germany from out of France and vice-versa.

The Duke of Burgundy could expand too. He bought the county of Namur in 1421. He won Hainaut and Zeeland in 1428, Brabant and Limburg in 1430. He imposed his protectorate to the lords of Liège, Cambrai and Utrecht, meaning they had to do as he ordained. He was the lord of Burgundy and of the Franche-Comté. But Luxemburg rebelled after the arrangement with Elisabeth of Goerlitz! The Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, took the town of

Luxemburg in 1443, ending all revolts. The states of Luxemburg nevertheless only recognised Philip the Good as their ruler in 1461.

Philip the Good of Burgundy (1443-1467) thus ruled over Luxemburg after the death of William of Saxony and after the death of Ladislaus, grandson of Sigismond. Charles the Bold (1467-1477) followed up on Philip the Good in 1467. He fought against revolts in his realm and finally died at Nancy in 1477 after a particularly hard siege he had laid on the town.

Maria of Burgundy (1477-1482), the heiress of Burgundy, married in August of 1477 with Maximilian of Austria, son of the Emperor Frederick III. He would be the future emperor of Germany. Only the Prince-Bishop of Liège managed to win independence for his lands in 1477.

In 1476, Philippe le Bel, son of Maria of Burgundy, and Duke of Burgundy and Luxemburg, married the infante Joana la Loca, daughter of the Spanish King Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella of Castille. Their son was Charles V (1506-1555), born as Duke of Luxemburg and ruler over more than half of Europe. He too became Emperor of Germany. In 1512, he gave the lands of Burgundy to his son Philip II (1555-1598), with the Dutch Provinces. The 7 Dutch Provinces declared their independence in 1581. They had by then enough of Austrian-Spanish rule.

In 1659, at the Treaty of the Pyrenees came another change in the Luxemburg territories. Spain ceded to France the lands of Ivoix, Damvillers, Marville, Montmédy and Thionville. This treaty fixed the frontiers with France, as they have been ever afterward.

Emperor Charles V was a great legislator and organiser. He introduced three councils, the Council of State, the Privy Council and the Council for Finances. The Council of State was led by a General Governor. The Privy Council handled matters of justice, of the cults, and oversaw the police with other important functions.

In 1507, Maximilian I of Austria, who had received the rule over the Lower Netherlands, appointed his daughter, Marguerite of Austria to Governor-General of the Low Countries. She remained so until 1530.

In 1559, Charles V decided to return to Spain, to the sun and warmer lands. His half-sister, Margaret of Parma, became Governor-General of the Low Countries. The Netherlands revolted in 1567, but their armies were cut down partly by the Duke of Alba. In 1574, the rule of the duke was revoked. Don Luis de Requesens y Zuniga replaced him. He was the Grand Commander of Castille. When Requesens died in 1576, Don Juan, an illegitimate child of Charles V replaced him. He died in 1578, and was followed up in the Low Countries by Alexander Farnese, then by Archduke Ernest.

The governor was the representative of the prince. Luxemburg had several governors in those times: Jean-Frederic d'Autel from 1645 to 1716, Jean Beck from 1588 to 1648, Count Pierre-Ernest de Mansfeld from 1545 to 1604 (Mansfeld lay in Saxony). The Provincial Council was put in place, handling justice and the administration of the region. It resided at Luxemburg city. All this time, the bishops ruling over the religious matters resided still outside the country: Trier, Liège, Metz, Verdun, Reims and Köln.

In 1598, the representatives of Luxemburg refused to sit with the other representatives of the provinces. They thus confirmed their relative independence from the other territories. They held their meetings in the castle of Luxemburg as of 1451. This castle was destroyed in the

16<sup>th</sup> century. Later, this was the beginning of a Luxemburg Parliament. They assembled in the City Hall of Luxemburg city, which was now, in Anton Vincius' times, the Grand-Duke's palace. Luxemburg by then had representatives from the nobility, from the clergy – though only the large abbeys had representatives, the abbeys of Trier, Echternach, Münster, Orval, Saint Hubert, and the Houffalise priory – and from the *Tiers État*.

The *Tiers État* were the representatives of the 15 towns of Luxemburg, among which 7 in the German part of the country (Luxemburg, Arlon, Bitburg, Diekirch, Echternach, Grevenmacher and Remich), and 8 in French-spoken Wallonia (Bastogne, Chiny, Durbuy, Houffalise, Laroche, Marche, Neufchâteau and Virton).

The abbeys remained Echternach, Alt-Münster and Saint Hubert with Benedictines, Orval with the austere Cistercians. The parishes were more or less abandoned to themselves, sometimes with ever-drunk clerks and their concubines. Nevertheless, Protestantism had only a minor influence in Luxemburg. Several places were really fortified: Arlon, Montmédy, Ivoix-Carignan, and Thionville; these would be involved in several European wars.

In 1521, King François I of France conquered parts of the duchy. In 1542, the French Army took the fortress of Luxemburg city, and again in 1543. In 1544, Emperor Charles V reconquered Luxemburg. This led to the Peace of Crépy of 15 September 1544. In 1552, Henri II took the bishoprics of Toul, Metz and Verdun, with Thionville, Mont-Saint-Jean, Soleuvre, Damvillers and Ivoix. In 1559, the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis stopped the disputes between France and Philip II of Spain. In 1566 happened still the war between Philip II and the Netherlands, directed against the absolutism of the Spanish king. In 1593 then, Philip of Nassau menaced Luxemburg, but he had to withdraw his troops because of intense canon fire from the fortress. In 1596, Dutch and French Armies together attacked the south of Luxemburg, took Montmédy, Virton and even Echternach. A year later, the troops of the Marshal de Biron tried again, in vain, to take the fortress-town of Luxemburg.

The Dutch provinces were allied to Elisabeth I of England, the great queen, and also to King Henri IV of France. Philip II of Spain decided finally to grant their independence to the Netherlands, plus the Duchy of Luxemburg, and give it to Archduke Albert of Austria. He actually granted the lands to his daughter Isabella, married in 1598 to this Archduke Albert of Austria.

In 1598, Philip II of Spain died at the age of 72 years. The same year saw the intronization of Albert and Isabella at Brussels. A new era truly began. Albert and Isabella made their solemn entry in Luxemburg. Still, the northern, Dutch provinces refused to submit to Spain and continued the war with Albert and Isabella. Since 1579, the Netherlands were called the United Provinces of the Netherlands. Albert opened negotiations with them, and concluded a cease-fire of 12 years, from 1609 to 1621, after 40 years of civil war. In 1611 was declared the *Perpetual Edict*, a very important document that fixed the habitual rights with the Roman Law, which became the origins of the Belgian and later the Luxemburg Constitution. In this period too, the Jesuit Fathers founded a college in Luxemburg to re-Christianise the population.

When in 1621 Albert died, without offspring, the reversion clause in the deed of his lands re-established the sovereignty of Spain over Luxemburg. Isabella continued to reign. She died in 1633. Philip IV of Spain (1621-1665) then reigned over Luxemburg. The population of

Luxemburg was dragged into the Thirty Years War, the ravages of which decimated 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of its population by famines and an epidemic of pest.

In 1635, the Elector of Trier, Philip de Soutern, placed himself under the protectorate of King Louis XIII. The Governor of Luxemburg took Trier, and made the Elector his prisoner. Philip IV gave him to Emperor Ferdinand II.

A little later, the Cardinal Richelieu of France declared war to Spain, in alliance with the Swedes, the German Protestants, and the Dutch. Their troops passed through Luxemburg, pillaging the lands. In 1643, the King of France, Louis XIV, took Thionville and Montmédy. He gradually conquered the whole of Luxemburg and the county of Chiny in the years of 1679 to 1681. The war ended with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, but war still went on for 11 years in the Netherlands. In 1657, Montmédy fell to the French Armies. In 1659 came the Peace of the Pyrenees. Thionville, Montmédy, Ivoix-Carignan, Damvillers, Chauvency and Mariville were added to France. In 1684, after a five-year siege of Luxemburg city by Vauban, Luxemburg capitulated. The Spanish garrison finally left the town.

Philip IV of Spain died in September of 1665. His successor would be Charles II (1665-1700), but he was only 4 years old! His mother, Marie-Anne of Austria endured the regency.

From 1684 to 1698 lasted the First French occupation of Luxemburg. King Louis XIV and Vauban refortified Luxemburg and demolished many castles, as well as the walls of smaller cities. Louis XIV integrated Luxemburg into France. He granted privileges to sooth the population. Metz became the administrative centre. Luxemburg was ruled by a Military Governor and a *Sous-Intendant* for the civil and financial administrations. In 1687, Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon, and the Dauphin visited Luxemburg. The king confirmed the privileges of the town.

By the League of Augsburg, the Imperial German Armies, the Dutch, Englishmen, Spanish, Swedish allied together. King Louis XIV signed the Treaty of Rijswijk. He restituted Luxemburg to Spain, except for the territories won by France in the Treaty of the Pyrenees. Thus, in January 1698, the French Armies left Luxemburg. The Dutch troops entered Luxemburg in the name of the king of Spain.

The years from 1698 to 1795 marked the return of the Habsburg in Luxemburg. On 1 November 1700 died King Charles II, the last Habsburg of Spain. There followed a War of Succession of Spain, from 1701 to 1714. King Louis XIV of France won to his cause Maximilian-Emmanuel of Bavaria, the Governor-General of the Spanish Netherlands, by promising sovereignty over Luxemburg and Namur. Their troops chased away the Dutch garrison of Luxemburg. They were replaced by French troops.

Holland and England, allied against Louis XIV and his grandson Philippe d'Anjou, occupied Trier and the valleys of the Mosel and the Lower Sûre. Grevenmacher and Echternach were pillaged. The English sent the Duke of Marlborough to the continent to oppose the French. In Luxemburg meanwhile reigned famine and misery! Many richer people of Luxemburg fled to Holland and to England, even to North America. The atrocious times ended with in 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht and in 1714 at the Treaty of Rastatt. The Spanish heritage was shared by Philippe IV, grandson of Louis XIV, and by Emperor Charles VI of Habsburg. This last gained the Netherlands and Luxemburg.

Thus, Charles VI of Habsburg (1714-1740) came to reign over Luxemburg after 200 years of wars and ravages. He consolidated the fortifications of Luxemburg city once more to a formidable fortress. He took many measures to ensure the economy of the land, so that the population of Luxemburg strongly increased in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, from this period dated the introduction of potatoes, and better resistance against epidemics. Charles VI died in October of 1740. His successor was Maria Theresia of Austria (1740-1780) and her grandchild Joseph II (1780-1790).

These Austrians introduced a period of vast administrative reforms, given with the best of intentions but not well received by the population. In 1781 was given the *Edict of Tolerance* to the Protestants. The religious reforms of Joseph II in particular, were not well appreciated. In the Belgian parts of the lands started the Brabant Revolution, in October of 1789. The Austrian troops withdrew to Luxemburg, which did not take part in the revolt. Joseph II died in 1790.

His brother Leopold followed up on him. The insurgents then formed a federative republic called the United Belgian States. But in 1790, the Austrian Armies took Brussels. Leopold II of Austria (1790-1792) revoked the edicts of his brother, re-established the ancient institutions and ended the revolutions. He died already in 1792, however, introducing Franz III (1792-1795) as ruler, a true despot.

In Luxemburg, meanwhile, remained only 12 families that could prove 4 grandparents of noble descent. The rest were young, immigrated nobles. So, there remained in Luxemburg no higher nobility and a larger lower nobility.

Habsburg policy still was for the nobility to have in propriety the large majority of the lands. Hence, they lived from the revenue of the ground, and they monopolised the smithies, the only more or less industrial activity in Luxemburg. Because of the many past wars, Luxemburg was poor, and it lay isolated from the Netherlands. There was no integrated society. The land was managed by the Council of Luxemburg. It had been hit by the reforms of Joseph II. The contemplative religious orders had been suppressed, then terminated, and the great monasteries of before had disappeared in the French revolution. From this debacle, only Orval would be born again, though only in 1927!

Only the capital could actually claim to be called a town in the 19<sup>th</sup> century! It had a mere 8,500 inhabitants at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It had only a strategic interest as a fortress, no commercial vocation anymore. The seat of the administration of the country, the seat of the Provincial Council was still in Luxemburg city.

Only a few families formed the *bourgeoisie* of the land. There were 58 notaries in Luxemburg, of which 11 resided in Luxemburg city. There were 13 corporations of artisans and in 1765 there were 1456 master-artisans, and 400 companions. But in 1794, only remained 48 masters! The farmers formed the largest social group. In fact, only 4% of the inhabitants lived in towns or large villages.

Oesling in the north, lived from the now meagre production of the land. Gutland reached better production in agriculture. The use of serfs had been abolished by Joseph II, though it continued to exist until 1782. The society of Luxemburg thus was corporative and hierarchised, inclined to give more valour to the individual than to any group. The Catholic Church still enjoyed the monopoly of religion, almost as a state religion. The Luxemburg people opposed energetically any change or abolition of their ancient institutions and customs.



Luxemburg remained essentially a rural county! The farmers lived in sheer autarchy in the countryside. They grew essentially grains and potatoes, with feeble results, recuperating only 3 to 6 times their seedlings. They didn't use much fertilisers, but they held oxen, cows and sheep and porks on meagre pastures. There was little industrial activity. Siderurgy mainly delivered iron bars, forged iron, and molten iron, exported to Liège for further work. They produced a little textile, had tanneries, made paper and pottery by the Boch Brothers potteries at Septfontaines. There were a few glassworks. Cultural life was almost inexistant and schooling rudimentary. In October 1603 was established a Jesuit first college at Luxemburg city.

During the end of the French *Ancien Régime* in the revolution, the French nobility had fled to Belgium and Germany, there in the regions of Koblenz and Trier. The new revolutionary Regime lasted from 1795 to 1815.

Anton Vincius judged the history of the Government of Luxemburg to have been extremely complex. So many rulers of so many different families had governed and cared more or less for the country! With so many rulers, how had the people been able to attach with feelings to any ruling family? None of the rulers had been chosen by the people, and Parliaments had always acquiesced to the wishes and orders of the great families of Europe and to their direct representatives. The people had practically never anything to say in the choice of their ruler. Was this not so for any country of Europe, however? What did such rulers do to the character of the men and women of Luxemburg? The times ahd assured there was little aristocracy left in the country. The representatives in Parliament were rich men, of course, who usually spoke for their own class and their own interests. This kind of history writing, in which only the succession of rulers mattered, and the wars, told him nothing about the character of the people! Anton could merely suspect the men and women living in Luxemburg to be very much attached to their soil, to their cities, to their ground. They would be individualists, who tried to live the same way as always, despite the different rulers, and thus turned to their own, personal, small advantages, and cling to them. That might have made of them rather egoistic, though honest citizens, for only honesty would allow them to live quietly, without falling in the grips of foreign-imposed justice of courts organised by the rulers who had remained quite foreign to their spirit and ways of living, with little regard and solidarity always towards the other people living outside their own small communities. Strangers, such as people immigrating from other lands would not readily be accepted in this country! Luxemburg had for so long been an assembly of rather closed communities. How would his family be received in Luxemburg? Anton feared it would be with much apprehension and possibly outright refusal.

On 20 April of 1792, France declared war on Franz II, King of Bohemia and Hungary and against his ally Frederick-William II (or Friedrich-Wilhelm in German), the king of Prussia. The French Armies were pushed back beyond Longwy and Verdun. Yet, after 20 September, after the battle of Valmy, Karl-August of Weimar, the Duke of Braunschweig and the Prussian princes had to hide in Luxemburg city for the advancing French troops.

The French General Dumouriez defeated the Austrian armies at Jemappes, and brought the Austrian Netherlands to France. 1793 saw the execution of Louis XVI in France. The Allies talked with each other at a conference in Antwerp.

In the spring of 1794, France had 13 armies and in all 700,000 soldiers. On 26 June, at the Battle of Fleurus, the French took entire Belgium. In 1793 too fell Arlon, and on 23 June, Orval burnt down. In April of 1794, the Abbey of Clairefontaine was pillaged and burnt. On 31 January of 1794, the French rulers set up a 9-member administration for Luxemburg in the Abbey of Saint Hubert, waiting for the fall of the fortress of Luxemburg city, besieged by General Jourdan. Finally, on 7 June 1795, the fortress of Luxemburg city, defended by Field-Marshal and Governor Blaise-Colomban de Bender (1713-1798) capitulated after a 7-month siege. On 12 June, the last Austrian troops had left Luxemburg. By a decree of the French Convention of 1 October 1795, France annexed the Austrian Netherlands and the Bishopric of Liège. Luxemburg simply disappeared as a more or less independent county on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1795. It was renamed the Department of the Forests. Austria confirmed the loss of its lands at the Peace of Campo-Formio on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1797. Luxemburg would know the French presence for 20 years.

The north of Luxemburg was soon incorporated in the French Department of the Ourthe with capital at Liège. The regions of Durbuy, Saint Hubert, Laroche, and Marche went to the Department of the Sambre and Meuse, with capital at Namur. It had 4 *arrondissements* and 28 *cantons*. The French authorities installed in each of the cantons a tribunal of the peace, a correctional tribunal in Luxemburg city, in Diekirch, Bitburg and Habay, and a civil and criminal tribunal in Luxemburg city. A rebellion, the *Klëppelkriech* or the Farmers' War was stopped in blood and tears.

On the 9 November 1799, by a coup, Napoleon Bonaparte entered the *Directoire* period. He was initially called the First Consul of France.

France concluded a concordat with the Pope on 15 July 1801. France recognised Catholicism as its main religion. Luxemburg was attached to the diocese of Metz. Napoleon placed a *Préfet* at the head of each department, helped by *Sous-Préfets* in the 4 *arrondissements* of Luxemburg, Bitburg, Diekirch and Neufchâteau.

When the Napoleonic Empire collapsed in 1814 after the Battle of Waterloo, Luxemburg lived in the total indifference of the French Revolution. Nevertheless, the judicial equality, the penal code, the trade code and the civil code introduced by the French continue till today. In politics, the Luxemburg nobility disappeared. The sale of their goods, considered as national property, profited to the Luxemburg notables and traders. The authority of the clergy had definitely diminished.

After the French domination came the dynasty of Orange-Nassau to Luxemburg, from 1815 to 1890. In January of 1814, Hessian soldiers replaced the French garrison at the fortress of Luxemburg city as a result of the Congress of Vienna. Legitimately, the former Austrian Netherlands should have been returned to the Austrian Habsburg dynasty. But these preferred to exchange them for Venice and Lombardy, next to Austria. The Congress of Vienna decided for the former *Seventeen Dutch Provinces*, the former Austrian Netherlands and the Bishopric of Liège to form the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with as monarch the king

William of Orange. Luxemburg was recreated, though without the lands east of the Mosel, of the Sûre and the Ourthe and in the Eiffel, the lands granted to Prussia.

William I of Orange (1815-1840) ceded 4 lands north-east of Koblenz: Siegen, Dillenburg, Hadamar, Nassau-Dietz given to Prussia, but he received the Duchy of Luxemburg at the rank of a Grand-Duchy, with parts of the Duchy of Bouillon. Here, about 210,000 people lived in a French-German community. Luxemburg was integrated in the German Federation, the *Deutscher Bund*, of about 40 states. Due to this arrangement, the Dutch princes could send a delegate to the Diet of Frankfurt! A special agreement made of Luxemburg a federal fortress, defended by a Prussian garrison. On 23 August of 1815, William I of the Netherlands put Belgium, the 18 Provinces of the Netherlands and Luxemburg together in one kingdom.

William I (1815-1840), King of the Netherlands, received the oaths of allegiance of the Belgians and the delegates of Luxemburg. There were consultative parliaments at Brussels and at Den Haag. The different states had at their head a Provincial Governor. Soon, in 1817, a new famine set in at Luxemburg.

France and Prussia established customs frontiers, which was very bad for the Luxemburg economy. In 1830, Luxemburg rallied the Belgian revolt against the Netherlands. When on 4 October 1830 the independence of Belgium was declared, Luxemburg rallied the Belgian revolt, and the Provincial Government of Luxemburg declared its lands an integral part of Belgium. But the same day, the Luxemburg Governor-General Wilmar was destituted, and replaced by Jean-Baptiste Thorn, a Luxemburger of Remich. He installed his administration at Arlon. The Prussian garrison of Luxemburg city remained loyal to the legal Sovereign William I of Orange. So, Luxemburg had a Belgian part and a small Orange part!

On 4 November 1830, representatives of England, Austria, France, Prussia and Russia convened at London. Their decision fell on 26 June of 1830. Belgian could become independent and neutral. By the Treaty of London of 18 Articles, Prince Leopold of Saxony-Coburg, uncle of Queen Victoria, became the first Belgian king.

On 2 August 1831, William I of the Netherlands invaded Belgium with an army, but a French expeditionary army saved Belgium. On 14 November 1831, a new conference took place at London. In a New Treaty of 24 Articles, in exchange for a part of Limburg, the right side of the Meuse and Maastricht were ceded to the Netherlands. The French parts of Luxemburg passed to Belgium, though the German parts of Luxemburg remained to William I. The Dutch forces continued to occupy certain fortresses attributed to Belgium, whereas the Belgians occupied Luxemburg, even though the citadel of Luxemburg city was still occupied by Prussian troops.

On 14 March 1838, the Baron Dedel, Minister of the Netherlands in London, told Lord Palmerston his government adhered to the Treaty of the 24 Articles. Three delegates of Luxemburg sat at that time in the Brussels Parliament: Edouard d'Huart, Jean-Pierre Wilmar and Jean-Baptiste Nothomb. In April of 1839, the Belgian Parliament ratified the Treaty of London. The districts of Arlon, Bastogne, Marche, Neufchâteau and Virton went to Belgium.

Luxemburg remained Dutch! The head of Luxemburg became a German civil servant, Frederick Hassenpflug. He negotiated to bring back Luxemburg in the German *Zollverein*.

On 7 October 1840, William I (Willem I in Dutch), abdicated in favour of his son William II. He confirmed the independence of the Belgian lands. The Governor of Luxemburg became Théodore-Ignace de la Fontaine. French was made the language of the administration. On 27 September of 1870, Pope Pius X made of Luxemburg a bishopric.

Luxemburg city then still held a Prussian garrison, but William II created a Luxemburg contingent of soldiers, based at Echternach and Diekirch. On 8 February 1842, King William II signed a treaty which made Luxemburg enter the German *Zollverein* anew. This allowed the industrial development of the country. Luxemburg exported iron minerals to the Saar, the Ruhr and Belgium. The agreement was reconducted in 1853, 1865, 1872 and 1902. It meant a sort of economic union with Prussia, which also represented Luxemburg on the *Zollverein*. Luxemburg developed its agriculture and its industry from 1870 to 1900. It also signed the use of the *Thaler* as the coins of the northern states of the *Zollverein*, and of the *Gulden* of the southern states. On 19 April 1848, Parliament accepted a new constitution on the Belgian example. Only about 10,000 people entered the conditions to vote then, about 5% of the population. Elections were organised in 1848, and subsequently a Liberal Government was installed, presided by Jean-Jacques Wilmar (1792-1866), son of the former Governor.

1849 was the year of the death of King William II of the Netherlands. William III, actually called Alexander, was his oldest son. He proved more authoritative than his father. In 1851, the Diet of Frankfurt demanded that each then German State be conforming to the principle of a monarchy. William III delegated the government of the Grand Duchy to his younger brother, Prince Henri of the Netherlands (1850-1879), with the title of Prince-Lieutenant of the king. This proved to be a major event for Luxemburg. For the first since a very long time, hundreds of years, it had again its own monarch! Even if King William of the Netherlands was still the authority over Prince Henri.

On 23 September of 1853, King William III repudiated the Government of Wilmar. His government was replaced by one under Mathias Simons (1802-1874), a known reactionary. But in October of 1856 already, the parliament of Luxemburg sent Simons in the minority. William III then dissolved the Parliament, and replaced the constitution by a charter conforming to the monarchical principles. This was considered a putsch of the king and Archduke over Luxemburg! In a new constitution, the Luxemburg law was subordinated to the federal law and the sovereignty of the king was fully restored. The Council of State had the role to control the works of Parliament.

During these times, new roads were built in Luxemburg, and new railways by the French *Compagnie de l'Est*. The new lines were Luxemburg-Thionville, Luxemburg-Arlon, Luxemburg-Trier, all in 1850, as well as Luxemburg city to Troisvierges, Spa and Liège, with internal networks. New institutions were installed, the *Chambre des Comptes* in 1848, the International Bank in 1856 and the *Caisse d'Épargne* in 1859. In 1866, during the Prussian-Austrian War for the domination in united Germany, Luxemburg remained neutral. In the

Treaty of Prague of that same year 1866, Luxemburg one more was confirmed in its independence.

In 1867, Napoleon II of France made a financial proposal to William III of the Netherlands to buy Luxemburg. But Bismarck refused! He considered Luxemburg a German land. Also Leopold II of Belgium wanted to buy Luxemburg.

At a New Conference of London, a treaty was signed on 11 May 1867, ratified by the 31 parliamentarians of Luxemburg. Luxemburg was declared perpetually neutral. The fortress of Luxemburg city was dismantled, and the Prussian garrison left the country. Luxemburg was a buffer state between France and Germany. Its rapid expansion of the population could be due to the advantage of the *Zollverein*. Yet, it still had a statute of personal union with the king of the Netherlands. Nevertheless, in the war of 1870 between France and Germany, Germany respected the neutrality of Belgium and Luxemburg. Germany received the renunciation of the rights of the *Compagnie de l'Est* in railways and Luxemburg ceded the exploitation of the Luxemburg line to Germany.

The Luxemburg Prime Ministers in the following period were Emmanuel Servais, President of the Government from 1869 to 1876, Félix von Blochhausen from 1876 to 1885 and Paul Eyschen from 1892 to 1915. Luxemburg knew a constant economic progression. In 1873, came the creation of the Luxemburg National Bank on the Belgian example. Luxemburg enjoyed a constant influx of German capital in his industry. The Tomas-Gilchrest technology was introduced as of 1879. The immigration of German and Italian workers was equally constant. Several societies for Siderurgy were founded in the years of 1870 to 1890. These would form an important upsurge of industrialisation and wealth in Luxemburg. Customs were re-introduced in 1879, also re-affirming the independence of the country. Luxemburg evolved to one of the leading countries in the European iron and steel production.

Prince Henri died on 13 January 1879, without children. On 23 November 1890 died also King William III without children. This ended the personal union of Luxemburg with the Netherlands!

In 1783 had been established a familial pact between the branches of the Nassau family, which excluded the feminine succession, as long as there were male descendants in the other families of Nassau. The Dutch king had been of the Orange-Nassau dynasty.

Adolphe of Nassau (1890-1905) thus became the new Grand Duke of Luxemburg, a German prince. He was 73 years old. He remained living in his residences of Germany! The Minister of State Paul Eyschen (1841-1915) treated therefore the affairs of the country, keeping intact the neutrality of Luxemburg.

In 1905, at the death of Adolphe of Nassau, his son William IV (1905-1912) at 53 years of age, received the throne of Grand Duke of Luxemburg. He had a fragile health. He married Marie-Ange of Bragance (1861-1942), the Infante of Portugal, daughter of King Miguel, exiled in the nearby Grand Duchy of Baden. They had 6 children, all daughters.

In 1907, William IV had changed the familial pact of the Nassau, with agreement of the Luxemburg Parliament, to ensure his succession. On 25 February 1912 therefore, Marie-Adelaïde, his eldest daughter, 18 years old, came to the throne.

On 2 August 1914, German troops entered Luxemburg. It was the beginning of the First World war! The railways from Luxemburg to Longwy were of strategical importance to Germany, as was the Luxemburg iron and steel industry. The Grand-Duchess did protest against the German Emperor William II, and Paul Eyschen sent a telegram to the Chancellor of the German Empire, all to no avail. During the war, however, Marie-Adelaïde received the German emperor and his generals in a friendly way.

But the German occupation was painful for Luxemburg! Germany imposed its will. Luxemburg civilians were condemned by German military tribunals. The Germans refused to let Luxemburg diplomats travel abroad and the state nourished the people from the Central Office of Acquisitions in Berlin. Germany used the Luxemburg railways intensely, contrary to a clause in the treaty of 11 June 1872.

During the war, on 12 October 1915, Paul Eyschen died. Marie-Adelaïde imposed Hubert Deutsch to form a new government. But he was placed in the minority by Parliament. Marie-Adelaïde dissolved Parliament. New elections took place on 23 December 1915. In February of 1916, a coalition government under Viktor Thorn, president, was formed. Thorn ruled for 16 months only, and he was followed up by Leon Kaufmann. In September 1918 already, this Leon Kaufmann resigned at the betrothal of Princess Antonia, 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter of Marie-Anne de Bragance with Ruprecht, the hereditary Prince of Bayern, who had been head of the German Army in Flanders during the war. After the elections of 1918, a Government of national union under the President of the Government Emile Reuter (1874-1973) could be formed.

The years of 1918 and 1919 were crisis years for Luxemburg. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1918, a council of workers and farmers demanded the abdication of the Grand Duchess and the creation of a popular republic. But Parliament rejected the motion with 21 votes against, 19 for and 3 abstentions. On about that time of 21 November, American and French troops entered Luxemburg. French soldiers were already in the duchy since 12 November.

In December of 1918, Luxemburg tried to get economic agreements signed with France. The French Minister Pichon of Foreign Affairs, however, did not want to receive the Luxemburg representatives, as the representatives of a sovereign who had gravely compromised herself with the enemies of France. The Allies thus proved themselves hostile to Grand-Duchess Marie-Adelaïde! Only the Luxemburg Catholic Right wanted still a monarchy for the country.

On 9 January of 1919, the leftists of Luxemburg tried a putsch, by a mutiny of the *Compagnie des Volontaires Luxembourgeois* against their officers. A *Comité de Salut Public* proclaimed the Republic. The President of the Parliament, François Altwies, however, called on the French Army to dissolve the rebellion and restore calm.

Marie-Adelaïde abdicated. She left the country on 29 January. She died at the Hohenburg in Bavaria on 24 January of 1924. Her body was repatriated to Luxemburg on 26 October 1947, and buried in the Luxemburg cathedral.

Her successor was her sister Charlotte (1896-1985), married on 6 November 1919 to Felix of Bourbon-Parma. Luxemburg was not annexed to Belgium. Belgium recognised Charlotte as Grand-Duchess on 13 February 1919. In that same year of 1918, the Luxemburg Government

placed the German Mark out of use in Luxemburg and Luxemburg also denounced the *Zollverein*.

On 28 September of 1919 took place a referendum in Luxemburg, on the keeping of the dynasty and on a new economic partner for the country. 80% of the Luxemburg citizens voted for Charlotte, and 73% chose for France as an economic partner. But France had let known to Belgium its disinterest for Luxemburg! So, on 10 May 1920, the French Government told Emile Reuter it declined the offer of an economic union with Luxemburg. Luxemburg turned to Belgium. Negotiations between Emile Reuter and Paul Heymans of Belgium led to the UEBL, the *Union Economique Belgo-Luxembourgeoise*, signed on 25 July 1921 after 14 months of hard negotiations, approved on 22 December 1922. Luxemburg engaged in a *mariage de raison* with Belgium and made of the Belgian Frank the money of the union.

In 1935, a mixed administrative commission of the common commercial politics and a permanent Arbitrary College to defend the Luxemburg interests were founded. Luxemburg reserved to itself the rights to decide on its mint, be consulted by Brussels on all economic agreements and agreements of trade, and to hold exclusively Luxemburg citizens in its country as agents of customs. Luxemburg also founded a station for wine quality to ameliorate its wine production. It began the reorganisation of its steel industry. Companies such as the *Terres Rouges*, founded in 1919 by Schneider, the Bank of Brussels and the ARBED for the steel industry of Luxemburg were installed. Emile Mayrisch (1862-1928) and Gaston Barbançon had founded the ARBED, the *Aciéries Réunies de Bülach, Eich and Dudelange*.

Luxemburg was also hit by the depression of 1929, as all prices declined. In the elections of March 1925, Pierre Prüm had set up a Government of Socialists and Liberals. That Government fell in 1926, leading again to a coalition of the right. From 1926 to 1945, coalition Governments of Catholics, radical liberals and even Socialists followed up on each other. Politicians of importance were Joseph Blech (1887-1975) and Pierre Dupong (1885-1953). The first was the president of a coalition of Catholics and Liberals from 1926 to 1937, the second of coalitions of Catholics and Socialists from 1937 to 1945. Blech adapted the agriculture to the union with Belgium. He stabilised the Franc in connection to the pound Sterling. He introduced a fiscal regime favourable to holding companies, founded the Exchange of Luxemburg. Banks such as the Crédit Lyonnais and the Crédit Industriel d'Alsace established daughter companies in Luxemburg.

In December of 1920, Luxemburg was admitted to the United Nations. It remained a neutral country. But Parliament did not ratify this, considering such a membership contrary to the Luxemburg constitution. Luxemburg did not sign the Armaments Reduction Pact, nor the Agreements of Locarno. It very strictly kept to its neutrality in all conflicts. Yet, on 22 December 1930, Belgium and Luxemburg signed the Convention of Oslo, moving into a political union to work for the peace in Europe.

The Belgian Franc devalued in 1935. The then Prime Minister separated the Luxemburg Franc from the Belgian standard. In 1937, Joseph Blech resigned. He wanted to ban the leftist parties. A new government then was formed under Pierre Dupong, the former Minister of Finances.

Anton Vincius had really not been able to understand for which reason his father had wanted to move to Luxemburg. Why not much farther away from threatening Germany, why not Portugal, why not the United States of America? Languages were an obstacle, but no obstacle that could not be overcome. The question bothered him for a long time, until he thought he had found an explanation. He never dared to discuss what he had found out, or thought to be a truth with his father, out of respect for the man he had admired all his life, but the answer had all to do with his father, his father only!

In fact, by moving to Luxemburg, his father had not left Germany at all! The First and Second *Reich* had disappeared, the empires of Charlemagne and of Wilhelm I were no more. But was not Luxemburg the only remnant of the first two Empires, the only representant country or *Land* of the first two empires, still existing and still being an independent country? Luxemburg had even given a few of the most powerful, grand emperors of the old times, of the founding times, to Germany! Of the forty-odd *Länder* still remaining, the only one to lead an independent life was Luxemburg! No, his father had never left Germany, not the First and not the Second *Reich*, not the real Germany, not the Germany of his forefathers. Maybe his father was one of the few men left of the glorious Germany. He certainly was no Third *Reich* man! Never! But his father had also not been able to extirpate himself from the Germany he loved. That was the reason he had come to live in the only remnant of his old Germany, in independent Luxemburg. In doing so, his father lived still in Germany.

### *Moving to Luxemburg*

The Vincius had decided to move to Luxemburg. Julian and Charlotte and Ernst spoke together on how they would proceed. The move couldn't just happen as easily as they had thought. Julian had a passport, which marked him as a Jew. The border had to be passed in a truck, not once, but several times, loaded to the brim with furniture and works of art, among which a few quite large, grand paintings of landscapes. Gold bars had to be hidden somewhere in the chassis or in the furniture. They could not trust the moving to a German company. Papers would be needed and the whole thing would become clear in the open to the Nazi authorities.

The truck was the first issue quickly solved. Ernst sighed, but he could bring one, bought for almost nothing, with a still fine motor in it, which Ernst took out and replaced with new valves and tubing. The repaired and boosted new motor would not fail them on the roads. A place to hide gold in could be welded in a day, in fact Ernst found two places, to balance the load and make the hiding places seem symmetric, integral pieces of the car chassis.

Ernst assumed from the beginning he would drive. He didn't object. Julian should limit his movements to outside Germany to the strictest minimum, Ernst warned. Yet, looking for a new home might take more than one drive to Luxemburg to finalise. Anton volunteered to accompany Ernst, and so did Malou, but Charlotte definitely refused her darling son and unpredictable daughter to take any risks. It took her a week of cajoling, to convince Julian she could find a large apartment or a house, or two houses, as expertly as Julian. Julian saw his money dwindle with every word of his wife. Finally, though, he threw his arms up in



surrender, and after days of bickering, he accepted the operation to be led by Charlotte. She would drive with Ernst to Luxemburg, to find a house to live in with the family. She cleverly showed her trump card, her French passport and waved that constantly before Julian's eyes. Yes, that passport could make things quite simpler. Charlotte would have to find them a new home, and a separate, smaller house or even apartment to serve as his office, a place where he could receive his clients. Later on, if things went well, he could also install a secretary there. Julian insisted the two places be separate. One place would hold a plate with his name and the mention he was a doctor, the other not. They decided on two houses in the same street or in streets close-by.

Charlotte agreed, and off she rode with Ernst to Luxemburg. They rode in another Audi, Ernst had provided. The papers of the car were on Ernst's name. Charlotte and Ernst rode with a decent part of the Vincius gold in a new, secret compartment, welded under the back seats. As usual, Ernst didn't talk much underway. He didn't dare to mention to Charlotte either, he had papers on him stating he was a member of the NSDAP, nothing new in that, but also giving his rank in the SS.

Indeed, the Nazis of Berlin had asked him to take on the function of director of procurements in the Procurements Office of the Ministry for Armament. Ernst had been forced to accept the job. One couldn't refuse a demand that had very much sounded like an order. The Nazis in the party had found out he had become a very capable, smart businessman, with a fine knowledge of everything to do with mechanics. He was a self-made man, the kind Hitler and the Nazis just loved, not an intellectual university guy. Ernst had sought more or less reliable former traders to manage his garages, while he worked in official positions at Nazi rearmament. Actually, he felt ashamed of having accepted and didn't dare explain to Julian what had happened to him in the Nazi service. The job had made a far richer man of him than he could have been with only his garages as income. Some would call it corruption, but some money from the deals with German industrialists always remained glued to the fingers of the middle men. Also, the Nazi Party members, SS and SA men, had noted the addresses of his garages in Berlin as reliable and cheap places to have their own cars maintained.

Ernst was confident he could pass the border of Luxemburg on German side with these papers. The customs men would think he was out for a pleasure trip with his mistress. It might even have been easier for him to put on his SS *Hauptman* uniform, his uniform of captain, but he didn't want to scare Charlotte or throw Julian in a fit that might have landed his friend in a bed of his own hospital. Ernst should go slowly!

Charlotte and Ernst arrived without issues at the border and then they rode on to a small hotel of Luxemburg city, where they took two rooms. They needed a few days to find two houses for the Vincius family to live in. The house they would use as their new home was in the *Rue Henri IV*. It was quite large and deep in the street. The smaller one, a separate house too, no apartment, destined to become Julian's office, lay in the nearby *Rue Jean l'Aveugle*. Both streets were situated in the centre of Luxemburg, with parking space all around. Charlotte immediately paid for the houses, and Ernst had agreed it would be hard in a few days to find better places. They had been lucky.

The property deeds had taken a few days more to write. They had been placed in a small vault in a Belgian bank where Charlotte had also opened a bank account. The notary who had

secured both transactions had been helpful and reasonably honest, Charlotte and Ernst agreed. Charlotte esteemed the houses almost perfect for them to blend in with the Luxemburg population. Charlotte and Ernst didn't try to take Luxemburg Franks to Berlin. Ernst pried out a brick in one of the rooms upstairs of the house in the *Rue Henri IV*, placed banknotes and gold coins there, and pushed the brick back in place. They did not have to use all the gold they had brought with them.

Charlotte and Ernst arrived triumphantly in Berlin. Julian Vincius was glad. Charlotte had found houses in what, she explained in many words and gestures, was a nice, busy street in the middle of Luxemburg, where many clients would be waiting for a special doctor. With time, she proposed they should build a villa on the heights of the town, where the air was no doubt cooler but healthier. Didn't they need that already now? She guaranteed many customers to Julian. Julian didn't try to tell her he did not really sought customers, but people to help out of their pain. And preferably people with money.

The next expedition to Luxemburg happened with Ernst's special truck. This time, Julian wanted to drive with Ernst. From Berlin, they drove as quickly as they dared to Trier. The truck was heavily loaded with furniture, and more gold bars and gold coins were hidden in a small compartment above the tires. The voyage proceeded smoothly, until the truck arrived at the German border. This would be a tight moment to pass. A group of soldiers stood there, as usual. A *Gefreiter*, a corporal, asked them for their papers.

The corporal looked up when he read Ernst's papers. Ernst sat at that moment in the driving seat. The man passed to the other side and looked at Julian's papers. He frowned, looked again and again. Then, without a word, he took Julian's passport and walked back to the post. Julian and Ernst saw the man entering the small building, still with Julian's papers in his hand. The corporal came back minutes later. A lieutenant followed him. The lieutenant took the passport from the hands of the corporal, who went to stand with his soldiers on the other side of the road. The lieutenant waited, until the corporal was out of hearing distance. So far, no rifle went up, no revolver appeared in any hand. Julian thought this a rather good sign.

The lieutenant came to Julian's side.

He saluted, clicked his heels, and asked, 'your name is Julian Vincius?'

'Yes,' Julian confirmed.

'Herr Doctor Julian Vincius?'

'Indeed,' Julian repeated.

The man looked once again on the papers, hesitating.

Then, he continued, 'it says on your papers you participated in the Battles of Verdun.'

'I did,' Julian said. 'I was a doctor, of course.'

'Of course,' the lieutenant went on. He hesitated for a while. 'In 1914-1918, you were the *Oberst Stabsarzt* in the hospital of Longwy, or am I mistaken?'

Julian was astonished. How could this young lieutenant know about that? The lieutenant was far too young to have fought in the war.

'I was,' Julian said, in as little words as possible.

The man could not have missed the large, red stamp marking him out as a Jew.

The lieutenant smiled thinly, and saluted once more.

‘Johann Keltermann at your service, Herr Oberst. You don’t know me. You couldn’t possibly, but you knew my father, Georg Keltermann. My father was brought to the Longwy central lazaret at end 1917. He thought he was going to die. His right leg had been smashed to pulp. His left leg was hurt. Shrapnels had hit them badly. The doctors feared gangrene and were preparing to cut off both of his legs. My father told me time and time again, how you came into his room then, examined him, and shouted for the other doctors to leave. You pushed my father’s bed personally through the door and took him to a Roentgen device. With two nurses, you managed to take X-ray photographs of his legs. The next hour, you operated on my father’s legs. You operated three times on my father’s legs over a period of three months. All that time, you kept my father at the Longwy hospital. My father then left, walking on both legs, with crutches, but you assured him he would walk better by the day, granted some everyday exercise. My father still limps, but he tells everybody who wanted to hear the story, you saved his life. We are grateful.’

‘Keltermann I knew indeed,’ Julian could then remember. ‘Tall man, sturdy, a man from Württemberg. A man who was full of jokes all the time? I never had a tougher guy under my knife. And yet, he was a great charmer. That man was a perpetual optimist! I sat with him often in the evenings. Not more than an hour, but always a cheerful moment. He did cheer me up, then, more than I could give him hope. He was sent to Baden, afterwards, to recuperate and heal further. I’m glad he made it. Verdun was a terrible slaughterhouse! How is your father?’

‘He is well. He survived. On both legs! And he is a joker still! The times are once more not so happy ones.’

‘True,’ Julian nodded.

The young officer got a small notebook out of a pocket in his uniform, and a pencil, and he wrote something on a page. He tore out that page, and stuck it through the window to Julian’s hands.

‘Here is a telephone number. And a word. The word is my sweetheart’s first name. Next time you want to come by this road to Luxemburg in a truck laden with goods, come later on the day. No earlier than 6 o’clock in the evening, no later than 8. A day earlier, call that number. I’ll be waiting for you here, at least if I don’t get moved to another duty. If the last is the case, I’ll explain to you where to go. Not here, then. It is my own telephone number. Try it from not too far away. Tell me you will be passing the border, by this road, and when, approximately at what time. I’ll be waiting for you. You’ll be able to pass without questions asked. Take care! There is a nasty *Hauptmann* at the next border entry. He may arrest you, or anyway stop you. He is also the boss of this border post. I’ll tell you whether you can pass here or not. If you have to pass, I’ll see to it he doesn’t bother you. I’ll wave you through. I don’t want to know more. Have a good trip yet, Herr Doctor!’

The lieutenant stepped aside, saluted again, and waved Julian and Ernst through.

When they rode on, Ernst had to ride quite a few kilometres on, before he dared ask, ‘what was all that about? What was that conversation about? Why all the saluting?’

Julian emerged as out of a dream. He hadn’t realised how dangerous already it was to pass the frontier for a Jew.

‘A friend,’ Julian smiled, ‘the son of a friend. He knew me. Son of a soldier who was in the war with me. I saved his father’s legs. We have an open gate, now.’

‘Well, I ever,’ Ernst exclaimed, astonished and suddenly all joy. ‘You, Julian Vincius, you’ll always astonish me. Friends here, in this damn place?’

‘You have Vincius blood too in your veins,’ Julian gave back.

They rode to Luxemburg in the best of moods.

They arrived, and in the falling darkness unloaded the trucks, first at Julian’s new home, then in the other street. Julian saw Charlotte had not lied to him. The two houses would do well. He smiled. Some of the furniture was heavy, but he could heave still. He hadn’t lost his strength yet. When all the furniture was in the house, he was taking his breath like an ox, but he had not to ask Ernst to wait for a while and rest, because he was tired. He was exhausted, in sweat, but he had made it this time. One thing at a time!

Julian Vincius wondered what to do the second and third times he would have to drive over the border with his furniture and things. Later, he explained the whole story to Ernst. Ernst proved rather euphoric.

He said, ‘of course, we have to phone your guy the next time! ‘What incredible luck we had to have met that lieutenant on our most crucial point. With a story like that, the lieutenant must be an honest man. He cannot be a traitor to the man who saved his father! He didn’t look like one! His eyes shone honestly. I can tell. No, there is no trap, here! We have to make it soon, beat the iron when it’s hot. To get back, though, we should try another road. More to the north. But we only come in by the Trier road! This is too fine an opportunity to throw it away.’

And so, on the second and third times, Julian phoned the day before he would pass the border again, he phoned from out of a small hotel near the border, where he and Ernst stayed before driving on. Both times, Johann Keltermann came on the phone, and Julian explained. The lieutenant said he would be waiting at the border post. And so he was. But he was not alone. Not only Johann Keltermann stood on guard. A much older man, who Julian recognised as Johann’s father, Georg Keltermann, stood there. This time, Julian sprang out of the truck. Julian and the older man shook hands, but then, as if by common signal, Julian and Georg put their arms around each other, and held a while. The German and the Jewish doctor! Ernst saw the men enter the post. After a while, the lieutenant, Johann, came out of the building, up to Ernst, and told, ‘my father wants to see you too!’

Ernst smiled, could drive his truck to behind the building, and went in with young Johann.

Ernst was welcomed with shouts of laughter and much tapping on shoulders when he saw Georg. Yes, both men recognised each other, too.

‘Once a driver, ever a driver,’ Georg laughed.

They remained together only one hour. Then, Georg said they should drive on. In the dark, all soldiers and gendarmes were more nervous.

Julian and Ernst stepped back into their truck. Both had the smell of schnapps on their breath.

‘Truly nice guys,’ Ernst let escape. ‘Very good schnapps.’

Julian nodded. They smiled.

When Ernst rode on, Julian looked behind. He saw the young lieutenant and his father still stand and salute, not in the new way, not in the Hitler way, but in the old way of soldiers of Verdun. Julian saluted back. Old comrades!

The same scene repeated a third time. Again, Ernst brought his truck to behind the border to a darker place. Again, memories of the Great War were exchanged. Not once did anybody

mention Julian was a Jew. What did that matter when one had suffered together in a terrible war?

### *The Luxemburg Vincius*

Julian Vincius dithered for some time, before leaving his beloved Berlin. Finally, he decided it was absolutely time to let definitely the capital of Germany behind, now the capital of Nazi Germany, and to begin a new life in Luxemburg. He could sell his apartment in the Landgrafenstrasse at a decent price, though much lower than he had hoped for.

Julian rode to Luxemburg in his own Audi, alone. He would pass a last time by what he called the Keltermann border post. Charlotte and her two sons Anton and Maxim, took the train. Nothing in their passports indicated they were not through and through Aryan Germans, and Charlotte was a Frenchwoman. They went by train as far as Trier, then changed trains for Luxemburg city. Although their passes were meticulously checked at Trier and later even on the train, they could continue their trip without issues. They were on a holiday!

The girl Malou remained in Berlin. This was 1937. She was 20 years old, an adult young woman, well aware for her too, a new life had started. She could finally do whatever she wanted, even invite lovers to her home, without any parent Cerberus making remarks.

They all said goodbye to Ernst Vincius and his wife Eva. They promised to see each other again after the Nazi regime. Ernst had confessed he was now an officer in the SS, even though he had not really volunteered to join the corps. He had become a key man in Procurement! Ernst had heard he would be promoted to *Oberst* soon. When Ernst told Julian, Julian had felt dark anger move to his head. Yet, he knew Ernst as an honest man, a Vincius, a good man. Julian hesitated for a long while before speaking out.

Then, he said, slowly and with a low voice, 'well, Ernst, I wish you luck. I know you don't abide by the Nazi ideas. We have talked about all that many times. You are just trying to survive and live well with your family. Don't ever forget that for you, your wife and children, there will always be a house open to you all in Luxemburg. Don't telephone me, don't write to me, for you might get compromised. Just survive, and we'll see each other back when we can do so in all safety. I can't believe that wouldn't happen within a few years yet, not more than 5 to 10 years as from this date. We shall meet again, however long it takes!'

Ernst nodded thanked, shook hands a long time, and the two men, now the Jew and the SS, embraced.

Julian brought his wife and boys to the train. He saw them off. He rode back to a practically empty apartment, which was already not anymore his own. The next day, he too rode off and arrived two days later at Luxemburg city. Ernst didn't keep his word. He did continue to write to Julian, gave him reports of what happened in Germany, though in few letters.

After a few months of having remained partially illegally in Luxemburg city, Julian and his two sons went to the City Hall of Luxemburg. They explained their story first to a clerk, then to several persons ever higher up in the civil servants ranks of the town and country. They

asked to be able to work and study in Luxemburg. That was a form of asylum. They but asked for passports as *apatrides*, as men without a fatherland.

The boys had argued with their father and insisted to do so. They felt bitter against the land they were born in. They did not want entirely to deny their origins. Had their forefathers not been Jewish? The issue the Vincius presented at the City Hall caused quite a stir. Different men consecutively came to talk to the Vincius. Julian had to wait for two months for a clear answer on what the Luxemburg authorities intended to do with the application to Luxemburg citizenship of the family. Julian was called back three times to discuss matters over. The Luxemburg men were impressed with what Julian had been doing in Berlin, teaching and research at the most famous hospital of Europe! Luxemburg needed such men! Julian explained why he wanted to stay in Luxemburg, told them of his wife who was French, and the plea of his boys. He gave the right and honest story.

Finally, somebody high up in the hierarchy of Luxemburg administration must have decided one couldn't refuse such a doctor as this Vincius to stay and work in the country. The administration gave him and his boys an *apatride*, fatherland-less, temporary passport. He received papers stating he was allowed a work permit in Luxemburg, a paper to be renewed each year. He could appeal to receive the Luxemburg nationality, they said, but granted the current international situation, this plea could be satisfied only in a few years. He did not immediately receive a simple Luxemburg passport. He was satisfied with the simpler papers, as he had no intention to leave the country, except maybe short visits to family of Charlotte in nearby France. The papers were all Julian and his sons needed. He and his sons could work in Luxemburg!

Anton was sent to a farm in Luxemburg first. He worked in the farm near the Belgian border, stayed there for weeks at a time and only seldom returned to his parents' home in Luxemburg city. He learned there the practical farming work. At end August 1937, used now to the loneliness of having no loving persons near him, he would have to move to Belgium.

His father had found a fine university in the Belgian French-speaking town of Gembloux, not far from Namur. Gembloux was a little-known town of Wallonia, but it prided in a worldwide known agricultural university. The university exclusively formed agricultural engineers at university level. The particularity of this university was that it accepted easily students from all over the world. Anton would study there, if accepted. Julian Vincius and Anton did not doubt Anton would be accepted. The fact that there were so many foreign students there, had helped make its reputation as a friendly university. There was a direct railway connection from Brussels to Luxemburg city, which ran over Gembloux and Namur. The connection to Luxemburg was fast and excellent.

The university's rooms were housed in an age-old, famous Benedictine abbey. To it came many, often very rich students from all over Europe, many Poles and students from the eastern European lands. The university had won an excellent reputation. Moreover, the Belgian State had installed up to seven Research Stations in agriculture at different places in town. These also drew students and professors and engineers to Gembloux. The population of the little town, a mere 5,000 inhabitants, was friendly towards students coming from abroad. There was no hotel of any name in town. The students found rooms in the houses held by the inhabitants. Many a new engineer married a Gembloux girl! In the summer of 1937, Anton found a room in a grocery shop quite near the abbey. The shop sold about everything one might need in a kitchen or a normal household, from pots and pans to textiles and herbs. He

would remain there for the next four or five years, and study agriculture. In the meantime, he continued working the land in Luxemburg. He learned to drink the Luxemburg white brandy of *Quetsch*, a prune alcohol, and continued this habit all through his life, though always with good measure. Anton was handsome and intelligent. He had a truly German head. Like his father, he was inclined to the theoretical lessons. He did well.

Maxim had still some time to spend in a gymnasium-equivalent high school in Luxemburg. He was not a boy to like studying for study's sake. He had the practical, Jewish German-style of head. Maxim was preparing to study in the Technical High School of Luxemburg. He entered that school in 1938, when he was 18 years old. His mother and father intended to send him to Paris to study in engineering too. Maxim soon learned to know a Luxemburg girl. She was the same age as he, and called Francine Neuville. A common feature of the lives of all Vincius men was that when they fell in love with a girl, they also married her, even if afterwards the marriages could run into trouble. Maxim married Francine indeed later, after the war.

It took a very, very long time for Julian Vincius to have Luxemburg clients in his medical practice, for consultation or for treatment. In 1937, he had almost no patients at all. The Vincius family in Luxemburg ate up almost all the money they had saved from Berlin. In 1938 and 1939, Julian Vincius began to worry and to despair, so much so he entered a period of deep depression. That situation worsened, though by the good and loving care of his wife, he slowly emerged. The Vincius would soon be very poor people. Julian even thought of selling the house in the *Rue Henri IV*, to live all together in the smaller house where his office was. That might provide the family with some more money to live on. Julian realised he could not hold much longer like this than 2 or 3 more years. He thought of presenting himself as a male nurse in the local hospitals. He was practically sure, however, his age would be an obstacle, and his qualification too. He grew desperate. He had to pay for the studies of his sons in Luxemburg and abroad, and wondered how to be able to do that.

Before it came so far, his situation as a doctor ameliorated a little. More clients came to his office. His reputation grew. He was a fine doctor, the population of Luxemburg city finally agreed. By the end of the summer of 1938, he was a saved man! Once more, money streamed in, much more modestly than in Berlin, but enough to live well. Theatres and concerts became a possibility again. Julian remained very discreet. The plate on his door didn't mention he was a past professor at the *Charité* of Berlin. Few people knew he lived with his family in another house, in another street. He could buy a new car when his Audi broke down. He decided for a Citroën car this time, the first time he would drive a French car. He didn't change his new habit in the rest of his life. He turned into a fan of French Citroën cars!

In the late summer of 1939, when his financial situation had finally cleared up, Charlotte whispered something extraordinary to her husband. Charlotte was 41 years old then, and Julian 54. She was pregnant again. A new child would be born, if the birth-giving would proceed well, in the late spring of 1940, probably in May of next year. One more, new hope!

## Author's Notes

The Second World War, especially in Western Europe, was mainly a result of differences in ideology. The terror and the killings inflicted during the war reflected this. The clearest demonstration of the pre-eminence of ideology was the Holocaust of the Jews, the extreme violence on a people, the genocide.

In the same sense can be regarded the elimination in Germany of what the Nazis called the racial degenerates, an essential principle resulting from eugenics. The Nazis secretly halted the euthanasia action on a part of its population in August 1941, after it had become public, which had led to its denunciation by the Bishop of Münster, Clemens August Graf von Galen. Nevertheless, until then, about 70,000 patients of mental asylums had been victim of the programme. After August 1941, the killing moved to the concentration camps. The total number of victims in the camps, other than the Jews, may have amounted to 200,000 victims. The killing of the mentally sick was too aimed to be justified purely by economic savings. The mentally ill were considered a burden to the state.

The same happened to the Jews. The Jews who were still able to work were put to work and the others were killed. Later still, all were killed. Very few survived. Auschwitz, in Upper-Silesia, combined extermination with industrial profit. Auschwitz consisted of 28 sub-camps and had about 40,000 prisoners in slave labour. These generated about 30 million *Reichsmark* of profit to the German State.

The German leaders took it for granted that between 20 and 30 million Slav people would die of starvation from the German occupation of the Soviet Union, as well as about 5.7 million Soviet prisoners of war in German hands. 3.3 million died of starvation, cold and diseases and lack of food.

To end on a more optimistic tone, the United Nations Organisation, the UN, was founded on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1945 at San Francisco, and Europe could move out of its ashes by the USA-funded Marshall Plan.

In novels, it is not usual to refer to individual date or scenes and thus to the authors who gave them or edited them. Nevertheless, as I am no historian, all the dates and events in this book have been taken from the series of books listed hereafter in the bibliography; and mainly from the books mentioned for the authors Ian Kershaw, Thomas Friedrich, Richard J. Evans, Victor Davis Hanson, Henri Liebkecht and the authors, Jean Gregor and Pierre Pean. As this is a novel, a fiction. I did not refer by individual references to details given by each of these authors. Just consider the novel as not necessarily the absolute truth, and look for the authors mentioned and their books for having produced the real historical truth, not to the writer of this novel.



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