

The Rise of Hitler:

April 20, 1889, The Great Aryan Master Adolf Hitler is Born

At 6:30 p.m. on the evening of April 20, 1889, he was born in the small Austrian village of Braunau Am Inn just across the border from German Bavaria. Adolf Hitler would one day lead a movement that placed supreme importance on a person's family tree even making it a matter of life and death. However, his own family tree was quite mixed up and would be a lifelong source of embarrassment and concern to him.

His father, Alois, was born in 1837. He was the son of Maria Anna Schicklgruber.

Adolf Hitler would never know for sure just who his grandfather was. He did know that when his father Alois was about five years old, Maria Schicklgruber married Johann Georg Hiedler. The marriage lasted five years until her death of natural causes, at which time Alois went to live on a small farm with his uncle.

At age thirteen, young Alois had enough of farm life and set out for the city of Vienna to make something of himself. He worked as a shoemaker's apprentice then later enlisted in the Austrian civil service, becoming a junior customs official. He worked hard as a civil servant and eventually became a supervisor. By 1875 he achieved the rank of Senior Assistant Inspector, a big accomplishment for the former poor farm boy with little formal education.

At this time an event occurred that would have big implications for the future. Alois had always used the last name of his mother, Schicklgruber, and thus was always called Alois Schicklgruber. He made no attempt to hide the fact that he was illegitimate since it was common in rural Austria.

But after his success in the civil service, his proud uncle from the small farm convinced him to change his last name to match his own, Hiedler, and continue the family name. However, when it came time to write the name down in the record book it was spelled as Hitler.

And so in 1876 at age 39, Alois Schicklgruber became Alois Hitler. This is important because it is hard to imagine tens of thousands of Germans shouting "Heil Schicklgruber!" instead of "Heil Hitler!"

In 1885, after numerous affairs and two other marriages ended, the widowed Alois Hitler, 48, married the pregnant Klara Pölzl, 24, the granddaughter of uncle Hiedler. Technically, because of the name change, she was his own niece and so he had to get special permission from the Catholic Church.

The children from his previous marriage, Alois Hitler, Jr., and Angela, attended the wedding and lived with them afterwards. Klara Pölzl eventually gave birth to two boys and a girl, all of whom died. On April 20, 1889, her fourth child, Adolf, was born healthy and was baptized a Roman Catholic. Hitler's father was

now 52 years old.

Throughout his early days, young Adolf's mother feared losing him as well and lavished much care and affection on him. His father was busy working most of the time and also spent a lot of time on his main hobby, keeping bees.

Baby Adolf had the nickname, Adi. When he was almost five, in 1893, his mother gave birth to a brother, Edmund. In 1896 came a sister, Paula.

In May of 1895 at age six, young Adolf Hitler entered first grade in the public school in the village of Fischlham near Linz, Austria.

### Hitler's Boyhood

In 1895, at age six, two important events happened in the life of young Adolf Hitler. First, the unrestrained, carefree days he had enjoyed up to now came to an end as he entered primary school. Secondly, his father retired on a pension from the Austrian civil service.

This meant a double dose of supervision, discipline and regimentation under the watchful eyes of teachers at school and his strict father at home. His father, now 58, had spent most of his life working his way up through the civil service ranks. He was used to giving orders and having them obeyed and also expected this from his children. The Hitler family lived on a small farm outside of Linz, Austria. The children had farm chores to perform along with their school work. Hitler's mother was now preoccupied with caring for her new son, Edmund. In 1896, she gave birth to a girl, Paula. The Hitler household now consisted of Adolf, little brother Edmund, little sister Paula, older half-brother Alois Jr., older half-sister Angela and two parents who were home all the time. It was a crowded, noisy little farm house that seems to have gotten on the nerves on Hitler's father who found retirement after 40 years of work to be difficult. The oldest boy, Alois Jr., 13, bore the brunt of his father's discontent, including harsh words and occasional beatings. A year later, at age 14, young Alois had enough of this treatment and ran away from home, never to see his father again. This put young Adolf, age 7, next in line for the same treatment. Also at this time, the family moved off the farm to the town of Lambach, Austria, halfway between Linz and Salzburg. This was the first of several moves the family would make during the restless retirement of Hitler's father.

For young Adolf, the move to Lambach meant an end to farm chores and more time to play. There was an old Catholic Benedictine monastery in the town. The ancient monastery was decorated with carved stones and woodwork that included several swastikas. Adolf attended school there and saw them every day. They had been put there in the 1800s by the ruling Abbot as a pun or play on words. His name essentially sounded like the German word for swastika, Hakenkreuz. Young Hitler did well in the monastery school and also took part in the boys' choir. He was said to have had a fine singing voice. Years later Hitler would say the solemn pageantry of the high mass and other Catholic ceremonies was quite intoxicating and left a very deep impression.

As a young boy he idolized the priests and for two years seriously considered becoming a priest himself. He especially admired the Abbot in charge, who ruled his black-robed monks with supreme authority. At home Hitler sometimes played

priest and even included long sermons.

At age nine, he got into schoolboy mischief. He was caught smoking a cigarette by one of the priests, but was forgiven and not punished.

His favorite game to play outside was cowboys and Indians. Tales of the American West were very popular among boys in Austria and Germany. Books by James Fenimore Cooper and especially German writer Karl May were eagerly read and re-enacted.

May, who had never been to America, invented a hero named Old Shatterhand, a white man who always won his battles with Native Americans, defeating his enemies through sheer will power and bravery. Young Hitler read and re-read every one of May's books about Old Shatterhand, totaling more than 70 novels. He continued to read them even as Führer. During the German attack on the Soviet Union he sometimes referred to the Russians as Redskins and ordered his officers to carry May's books about fighting Indians.

In describing his boyhood, Hitler later said of himself that he was an argumentative little ring leader who liked to stay outside and hang around with 'husky' boys. His half-brother Alois later described him as quick to anger and spoiled by his indulgent mother.

In 1898, the Hitler family moved once again, to the village of Leonding, close to Linz. They settled into a small house with a garden located next to a cemetery. This meant another change of schools for Adolf.

He found school easy and got good grades with little effort. He also discovered he had considerable talent for drawing, especially sketching buildings. He had the ability to look at a building, memorize the architectural details, and accurately reproduce it on paper, entirely from memory.

One day, young Hitler went rummaging through his father's book collection and came across several of a military nature, including a picture book on the War of 1870-71 between the Germans and the French. By Hitler's own account, this book became an obsession. He read it over and over, becoming convinced it had been a glorious event.

"It was not long before the great historic struggle had become my greatest spiritual experience. From then on, I became more and more enthusiastic about everything that was in any way connected with war or, for that matter, with soldiering." - Hitler stated in his book *Mein Kampf*.

Cowboys and Indians gave way to battle re-enactments, especially after the Boer War broke out in Africa. Hitler, now eleven years old, took the side of the Boers against the English and never tired of playing war. Sometimes, he even wore out the boys he was playing with and then simply went and found other boys to continue.

But now at home, tragedy struck. Adolf's little brother Edmund, age 6, died of

measles. Adolf, the boy who loved warplay and its 'pretend' death now had to confront genuine death for the first time. It seems to have shaken him badly. To make matters worse, the little boy was buried in the cemetery next to their house. From his bedroom window, Adolf could see the cemetery.

Years later, neighbors recalled that young Adolf was sometimes seen at night sitting on the wall of the cemetery gazing up at the stars.

And there were now more problems for Adolf. His grade school years were coming to an end and he had to choose which type of secondary school to attend, classical or technical. By now, young Hitler had dreams of one day becoming an artist. He wanted to go to the classical school. But his father wanted him to follow in his footsteps and become a civil servant and sent him to the technical high school in the city of Linz, in September 1900.

Hitler, the country boy, was lost in the city and its big school. City kids also looked down on country kids who went to the school. He was very lonely and extremely unhappy. He did quite poorly his first year, getting kept back.

He would later claim he wanted to show his father he was unsuited for technical education with its emphasis on mathematics and science and thus should have been allowed to become an artist.

"I thought that once my father saw what little progress I was making at the [technical school] he would let me devote myself to the happiness I dreamed of."  
- Hitler explained in Mein Kampf.

There were frequent arguments at home between young Hitler and his father over his career choice. To the traditional minded, authoritarian father, the idea of his son becoming an artist seemed utterly ridiculous.

But in the grand scheme of things, as young Adolf saw it, the idea of a career spent sitting in an office all day long doing the boring paperwork of a civil servant was utterly horrible. The dream of becoming an artist seemed to be the answer to all his present day problems.

But his stubborn father refused to listen. And so a bitter struggle began between father and son.

Hitler began his second year at the high school as the oldest boy in his class since he had been kept back. This gave him the advantage over the other boys. Once again he became a little ringleader and even led the boys in afterschool games of cowboys and Indians, becoming Old Shatterhand. He managed to get better grades in his second year, but still failed mathematics.

Another interest of great importance surfaced at this time, German nationalism. The area of Austria where Hitler grew up is close to the German border. Many Austrians along the border considered themselves to be German-Austrians. Although they were subjects of the Austrian Hapsburg Monarchy and its multicultural empire, they expressed loyalty to the German Imperial House of

Hohenzollern and its Kaiser.

In defiance of the Austrian Monarchy, Adolf Hitler and his young friends liked to use the German greeting, "Heil," and sing the German anthem "Deutschland Uber Alles," instead of the Austrian Imperial anthem.

Hitler's father had worked as an Austrian Imperial customs agent and continually expressed loyalty to the Hapsburg Monarchy, perhaps unknowingly encouraging his rebellious young son to give his loyalty to the German Kaiser.

There was also a history teacher at school, Dr. Leopold Pötsch, who touched Hitler's imagination with exciting tales of the glory of German figures such as Bismark and Frederick The Great. For young Hitler, German Nationalism quickly became an obsession.

Adding to all this, was another new interest, the operas of German composer Richard Wagner. Hitler saw his first opera at age twelve and was immediately captivated by its Germanic music, pagan myths, tales of ancient Kings and Knights and their glorious struggles against hated enemies.

But now, for young Hitler, the struggle with his father was about to come to a sudden end. In January 1903, Hitler's father died suddenly of a lung hemorrhage, leaving his thirteen year old son as head of the Hitler household.

Hitler's father dies

In the town of Leonding, Austria, on the bitterly cold morning of Saturday, January 3, 1903, Alois Hitler, 65, went out for a walk, stopping at a favorite inn where he sat down and asked for a glass of wine. He collapsed before the wine was brought to him and died within minutes from a lung hemorrhage. It was not the first one he had suffered.

Young Adolf, now 13, broke down and cried when he saw his father's body laid out. His father's funeral mass in the small church at Leonding was well attended. A newspaper in nearby Linz published an obituary that included the following sentence: "The harsh words that sometimes fell from his lips could not belie the warm heart that beat under the rough exterior."

For Adolf, there would be no more harsh words and no more arguing with his father, especially over his career choice. Hitler's father had insisted Adolf become a civil servant like himself. Young Hitler, however, had dreams of becoming a great artist. Now Hitler was free from the stern words and domineering authority of his father. In fact, young Adolf was now the male head of the household, a position of some importance in those days.

Financially, his father had left the Hitler family fairly well provided for. Hitler's mother received half of her husband's monthly pension, plus death benefits. Adolf received a small amount each month, plus a small inheritance. The family also owned a house in Leonding which had been paid for mostly in cash.

For convenience, young Hitler went to live at a boys' boarding house in Linz where he was attending the technical high school. This saved him the long daily commute from Leonding. On weekends, he went back home to his mother. Hitler was remembered by the woman who ran the boarding house as a nervous, awkward boy, who spent most of his time reading and drawing. Although Hitler loved to read, he was a lazy and uncooperative student in school.

In Autumn 1903, when he returned to school after summer vacation, things got worse. Along with his poor grades in mathematics and French, Hitler behaved badly, knowing he was likely to fail. With no threat of discipline at home and disinterest shown by his school teachers, Hitler performed pranks and practical jokes aimed at the teachers he now disliked so much.

Among Hitler's antics - giving contrary, insulting, argumentative answers to questions which upset the teacher and delighted the other boys who sometimes applauded him. With those boys, he also released cockroaches in the classroom, rearranged the furniture, and organized confusion in the classroom by doing the opposite of what the teacher said.

Years later, even as Führer, Hitler liked to dwell on his schoolboy pranks and would recall them in detail to his top generals in the midst of waging a world war.

It was only Hitler's history teacher, Dr. Leopold Pötsch, and his tales of heroic Germans from bygone eras who kept his interest and earned his respect. By his early teens, Hitler already had a keen interest in German nationalism along with an big interest in art and architecture.

Young Hitler put all his hopes in the dream of becoming a great artist, especially as his prospects at the high school grew dimmer. Some of the teachers were also anxious to see Hitler thrown out of the school because of the trouble he caused.

One teacher later recalled young Hitler as one who "... reacted with illconcealed hostility to advice or reproof; at the same time, he demanded of his fellow pupils their unqualified subservience, fancying himself in the role of leader, at the same time indulging in many a less innocuous prank of a kind not uncommon among immature youths."

In May of 1904, at age 15, Adolf Hitler received the Catholic Sacrament of Confirmation in the Linz Cathedral. As a young boy he once entertained the idea of becoming a priest. But by the time he was confirmed he was bored and uninterested in his faith and hardly bothered to make the appropriate responses during the religious ceremony.

Shortly after this, Hitler left the high school at Linz. He had been given a passing mark in French on a make-up exam on the condition that he not return to the school. In September 1904, he entered another high school, at Steyr, a small town 25 miles from Linz. He lived in a boarding house there, sharing a room with another boy. They sometimes amused themselves by shooting rats.

Hitler got terrible marks his first semester at the new school, failing math, German, French, and even got a poor grade for handwriting. He improved during his second semester and was told he might even graduate if he first took a special make-up exam in the fall. During the summer, however, Hitler suffered from a bleeding lung ailment, an inherited medical problem.

He regained his health and passed the exam in September 1905, and celebrated with fellow students by getting drunk. He wound up the next morning lying on the side of the road, awakened by a milkwoman. After that experience he swore off alcohol and never drank again.

But Hitler could not bring himself to take the final exam for his diploma. Using poor health as his excuse, he left school at age sixteen never to return. From now on he would be self taught, continuing his heavy reading habits and interpreting what he read on his own, living in his own dreamy reality and creating his own sense of truth.

#### Hitler's fails art exam

After dropping out of high school in 1905 at age sixteen, Adolf Hitler spent the next few years in brooding idleness. His indulgent mother patiently urged him to learn a trade or get a job. But to young Hitler, the idea of daily work with its necessary submission to authority was revolting.

With his father now dead, there was no one who could tell young Hitler what to do, so he did exactly as he pleased. He spent his time wandering around the city of Linz, Austria, visiting museums, attending the opera, and sitting by the Danube River dreaming of becoming a great artist.

Hitler liked to sleep late then go out in the afternoon, often dressed like a young gentleman of leisure and even carried a fancy little ivory cane. When he returned home, he would stay up well past midnight reading and drawing. He would later describe these teenage years free from responsibility as the happiest time of his life.

His only friend was with another young dreamer named August Kubizek, who wanted to be a great musician. They met at the opera in Linz. Kubizek found Hitler fascinating and a friendship quickly developed. Kubizek turned out to be a patient listener. He was a good audience for Hitler, who often rambled for hours about his hopes and dreams.

Sometimes Hitler even gave speeches complete with wild hand gestures to his audience of one.

Kubizek later described Hitler's personality as "violent and high strung." Hitler would only tolerate approval from his friend and could not stand to be corrected, a personality trait he had shown in high school and as a younger boy as well.

Young Hitler did not have a girlfriend. But he did have an obsessive interest in

a young blond named Stephanie. He would stare at her as she walked by and sometimes followed her. He wrote her many love poems. But he never delivered the poems or worked up the nerve to introduce himself, preferring to keep her in his fantasies. He told his friend Kubizek he was able to communicate with her by intuition and that she was even aware of his thoughts and had great admiration for him. He was also deeply jealous of any attention she showed to other young men.

In reality, she had no idea Hitler had any interest in her. Years later, when told of the interest of her now-famous secret admirer, she expressed complete surprise, although she remembered getting one weird unsigned letter. Hitler's view of the world, also based in fantasy, began to significantly take shape. He borrowed large numbers of books from the library on German history and Nordic mythology. He was also deeply inspired by the opera works of Richard Wagner and their pagan, mythical tales of struggle against hated enemies. His friend Kubizek recalled that after seeing Wagner's opera "Rienzi," Hitler behaved as if possessed. Hitler led his friend atop a steep hill where he spoke in a strange voice of a great mission in which he would lead the people to freedom, similar to the plot in the opera he had just seen.

By now Hitler also had strong pride in the German race and all things German along with a strong dislike of the Hapsburg Monarchy and the non-Germanic races in the multicultural Austro-Hungarian empire which had ruled Austria and surrounding countries for centuries.

In the Spring of 1906, at age seventeen, Hitler took his first trip to Vienna, capital city of the empire and one of the world's most important centers of art, music and old-world European culture. With money in his pocket provided by his mother, he went there intending to see operas and study the famous picture gallery in the Court Museum. Instead, he found himself enthralled by the city's magnificent architecture.

Hitler had developed a big interest in architecture. He could draw detailed pictures from memory of a building he had seen only once. He also liked to ponder how to improve existing buildings, making them grander, and streamlined city layouts. In Vienna, he stood for hours gazing at grand buildings such as the opera house and the Parliament building, and looking at Ring Boulevard. As a young boy he had shown natural talent for drawing. His gift for drawing had also been recognized by his high school instructors. But things had gone poorly for him in high school. He was a lazy and uncooperative student, who essentially flunked out. To escape the reality of that failure and avoid the dreaded reality of a workaday existence, Hitler put all his hope in the dream of achieving greatness as an artist.

He decided to attend the prestigious Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. In October 1907, at age eighteen, he withdrew his inheritance money from the bank and went to live and study in Vienna. Hitler's mother was by now suffering from breast cancer and had been unsuccessfully operated on in January. But Hitler's driving ambition to be a great artist overcame his reluctance to leave her. He took the two day entrance exam for the academy's school of painting.



Confident and self assured, he awaited the result, quite sure he would get in. But failure struck him like a bolt of lightning. His test drawings were judged unsatisfactory and he was not admitted. Hitler was badly shaken by this rejection. He went back to the academy to get an explanation and was told his drawings showed a lack of talent for artistic painting, notably a lack of appreciation of the human form. He was told, however, that he had some ability for the field of architecture.

But without the required high school diploma, going to the building school and after that, the academy's architectural school, seemed doubtful. Hitler resolved to take the painting school entrance exam again next year. Now, feeling quite depressed, Hitler left Vienna and returned home where his beloved mother was now dying from cancer, making matters even worse.

Hitler's mother dies

On January 14, 1907, Adolf Hitler's mother went to see the family doctor about a pain in her chest, so bad it kept her awake at night. The doctor, Edward Bloch, who was Jewish, examined her and found she had advanced breast cancer. Adolf Hitler sobbed when the doctor told him she was gravely ill and needed immediate surgery. A few days later, Klara Hitler, 46, was operated on and had one of her breasts removed. But the operation was too late. Her illness, malignant cancer, would slowly ravage her body. She couldn't make it up the stairs to the family apartment, so they moved into a first floor apartment in a suburb next to Linz, Austria.

Eighteen-year-old Adolf had grand ideas of someday becoming a great artist. Each October, entrance examinations were held at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Despite his misgivings about leaving his mother, Hitler's artistic ambitions had driven him to withdraw his inheritance from the bank and move to Vienna to study at the academy.

Problems had arisen for Hitler when he failed the academy's entrance exam and his mother's condition took a turn for the worse. He left Vienna, feeling quite depressed, and went back home to his mother and did not tell her he failed the exam.

Hitler consulted Dr. Bloch who recommended drastic treatment to save his mother's life. The painful, expensive treatment involved applying dosages of iodoform directly onto the ulcerations caused by the cancer. She was moved into the warm kitchen of the Hitler apartment where Adolf kept constant watch and even helped out with household chores such as cooking and washing the floor. The apartment, however, always smelled of iodoform. She bore the pain well, but Adolf anguished over every moment of her suffering.

Her condition steadily worsened and as the festive Christmas season approached in December 1907, she was near death. In the early hours of December 21, amid the glowing lights of the family's Christmas tree, she died quietly. Adolf was devastated. Dr. Bloch arrived later that day to sign the death certificate. He later said he had never seen anyone so overcome with grief as Adolf Hitler at the loss of his mother. "

Klara Hitler was buried on a misty, foggy December day in the cemetery at Leonding, next to her husband. The cemetery also contained her son Edward, Adolf's younger brother, who had died from measles at age six. The next day, Christmas Eve, Hitler and his sisters paid a visit to Dr. Bloch and settled the medical bill. The doctor gave the family a break on the charges considering the many home visits he had made to his patient. Adolf Hitler expressed profound gratitude to the doctor. "I shall be grateful to you forever," Hitler told him.

Now, with both parents gone, Hitler once again set his sights on Vienna and the art academy. He moved there in February 1908. But in that beautiful old city things would go quite poorly for Hitler. He would eventually wind up sleeping on park benches and eating at charity soup kitchens. His years of misery in Vienna would also be a time when he formulated many of his ideas on politics and race which would have immense consequences in the future.

Hitler is homeless in Vienna

The beautiful old world city of Vienna, capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with its magnificent culture that had seen the likes of Beethoven and Mozart, now had a new resident, a pale, lanky, sad looking eighteen year old named Adolf Hitler.

Vienna was a city alive with music and full of diverse people who loved the arts and felt lucky to call the place home. In February 1908, Hitler moved there with the goal of attending the art academy and becoming a great artist.

Sixty years before him, Hitler's father also came to Vienna seeking opportunity. At that time the Hapsburg Empire was ruled by Emperor Franz Josef. When Adolf Hitler arrived, it was still ruled by him, although he was now senile and under the influence of corrupt ministers. His empire, which had ruled Austria and surrounding countries for centuries, was now in great decline. Vienna, however, remained a city of opportunity and attracted a multicultural population from all over the empire.

Hitler's friend from his hometown of Linz, August Kubizek, also came to Vienna and they roomed together. In Vienna, Hitler continued the same lazy lifestyle he had enjoyed in Linz after dropping out of school. Kubizek described Hitler as a night owl who slept till noon, would go out for walks taking in all the sights, then stay up late discussing his ideas on everything from social reform to city planning. Hitler made no effort to get a regular job, considering himself far above that. He dressed like an artist and at night dressed like a young gentleman of leisure and often attended the opera.

Kubizek also recalled Hitler displayed an increasingly unstable personality with a terrible temper. At times he was quite reasonable but he was always prone to sudden outbursts of rage especially when he was corrected on anything. He had no real interest in women, preferring to keep away from them and even smugly rebuffed those who showed any interest in him. He strictly adhered to his Catholic upbringing regarding sex, believing men and women should remain celibate until marriage.

Hitler was also prone to sudden bursts of inspiration and had many interesting

ideas but never finished anything he started. Whether composing his own opera or redesigning the city of Vienna, he would start with much enthusiasm and work hard, only to eventually lose interest.

In October 1908, Hitler tried for the second time to gain admission to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. However, his test drawings were judged as so poor that he was not even allowed to take the formal exam. It was a bitter disappointment to Hitler and effectively left him on the outside looking in at the artistic community in Vienna. His friend Kubizek had successfully gained entrance to the Vienna Conservatory and was studying music there, doing quite well, in contrast to Hitler.

Hitler soon parted company with his friend in a rather strange manner. When Kubizek returned to Vienna after two months of military training in November 1908, he found Hitler had moved out of their shared apartment and left no forwarding address.

Hitler now had no use for his friend and made no attempt to find him again. He lived by himself, moving from place to place as his savings gradually dwindled and his lifestyle spiraled downward. Despite the need for money, Hitler made no attempt to get regular employment. He eventually pawned all his possessions and actually wound up sleeping on park benches and begging for money. He quickly became a dirty, smelly, unshaven young man wearing tattered clothes and did not even own an overcoat. In December of 1909, freezing and half starved, he moved into a homeless shelter. He ate at a soup kitchen operated by the nuns from a nearby convent.

In February 1910, he moved into a home for poor men where he would stay for the next few years. Hitler sometimes earned a little money as a day laborer, shoveling snow and carrying bags at the train station. He then discovered he could earn a meager living selling pictures of famous Vienna landmarks which he copied from postcards. Another resident at the home, Reinhold Hanish, acted as his agent, hawking Hitler's works of art to various shops where they were mostly used to fill empty picture frames. Hitler also painted posters for shop windows.

Hanish recalled Hitler as undisciplined and moody, always hanging around the men's home, eager to discuss politics and often making speeches to the residents. He usually flew into a rage if anyone contradicted him. Eventually, Hitler quarreled with Hanish, even accusing him of stealing his property and falsely testified against him in court in August 1910, getting Hanish an eight day jail sentence. (In 1938 Hanish was murdered on Hitler's orders after talking to the press about him).

Hitler took to selling his own paintings to mostly Jewish shop owners and was also assisted by Josef Neumann, a Jew he befriended.

Hitler had a passion for reading, grabbing all the daily newspapers available at the men's home, reading numerous political pamphlets and borrowing many books from the library on German history and mythology.

He had a curious but academically untrained mind and examined the complex philosophical works of Nietzsche, Hegel, Fichte, Treitschke and the Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain.

Hitler picked up bits and pieces of philosophy and ideas from them and wound up with a hodgepodge of racist, nationalistic, anti-Semitic attitudes that over time became a die-hard philosophy, later to be described in his book, *Mein Kampf*.

The utter misery of his poverty also deeply influenced Hitler. He adopted a harsh, survivalist mentality, which left little room for consideration of kindness and compassion - an attitude that would stay with him until the end. "I owe it to that period that I grew hard and am still capable of being hard." - Hitler stated in *Mein Kampf*.

Even before he came to Vienna, Hitler had a personality notable for its lack of empathy. Many historians have concluded Hitler suffered psychological distress partly brought on by an unhappy childhood, notably his relationship with his father, a domineering, at times cruel man. At the same time, Hitler had also shown extraordinary attachment to his over indulgent mother.

In Vienna, and later, Hitler suffered bouts of depression. Other times he experienced extreme highs, only to be followed by a drop back into the depths. One consistent personality trait was the hysteria evident whenever someone displeased him. Hitler's personality has been described as basically hysterical in nature.

Now, at age 21, he was becoming keenly interested in politics, watching events unfold around him in Vienna.

After witnessing a large protest march by workers, he immersed himself in an intensive study of the politics of the workers' party, the Social Democrats. He gained appreciation of their ability to organize large rallies and use propaganda and fear as political weapons.

From the sidelines, he also watched the two other main parties, the Pan German Nationalists and the Christian Social Party, which heightened his interest in German nationalism and anti-Semitism.

Vienna, a city of two million, had a Jewish population of just under two hundred thousand, including many traditionally dressed ethnic Jews. In Linz, Hitler had only known a few "Germanized" Jews. The poor men's home Hitler lived in was near a Jewish community.

Among the middle class in Vienna, anti-Semitism was considered rather fashionable. The mayor, Karl Lueger, a noted anti-Semite, was a member of the Christian Social Party which included anti-Semitism in its political platform. Hitler admired Lueger, a powerful politician, for his speech making skills and effective use of propaganda in gaining popular appeal. He also admired Lueger's skill in manipulating established institutions such as the Catholic Church. He

studied Lueger carefully and modeled some of his later behavior on what he learned.

There were also anti-Semitic tabloids and pamphlets available at the newsstands and at local coffee shops. On first reading them, Hitler claims in his book *Mein Kampf* to have been put off.

"...the tone, particularly of the Viennese anti-Semitic press, seemed to me unworthy of the cultural tradition of a great nation."

But also in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler describes the transformation in his thinking regarding the Jews. It began with a chance meeting.

"Once, as I was strolling through the inner city, I suddenly encountered an apparition in a black caftan and black hair locks. Is this a Jew? was my first thought."

"For, to be sure, they had not looked like that in Linz. I observed the man furtively and cautiously, but the longer I stared at this foreign face, scrutinizing feature for feature, the more my first question assumed a new form: is this a German?"

To answer his own question, he immersed himself in anti-Semitic literature. Then he went out and studied Jews as they passed by.

"...the more I saw, the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity..."

"For me this was the time of the greatest spiritual upheaval I have ever had to go through. I had ceased to be a weak-kneed cosmopolitan and become an anti-Semite."

But at this point Hitler's anti-Semitism was not apparent in his personal relationships with Jews. He still did business with Jewish shop owners in selling his paintings and maintained the friendship with Josef Neumann. However, the seeds of hate were planted and would be nurtured by events soon to come, laying the foundation for one of the greatest tragedies in all of human history.

Hitler left Vienna at age 24, to avoid mandatory military service in the Austrian army, and thus avoid serving the multicultural Austrian Empire he now despised.

Twenty four years after leaving Vienna, Adolf Hitler would make a triumphant return as Führer of the German Reich. However, the memory of those miserable days of failure in his youth and the attitudes and ideas he acquired would forever remain.

In May of 1913, he moved to the German Fatherland and settled in Munich. But he was tracked down by the Austrian authorities in January 1914. Faced with the possibility of prison for avoiding military service, he wrote a letter to the Austrian Consulate apologizing and told of his recent years of misery.

"I never knew the beautiful word youth." - Hitler stated in his letter.

The tone of the letter impressed the Austrian officials and Hitler was not punished for dodging the service. He took the necessary medical exam which he easily failed and the matter was dropped altogether.

In Munich, Hitler continued painting, once again making a small living by selling painted pictures of landmarks to local shops. When asked by an old acquaintance how he would make a permanent living, Hitler said it did not matter since there soon be a war.

On August 1, 1914, a huge, enthusiastic crowd including Hitler gathered in a big public plaza in Munich - the occasion - to celebrate the German proclamation of war.

Two days later, Hitler volunteered for the German Army, enlisting in a Bavarian regiment.

"For me, as for every German, there now began the greatest and most unforgettable time of my earthly existence. Compared to the events of this gigantic struggle, everything past receded to shallow nothingness." - Hitler said in Mein Kampf.

On first hearing the news of war Hitler had sunk to his knees and thanked heaven for being alive.

#### Hitler in World War One

In the muddy, lice infested, smelly trenches of World War One, Adolf Hitler found a new home fighting for the German Fatherland. After years of poverty, alone and uncertain, he now had a sense of belonging and purpose.

The "war to end all wars" began after the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was gunned down by a young Serbian terrorist on June 28, 1914. Events quickly escalated as Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany urged Austria to declare war on Serbia. Russia then mobilized against Austria. Germany mobilized against Russia. France and England then mobilized against Germany.

All over Europe and England young men, including Adolf Hitler, eagerly volunteered. Like most young soldiers before them, they thought it would be a short war, but hopefully long enough for them to see some action and participate in the great adventure.

It would turn out to be a long war in which soldiers died by the millions. An entire generation of young men would be wiped out. The war would also bring the downfall of the old European culture of kings and noblemen and their codes of honor.

New technologies such as planes, tanks, machine guns, long range artillery, and deadly gas were used by the armies against each other. But a stalemate developed along a line of entrenched fortifications stretching from the North Sea, all the way through France to the Saar River in Germany. In these miserable trenches,

Adolf Hitler became acquainted with war.

Hitler volunteered at age 25 by enlisting in a Bavarian Regiment. After its first engagement against the British and Belgians near Ypres, 2500 of the 3000 men in the Hitler's regiment were killed, wounded or missing. Hitler escaped without a scratch. Throughout most of the war, Hitler had great luck avoiding life threatening injury. More than once he moved away from a spot where moments later a shell exploded killing or wounding everyone.

Hitler, by all accounts, was an unusual soldier with a sloppy manner and unmilitary bearing. But he was also eager for action and always ready to volunteer for dangerous assignments even after many narrow escapes from death. Corporal Hitler was a dispatch runner, taking messages back and forth from the command staff in the rear to the fighting units near the battlefield. During lulls in the fighting he would take out his watercolors and paint the landscapes of war.

Hitler, unlike his fellow soldiers, never complained about bad food and the horrible conditions or talked about women, preferring to discuss art or history. He received a few letters but no packages from home and never asked for leave. His fellow soldiers regarded Hitler as too eager to please his superiors, but generally a likable loner notable for his luck in avoiding injury as well as his bravery.

On October 7, 1916, Hitler's luck ran out when he was wounded in the leg by a shell fragment during the Battle of the Somme. He was hospitalized in Germany. It was his first time away from the front after two years of war. Following his recovery, he went sight seeing in Berlin, then was assigned to light duty in Munich. He was appalled at the apathy and anti-war sentiment among German civilians. He blamed the Jews for much of this and saw them as conspiring to spread unrest and undermine the German war effort.

This idea of an anti-war conspiracy involving Jews would become an obsession to add to other anti-Semitic notions he acquired in Vienna, leading to an ever-growing hatred of Jews.

To get away from the apathetic civilians, Hitler asked to go back to the front and was sent back in March of 1917.

In August 1918, he received the Iron Cross first class, a rarity for foot soldiers. Interestingly, the lieutenant who recommended him for the medal was a Jew, a fact Hitler would later obscure. Despite his good record and a total of five medals, he remained a corporal. Due to his unmilitary appearance and odd personality, his superiors felt he lacked leadership qualities and thought he would not command enough respect as a sergeant.

As the tide of war turned against the Germans and morale collapsed along the front, Hitler became depressed. He would sometimes spend hours sitting in the corner of the tent in deep contemplation then would suddenly burst onto his feet shouting about the "invisible foes of the German people," namely Jews and

Marxists.

In October 1918, he was temporarily blinded by a British chlorine gas attack near Ypres. He was sent home to a starving, war weary country full of unrest. He laid in a hospital bed consumed with dread amid a swirl of rumors of impending disaster.

On November 10, 1918, an elderly pastor came into the hospital and announced the news. The Kaiser and the House of Hollenzollern had fallen. Their beloved Fatherland was now a republic. The war was over.

Hitler described his reaction in Mein Kampf: "There followed terrible days and even worse nights - I knew that all was lost...in these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed."

Not the military, in his mind, but the politicians back at home in Germany and primarily the Jews.

#### War Ends with German Defeat

Faced with an effective British blockade, fierce resistance from the British and French armies, the entrance of the United States army, political unrest and starvation at home, an economy in ruins, mutiny in the navy, and mounting defeats on the battlefield, German generals requested armistice negotiations with the Allies in November 1918.

Under the terms of the armistice, the German Army was allowed to remain intact and was not forced to admit defeat by surrendering. U.S. General George Pershing had misgivings about this, saying it would be better to have the German generals admit defeat so there could be no doubt. The French and British were convinced however that Germany would not be a threat again.

The failure to force the German General Staff to admit defeat would have a huge impact on the future of Germany. Although the army was later reduced in size, its impact would be felt after the war as a political force dedicated to German nationalism, not democracy.

The German General Staff also would support the false idea that the army had not been defeated on the battlefield, but could have fought on to victory, except for being betrayed at home, the infamous 'Stab in the Back' theory.

This 'Stab in the Back' theory would become hugely popular among many Germans who found it impossible to swallow defeat. During the war, Adolf Hitler became obsessed with this idea, especially laying blame on Jews and Marxists in Germany for undermining the war effort.

To Hitler, and so many others, the German politicians who signed the armistice on November 11, 1918, would become known as the "November Criminals."

After the armistice, the remnants of the German Army straggled home from the front to face tremendous uncertainty.



Germany was now a republic, a form of government (democracy) the Germans historically had little experience or interest in. With the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm and the collapse of the Hohenzollern Monarchy, the German Empire founded by Bismark in 1871 (The Second Reich) had come to an end.

The new German Republic would eventually have a constitution that made it on paper one of the most liberal democracies in history. Its ideals included; equality for all, that political power would be only in the hands of the people, political minority representation in the new Reichstag, a cabinet and chancellor elected by majority vote in the Reichstag, and a president elected by the people.

But Germany was also a nation in political and social chaos. In Berlin and Munich, left-wing Marxist groups proclaimed Russian-like revolutions, only to meet violent opposition from right-wing nationalist Freikorps (small armies of ex-soldiers for hire) along with regular Army troops.

Communists, Socialists and even innocent bystanders were rounded up and murdered in January 1919, in Berlin, and in May in Munich.

The leaders of the new German democracy had made a deal with the German General Staff which allowed the generals to maintain rank and privilege in return for the Army's support of the young republic and a pledge to put down Marxism and help restore order.

Amid this political turmoil, on June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed by the victorious Allies and was then dutifully ratified by the German democratic government. Under the terms of the treaty, Germany alone was forced to accept responsibility for causing the war and had to pay huge war reparations for all the damage. Germany also had to give up land to France and Poland. The German Army was limited to 100,000 men and was forbidden to have submarines or military aircraft.

The treaty had the effect of humiliating the German nation before the world. This would lead to a passionate desire in many Germans, including Adolf Hitler, to see their nation throw off the "shackles" of the treaty and once again take its place in the world - the "rebirth" of Germany through a strong nationalist government. In years to come, Hitler would speak out endlessly against the treaty and gain much support. In addition, he would rail against the 'November Criminals' and 'Jewish Marxists.'

In the summer of 1919, Adolf Hitler was still in the army and was stationed in Munich where he had become an informer. Corporal Hitler had named soldiers in his barracks that supported the Marxist uprisings in Munich, resulting in their arrest and executions.

Hitler then became one of many undercover agents in the German Army weeding out Marxist influence within the ranks and investigating subversive political

organizations.

The Army sent him to a political indoctrination course held at the University of Munich where he quickly came to the attention of his superiors. He describes it in *Mein Kampf*:

"One day I asked for the floor. One of the participants felt obliged to break a lance for the Jews and began to defend them in lengthy arguments. This aroused me to an answer. The overwhelming majority of the students present took my standpoint. The result was that a few days later I was sent into a Munich regiment as a so-called educational officer."

Hitler's anti-Semitic outbursts impressed his superiors including his mentor, Captain Karl Mayr (who later died in Buchenwald). In August 1919, Hitler was given the job of lecturing returning German prisoners of war on the dangers of Communism and pacifism, as well as democracy and disobedience. He also delivered tirades against the Jews that were well received by the weary soldiers who were looking for someone to blame for all their misfortunes.

An Army report on Hitler referred to him as "a born orator." Hitler had discovered much to his delight that he could speak well in front of a strange audience, hold their attention, and sway them to his point of view. For his next assignment, he was ordered in September of 1919 to investigate a small group in Munich known as the German Workers' Party.

#### Hitler Joins German Workers' Party

Corporal Adolf Hitler was ordered in September 1919 to investigate a small group in Munich known as the German Workers' Party.

The use of the term 'workers' attracted the attention of the German Army which was now involved in crushing Marxist uprisings.

On September 12, dressed in civilian clothes, Hitler went to a meeting of the German Workers' Party in the back room of a Munich beer hall, with about twenty five people. He listened to a speech on economics by Gottfried Feder entitled, "How and by what means is capitalism to be eliminated?"

After the speech, Hitler began to leave when a man rose up and spoke in favor of the German state of Bavaria breaking away from Germany and forming a new South German nation with Austria.

This enraged Hitler and he spoke out forcefully against the man for the next fifteen minutes uninterrupted, to the astonishment of everyone. One of the founders of the German Workers' Party, Anton Drexler, reportedly whispered: "...he's got the gift of the gab. We could use him."

After Hitler's outburst ended, Drexler hurried to Hitler and gave him a forty page pamphlet entitled: "My Political Awakening." He urged Hitler to read it and also invited Hitler to come back again.

Early the next morning, sitting in his cot in the barracks of the 2nd Infantry Regiment watching the mice eat bread crumbs he left for them on the floor, Hitler remembered the pamphlet and read it. He was delighted to find the pamphlet, written by Drexler, reflected political thinking much like his own - building a strong nationalist, pro-military, anti-Semitic party made up of working class people.

A few days later, Hitler received an unexpected postcard saying he had been accepted as a member into the party. He was asked to attend an executive committee meeting, which he did. At that meeting he was joyfully welcomed as a new member although he was actually very undecided on whether to join. In Mein Kampf, Hitler describes the condition of the party: "...aside from a few directives, there was nothing, no program, no leaflet, no printed matter at all, no membership cards, not even a miserable rubber stamp..."

Although unimpressed by the present condition of the German Workers' Party, Hitler was drawn to the sentiment expressed by Drexler that this would somehow become a movement not just a political party. And in this disorganized party, Hitler saw opportunity.

"This absurd little organization with its few members seemed to me to possess the one advantage that it had not frozen into an 'organization,' but left the individual opportunity for real personal activity. Here it was still possible to work, and the smaller the movement, the more readily it could be put into the proper form. Here, the content, the goal, and the road could still be determined..."

He spent two days thinking it over then decided.

"...I finally came to the conviction that I had to take this step...It was the most decisive resolve of my life. From here there was and could be no turning back."

Adolf Hitler joined the committee of the German Workers' Party (Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or DAP) and thus entered politics.

#### Nazi Party is Formed

Adolf Hitler never held a regular job and aside from his time in World War One, led a lazy lifestyle, from his brooding teenage days in Linz through years spent in idleness and poverty in Vienna. But after joining the German Workers' Party in 1919 at age thirty, Hitler immediately began a frenzied effort to make it succeed.

The German Workers' Party consisted mainly of an executive committee which had seven members, including Hitler. To bring in new members Hitler prepared invitations which each committee member gave to friends asking them to attend the party's monthly public meeting, but few came.

Next they tried having invitations printed at a stationary store. A few people came.

Then they placed an advertisement in an anti-Semitic newspaper in Munich and at Hitler's insistence, moved the public meeting to a beer cellar that would hold about a hundred. The other committee members were concerned they might have trouble filling the place, but just over a hundred showed up at the meeting held on October 16, 1919.

Hitler was scheduled to be the second speaker at this meeting. It was to be his first time as a featured speaker, despite the misgivings of some committee members who doubted Hitler's ability at this time.

But when Hitler got up to speak, he astounded everyone with a highly emotional, at times near hysterical manner of speech making. For Hitler, it was an important moment in his young political career.

He described the scene in Mein Kampf:

"I spoke for thirty minutes, and what before I had simply felt within me, without in any way knowing it, was now proved by reality: I could speak! After thirty minutes the people in the small room were electrified and the enthusiasm was first expressed by the fact that my appeal to the self-sacrifice of those present led to the donation of three hundred marks."

The money was used to buy more advertising and print leaflets. The German Workers' Party now featured Hitler as the main attraction at its meetings. In his speeches Hitler railed against the Treaty of Versailles and delivered anti-Semitic tirades, blaming the Jews for Germany's problems. Attendance slowly increased, numbering in the hundreds.

Hitler took charge of party propaganda in early 1920, and also recruited young men he had known in the Army. He was aided in his recruiting efforts by Army Captain Ernst Röhm, a new party member, who would play a vital role in Hitler's eventual rise to power.

In Munich, there were many alienated, maladjusted soldiers and ex-soldiers with a thirst for adventure and a distaste for the peace brought on by the Treaty of Versailles and the resulting democratic republic. They joined the German Workers' Party in growing numbers.

There were many other political groups looking for members, but none more successful than the Marxists. Genuine fear existed there might be a widespread Communist revolution in Germany like the Russian revolution. Hitler associated Marxism with the Jews and thus reviled it.

He also understood how a political party directly opposed to a possible Communist revolution could play on the fears of so many Germans and gain support.

In February of 1920, Hitler urged the German Workers' Party to hold its first mass meeting. He met strong opposition from leading party members who thought it was premature and feared it might be disrupted by Marxists. Hitler had no fear

of disruption. In fact he welcomed it, knowing it would bring his party anti-Marxist notoriety. He even had the hall decorated in red to aggravate the Marxists.

On February 24, 1920, Hitler was thrilled when he entered the large meeting hall in Munich and saw two thousand people waiting, including a large number of Communists.

A few minutes into his speech, he was drowned out by shouting followed by open brawling between German Workers' Party associates and disruptive Communists. Eventually, Hitler resumed speaking and claims in *Mein Kampf* the shouting was gradually drowned out by applause.

He proceeded to outline the Twenty Five Points of the German Workers' Party, its political platform, which included; the union of all Germans in a greater German Reich, rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, the demand for additional territories for the German people (*Lebensraum*), citizenship determined by race with no Jew to be considered a German, all income not earned by work to be confiscated, a thorough reconstruction of the national education system, religious freedom except for religions which endanger the German race, and a strong central government for the execution of effective legislation.

One by one Hitler went through the Twenty Five Points, asking the rowdy crowd for its approval on each point, which he got. For Hitler, the meeting was now a huge success.

"When after nearly four hours the hall began to empty and the crowd, shoulder to shoulder, began to move, shove, press toward the exit like a slow stream, I knew that now the principles of a movement which could no longer be forgotten were moving out among the German people."

"A fire was kindled from whose flame one day the sword must come which would regain freedom for the Germanic Siegfried and life for the German nation." Hitler realized one thing the movement lacked was a recognizable symbol or flag. In the summer of 1920, Hitler chose the symbol which to this day remains perhaps the most infamous in history, the swastika.

It was not something Hitler invented, but is found even in the ruins of ancient times. Hitler had seen it each day as a boy when he attended the Benedictine monastery school in Lambach, Austria. The ancient monastery was decorated with carved stones and woodwork that included several swastikas. They had also been seen around Germany among the *Freikorps* (soldiers for hire), and appeared before as an emblem used by anti-Semitic political parties.

But when it was placed inside a white circle on a red background, it provided a powerful, instantly recognizable symbol that immediately helped Hitler's party gain popularity.

Hitler described the symbolism involved: "In the red we see the social idea of the movement, in the white the national idea, in the swastika the mission to

struggle for the victory of Aryan man and at the same time the victory of the idea of creative work, which is eternally anti-Semitic and will always be anti-Semitic."

The German Workers' Party name was changed by Hitler to include the term National Socialist. Thus the full name was the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or NSDAP) called for short, Nazi.

By the end of 1920 it had about three thousand members.

#### Hitler Named Leader of Nazi Party

By early 1921, Adolf Hitler was becoming highly effective at speaking in front of ever larger crowds. In February, Hitler spoke before a crowd of nearly six thousand in Munich. To publicize the meeting, he sent out two truckloads of Party supporters to drive around with swastikas, cause a big commotion, and throw out leaflets, the first time this tactic was used by the Nazis.

Hitler was now gaining notoriety outside of the Nazi Party for his rowdy, at times hysterical tirades against the Treaty of Versailles, rival politicians and political groups, especially Marxists, and always the Jews.

The Nazi Party was centered in Munich which had become a hotbed of ultra right-wing German nationalists. This included Army officers determined to crush Marxism and undermine or even overthrow the young German democracy centered in Berlin.

Slowly, they began looking toward the rising politician, Adolf Hitler, and the growing Nazi movement as the vehicle to hitch themselves to. Hitler was already looking at how he could carry his movement to the rest of Germany. He traveled to Berlin to visit nationalist groups during the summer of 1921.

But in his absence, he faced an unexpected revolt among his own Nazi Party leadership in Munich.

The Party was still run by an executive committee whose original members now considered Hitler to be highly overbearing, even dictatorial. To weaken Hitler's position, they formed an alliance with a group of socialists from Augsburg. Hitler rushed back to Munich and countered them by announcing his resignation from the Party on July 11, 1921.

They realized the loss of Hitler would effectively mean the end of the Nazi Party. Hitler seized the moment and announced he would return on the condition that he was made chairman and given dictatorial powers.

Infuriated committee members, including Anton Drexler, founder of the Party, held out at first. Meanwhile, an anonymous pamphlet appeared entitled: "Adolf Hitler: Is he a traitor?" It attacked Hitler's lust for power and criticized the violence prone men now surrounding him. Hitler responded to its publication in a Munich newspaper by suing for libel and later won a small settlement.

The executive committee of the Nazi Party eventually backed down and Hitler's demands were put to a vote of the party members. Hitler received 543 votes for, and only one against.

At the next gathering, July 29, 1921, Adolf Hitler was introduced as Führer of the Nazi Party, marking the first time that title was publicly used to address him.

### The Beer Hall Putsch

A series of financial events unfolded in the years 1921 through 1923 that would propel the Nazis to new heights of daring and would even prompt Hitler into attempting to take over Germany.

In April of 1921, the victorious European Allies of World War One, notably France and England, presented a bill to Germany demanding payment for damages caused in the war which Germany had started. This bill (33 billion dollars) for war reparations had the immediate effect of causing ruinous inflation in Germany.

The German currency, the mark, slipped drastically in value. It had been four marks to the U.S. dollar until the war reparations were announced. Then it became 75 to the dollar and in 1922 sank to 400 to the dollar. The German government asked for a postponement of payments. The French refused.

The Germans defied them by defaulting on their payments. In response to this, in January 1923, the French Army occupied the industrial part of Germany known as the Ruhr.

The German mark fell to 18,000 to the dollar. By July 1923, it sank to 160,000. By August, 1,000,000. And by November 1923, it took 4,000,000,000 marks to obtain a dollar.

Germans lost their life savings. Salaries were paid in worthless money. Groceries cost billions. Hunger riots broke out.

For the moment, the people stood by their government, admiring its defiance of the French. But in September of 1923, the German government made the fateful decision to resume making payments. Bitter resentment and unrest swelled among the people, inciting extremist political groups to action and quickly bringing Germany to the brink of chaos.

The Nazis and other similar groups now felt the time was right to strike. The German state of Bavaria where the Nazis were based was a hotbed of groups opposed to the democratic government in Berlin. By now, November 1923, the Nazis, with 55,000 followers, were the biggest and best organized. With Nazi members demanding action, Hitler knew he had to act or risk losing the leadership of his Party.

Hitler and the Nazis hatched a plot in which they would kidnap the leaders of the Bavarian government and force them at gunpoint to accept Hitler as their leader. Then, according to their plan, with the aid of famous World War One General, Erich Ludendorff, they would win over the German Army, proclaim a nationwide revolt and bring down the German democratic government in Berlin. They put this plan into action when they learned there was going to be a large gathering of businessmen in a Munich beer hall and the guests of honor were scheduled to be the Bavarian leaders they now wanted to kidnap.

On November 8, 1923, SA troops under the direction of Hermann Göring surrounded the place. At 8:30 p.m., Hitler and his storm troopers burst into the beer hall causing instant panic.

Hitler fired a pistol shot into the ceiling. "Silence!" he yelled at the stunned crowd.

Hitler and Göring forced their way to the podium as armed SA men continued to file into the hall. State Commissioner Gustav von Kahr, whose speech had been interrupted by all this, yielded the podium to Hitler.

"The National Revolution has begun!" Hitler shouted. "...No one may leave the hall. Unless there is immediate quiet I shall have a machine gun posted in the gallery. The Bavarian and Reich governments have been removed and a provisional national government formed. The barracks of the Reichswehr and police are occupied. The Army and the police are marching on the city under the swastika banner!"

None of that was true, but those in the beer hall could not know otherwise. Hitler then ordered the three highest officials of the Bavarian government into a back room. State Commissioner Kahr, along with the head of the state police, Colonel Hans von Seisser, and commander of the German Army in Bavaria, General Otto von Lossow, did as they were told and went into the room where Hitler informed them they were to join him in proclaiming a Nazi revolution and would become part of the new government.

But to Hitler's great surprise, his three captives simply glared at him and at first even refused to talk to him. Hitler responded by waving his pistol at them, yelling: "I have four shots in my pistol! Three for you, gentlemen. The last bullet for myself!"

However, the revolution in the back room continued to go poorly for Hitler. Then, on a sudden impulse, Hitler dashed out of the room and went back out to the podium and shouted: "The government of the November criminals and the Reich President are declared to be removed. A new national government will be named this very day in Munich. A new German National Army will be formed immediately...The task of the provisional German National Government is to organize the march on that sinful Babel, Berlin, and save the German people! Tomorrow will find either a National Government in Germany or us dead!" This led everyone in the beer hall to believe the men in the back room had given in to Hitler and were joining with the Nazis. There was now wild cheering for



Hitler.

General Ludendorff then arrived. Hitler knew the three government leaders still in the back room would actually listen to him.

At Hitler's urging, Ludendorff spoke to the men in the back room and advised them to go along with the Nazi revolution. They reluctantly agreed, then went out to the podium and faced the crowd, showing their support for Hitler and pledging loyalty to the new regime.

An emotional Hitler spoke to the crowd: "I am going to fulfill the vow I made to myself five years ago when I was a blind cripple in the military hospital - to know neither rest nor peace until the November criminals had been overthrown, until on the ruins of the wretched Germany of today there should have arisen once more a Germany of power and greatness, of freedom and splendor." The crowd in the beer hall roared their approval and sang "Deutschland über Alles." Hitler was euphoric. This was turning into a night of triumph for him. Tomorrow he might actually be the new leader of Germany.

But then word came that attempts to take over several Army barracks had failed and that German soldiers inside those barracks were holding out against the Nazi storm troopers. Hitler decided to leave the beer hall and go to the scene to personally resolve the problem.

Leaving the beer hall was a fateful error. In his absence the Nazi revolution quickly began to unravel. The three Bavarian government leaders, Kahr, Lossow, and Seisser, slipped out of the beer hall after falsely promising Ludendorff they would remain loyal to Hitler.

Meanwhile, Hitler had no luck in getting the German soldiers who were holding out in the barracks to surrender. Having failed at that, he went back to the beer hall.

When he arrived back at the beer hall he was aghast to find his revolution fizzling. There were no plans for tomorrow's march on Berlin. Munich wasn't even being occupied. Nothing was happening.

In fact, only one building, Army headquarters at the War Ministry had been occupied by Ernst Röhm and his SA troopers. Elsewhere, rogue bands of Nazi thugs roamed the city of Munich rounding up some political opponents and harassing Jews.

In the early morning hours of November 9, State Commissioner Kahr broke his promise to Hitler and Ludendorff and issued a statement blasting Hitler: "Declarations extorted from me, General Lossow and Colonel von Seisser by pistol point are null and void. Had the senseless and purposeless attempt at revolt succeeded, Germany would have been plunged into the abyss and Bavaria with it." Kahr also ordered the breakup of the Nazi party and its fighting forces.

General Lossow also abandoned Hitler and ordered German Army reinforcements into Munich to put down the Nazi putsch. Troops were rushed in and by dawn the War

Ministry building containing Röhm and his SA troops was surrounded.

Hitler was up all night frantically trying to decide what to do. General Ludendorff then gave him an idea. The Nazis would simply march into the middle of Munich and take it over. Because of his World War One fame, Ludendorff reasoned, no one would dare fire on him. He even assured Hitler the police and the Army would likely join them. The now-desperate Hitler went for the idea. Around 11 a.m. on the morning of November 9, a column of three thousand Nazis, led by Hitler, Göring and Ludendorff marched toward the center of Munich. Carrying one of the flags was a young party member named Heinrich Himmler.

After reaching the center of Munich, the Nazis headed toward the War Ministry building but they encountered a police blockade. As they stood face to face with about a hundred armed policemen, Hitler yelled out to them to surrender. They didn't. Shots rang out. Both sides fired. It lasted about a minute. Sixteen Nazis and three police were killed. Göring was hit in the groin. Hitler suffered a dislocated shoulder when the man he had locked arms with was shot and pulled him down onto the pavement.

Hitler's bodyguard, Ulrich Graf, jumped onto Hitler to shield him and took several bullets, probably saving Hitler's life. Hitler then crawled along the sidewalk out of the line of fire and scooted away into a waiting car, leaving his comrades behind. The rest of the Nazis scattered or were arrested. Ludendorff, true to his heroic form, walked right through the line of fire to the police and was then arrested.

Hitler wound up at the home his friends, the Hanfstaengls, where he was reportedly talked out of suicide. He had become deeply despondent and expected to be shot by the authorities. He spent two nights hiding in the Hanfstaengl's attic. On the third night, police arrived and arrested him. He was taken to the prison at Landsberg where his spirits lifted somewhat after he was told he was going to get a public trial.

With the collapse of the Nazi revolution, it now appeared to most observers that Hitler's political career and the Nazi movement itself had come to a crashing, almost laughable end.

#### Hitler on Trial for Treason

The trial of Adolf Hitler for high treason after the Beer Hall Putsch was not the end of Hitler's political career as many had expected. In many ways marked the true beginning.

Overnight, Hitler became a nationally and internationally known figure due to massive press coverage. The judges in this sensational trial were chosen by a Nazi sympathizer in the Bavarian government. They allowed Hitler to use the courtroom as a propaganda platform from which he could speak at any length on his own behalf, interrupt others at any time and even cross examine witnesses.

Rather than deny the charges, Hitler admitted wanting to overthrow the government and outlined his reasons, portraying himself as a German patriot and the democratic government itself, its founders and leaders, as the real criminals.

"I alone bear the responsibility. But I am not a criminal because of that. If today I stand here as a revolutionary, it is as a revolutionary against the revolution. There is no such thing as high treason against the traitors of 1918."

Hitler considered the traitors of 1918 to be the German politicians responsible for the so called 'stab in the back,' who prematurely ended World War One and established the German democratic republic. In Hitler's mind and among many Germans, their Army had not been defeated on the battlefield but had been undermined by political treachery at home.

In reality, German Army leaders themselves had opened negotiations with the Allies to end the war which they were losing.

But newspapers quoted Hitler at length. Thus, for the first time, the German people as a whole had a chance to get acquainted with this man and his thinking. And many liked what they heard.

During 24 days of long, rambling arguments, Hitler's daring grew. As the trial concluded, sensing the national impact he was having, Hitler gave this closing statement:

"The man who is born to be a dictator is not compelled. He wills it. He is not driven forward, but drives himself. There is nothing immodest about this. Is it immodest for a worker to drive himself toward heavy labor?"

Is it presumptuous of a man with the high forehead of a thinker to ponder through the nights till he gives the world an invention? The man who feels called upon to govern a people has no right to say, 'If you want me or summon me, I will cooperate.' No! It is his duty to step forward.

The army which we have now formed is growing day to day. I nourish the proud hope that one day the hour will come when these rough companies will grow to battalions, the battalions to regiments, the regiments to divisions, that the old cockade will be taken from the mud, that the old flags will wave again, that there will be a reconciliation at the last great divine judgment which we are prepared to face. For it is not you, gentlemen, who pass judgment on us. That judgment is spoken by the eternal court of history...Pronounce us guilty a thousand times over: the goddess of the eternal court of history will smile and tear to pieces the State Prosecutor's submissions and the court's verdict; for she acquits us."

The court's verdict - guilty. Possible sentence - life. Hitler's sentence - five years, eligible for parole in six months.

The three judges in the trial had become so sympathetic that the presiding judge

had to persuade them to find him guilty at all. They agreed to find Hitler guilty only after being assured he would get early parole.

Other Nazi leaders arrested after the failed Putsch got light sentences as well. General Ludendorff was even acquitted.

On April 1, 1924, Hitler was taken to the old fortress at Landsberg and given a spacious private cell with a fine view. He got gifts, was allowed to receive visitors whenever he liked and had his own private secretary, Rudolph Hess. The Nazi Party after the Putsch became fragmented and disorganized, but Hitler had gained national influence by taking advantage of the press to make his ideas known. Now, although behind bars, Hitler was not about to stop communicating. Pacing back and forth in his cell, he continued expressing his ideas, while Hess took down every word. The result would be the first volume of a book, *Mein Kampf*, outlining Hitler's political and racial ideas in brutally intricate detail, serving both as a blueprint for future actions and as a warning to the world.

#### Hitler's Book *Mein Kampf*

Although it is thought of as having been 'written' by Hitler, *Mein Kampf* is not a book in the usual sense. Hitler never actually sat down and pecked at a typewriter or wrote longhand, but instead dictated it to Rudolph Hess while pacing around his prison cell in 1923-24 and later at an inn at Berchtesgaden. Reading *Mein Kampf* is like listening to Hitler speak at length about his youth, early days in the Nazi Party, future plans for Germany, and ideas on politics and race.

The original title Hitler chose was "Four and a Half Years of Struggle against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice." His Nazi publisher knew better and shortened it to "*Mein Kampf*," simply My Struggle, or My Battle.

In his book, Hitler divides humans into categories based on physical appearance, establishing higher and lower orders, or types of humans. At the top, is the Germanic-Aryan man with his fair skin, blond hair and blue eyes.

He asserts that the Aryan is the supreme form of human, or master race.

the Untermenschen, or racially inferior were the Jews and the Slavic peoples, notably the Czechs, Poles, and Russians.

"...it [Nazi philosophy] by no means believes in an equality of races, but along with their difference it recognizes their higher or lesser value and feels itself obligated to promote the victory of the better and stronger, and demand the subordination of the inferior and weaker in accordance with the eternal will that dominates this universe." - Hitler states in *Mein Kampf*.

Hitler then states the Aryan is also culturally superior.

"All the human culture, all the results of art, science, and technology that we see before us today, are almost exclusively the creative product of the Aryan..."

"Hence it is no accident that the first cultures arose in places where the Aryan, in his encounters with lower peoples, subjugated them and bent them to his will. They then became the first technical instrument in the service of a developing culture."

Hitler goes on to say that subjugated peoples actually benefit by being conquered because they come in contact with and learn from the superior Aryans.

However, he adds they benefit only as long as the Aryan remains the absolute master and doesn't mingle or inter-marry with inferior conquered peoples. But it is the Jews, Hitler says, who are engaged in a conspiracy to keep this master race from assuming its rightful position as rulers of the world, by tainting its racial and cultural purity and even inventing forms of government in which the Aryan comes to believe in equality and fails to recognize his racial superiority.

"The mightiest counterpart to the Aryan is represented by the Jew." Hitler describes the struggle for world domination as an ongoing racial, cultural, and political battle between Aryans and Jews. He outlines his thoughts in detail, accusing the Jews of conducting an international conspiracy to control world finances, controlling the press, inventing liberal democracy as well as Marxism, promoting prostitution and vice, and using culture to spread disharmony.

Throughout *Mein Kampf*, Hitler refers to Jews as parasites, liars, dirty, crafty, sly, wily, clever, without any true culture, a sponger, a middleman, a maggot, eternal blood suckers, repulsive, unscrupulous, monsters, foreign, menace, bloodthirsty, avaricious, the destroyer of Aryan humanity, and the mortal enemy of Aryan humanity...

"...for the higher he climbs, the more alluring his old goal that was once promised him rises from the veil of the past, and with feverish avidity his keenest minds see the dream of world domination tangibly approaching." This competition for world domination between Jews and Aryans would become widespread in Nazi Germany and would even be taught to school children.

This, combined with Hitler's racial attitude toward the Jews, would be shared to varying degrees by millions of Germans and people from occupied countries, so that they either remained silent or actively participated in the Nazi effort to exterminate the vile Jewish population of Europe.

*Mein Kampf* also provides an explanation for the military conquests later attempted by Hitler and the Germans. Hitler states that since the Aryans are the master race, they are entitled simply by that fact to acquire more land for themselves. This *Lebensraum*, or living space, will be acquired by force, Hitler says, and includes the lands to the east of Germany, namely Russia. That land would be used to cultivate food and to provide room for the expanding Aryan population at the expense of the Slavic peoples, who were to be removed, eliminated, or enslaved.

But in order to achieve this Hitler states Germany must first defeat its old enemy France, to avenge the German defeat of World War One and to secure the western border. Hitler bitterly recalls the end of the first World War, saying the German Army was denied its chance for victory on the battlefield by political treachery at home. In the second volume of Mein Kampf he attaches most of the blame to Jewish conspirators in a highly menacing and ever more threatening tone.

When Mein Kampf was first released in 1925 it sold poorly. People had been hoping for a juicy autobiography or a behind-the-scenes story of the Beer Hall Putsch. What they got were hundreds of pages of long, hard to follow sentences and wandering paragraphs.

However, after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, millions of copies were sold.

It was considered proper to own a copy and to give one to newlyweds, high school graduates, or to celebrate any similar occasion. But few Germans ever read it cover to cover. Although it made him rich, Hitler would later express regret that he produced Mein Kampf, considering the extent of its revelations. Those revelations concerning the nature of his character and his blueprint for Germany's future served as a warning to the world. A warning that was mostly ignored.

#### A New Beginning

A few days before Christmas, 1924, Adolf Hitler emerged a free man after nine months in prison, having learned from his mistakes. In addition to creating the book, Mein Kampf, Hitler had given considerable thought to the failed Nazi revolution (Beer Hall Putsch) of November 1923, and its implications for the future.

"...Instead of working to achieve power by an armed coup we shall have to hold our noses and enter the Reichstag against the Catholic and Marxist deputies. If outvoting them takes longer than outshooting them, at least the results will be guaranteed by their own Constitution! Any lawful process is slow. But sooner or later we shall have a majority - and after that Germany." - Hitler stated while in prison.

The Nazi Party would be organized like a government itself, so that when power was achieved and democracy was legitimately ended, this 'government in waiting' could slip right into place.

But before any of this could be started, Hitler had some problems to overcome. After the Beer Hall Putsch, the government of the German state of Bavaria banned the Nazi Party and its newspaper, the Völkischer Beobachter (Peoples' Observer).

Also, the Nazi Party was now badly disorganized with much infighting among its leaders.

Early in 1925, Hitler visited the Prime Minister of Bavaria and managed to

convince him to lift the ban, on the promise of good behavior, and after promising that the Nazis would work within the rules of the democratic constitution. He then wrote a long editorial for the *Völkischer Beobachter* called "A New Beginning" published February 26, 1925.

On February 27, the Nazis held their first big meeting since the Beer Hall Putsch at which Hitler reclaimed his position as absolute leader of the Nazi Party and patched up some of the ongoing feuds. But during his two hour speech before four thousand cheering Nazis, Hitler got carried away and started spewing out the same old threats against the democratic republic, Marxists, and Jews.

For this, the government of Bavaria slapped him with a two year ban on public speaking. It was a major setback for Hitler who owed much of his success to his speech making ability. But rather than be discouraged or slowed down, Hitler immediately began reorganizing the Nazi Party with feverish effort.

The Nazi party itself was divided into two major political organizations.  
PO I - Dedicated to undermining and overthrowing the German democratic republic.

PO II - Designed to create a government in waiting, a highly organized Nazi government within the republic that would some day replace it. PO II even had its own departments of Agriculture, Economy, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Propaganda, Justice, along with Race and Culture.

Germany was divided up by the Nazis into thirty four districts, or Gaue, with each one having a Gauleiter, or leader. The Gau itself was divided into circles, Kreise, and each one had a Kreisleiter, or circle leader. The circles were divided into Ortsgruppen, or local groups. And in the big cities, the local groups were divided along streets and blocks.

For young people, the Hitler Jugend, or Hitler Youth was formed. It was for boys aged 15 to 18, and was modeled after the popular boy scout programs. Younger boys aged 10 to 15 could join the Deutsches Jungvolk. There was an organization for girls called Bund Deutscher Maedel and for women, the Frauenschaften.

Also at this time, Hitler began to reorganize the SA, his Nazi storm troopers, which he referred to in *Mein Kampf* as "...an instrument for the conduct and reinforcement of the movement's struggle for its philosophy of life."

The SA began as an organization of Nazi street brawlers originally called the "monitor troop" that kept Nazi meetings from being broken up by Marxists and fought with them in the streets as well. It had also been Hitler's main 'instrument' in the failed Putsch.

Realizing the German man's fondness for uniforms, the SA adopted a brown-shirted outfit, with boots, swastika armband, badges and cap. Nazi uniforms along with the swastika symbol would become important tools in providing recognition and visibility, thus increasing public awareness of the party.

At this time, within the SA, a new highly disciplined guard unit was formed by

Hitler that would be solely responsible to him and would serve as his personal body guard. It was called the Schutzstaffel, the staff guard or SS for short. The SS adopted a black uniform, modeled party after the Italian Fascists. A former stationery salesman, Josef Berchtold, was its first leader. A young man who had done a variety of odd jobs for the party became member number 168. His name was Heinrich Himmler.

But despite all this effort, the Nazis now ran into a big obstacle that limited the Party's success. Things were getting better in Germany. The economy was improving and unemployment was dropping. The big German industrialists were now debt free. Factory output was increasing as investment capital came pouring in from the United States.

An American named Charles G. Dawes had drawn up a plan, approved by the Allies, that reduced German war reparations.

currency, the mark. The plan also provided for huge loans from America to help German industry rebuild. The German government also borrowed from the U.S. to finance its vast array of new social programs and municipal building projects including airfields, sports stadiums and even swimming pools.

And Germany now had a new president, a sleepy-eyed old gentleman named Paul von Hindenburg, a famous World War One Field Marshal. He was unanimously backed by the conservative and middle-of-the-road political parties to help bring stability to the republic and to thwart any attempt by radical parties to capture the presidency.

The German Army had made its peace with the young republic. Although forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles to exceed 100,000 soldiers and denied modern equipment and planes, thousands of men existed in thinly veiled paramilitary organizations funded by the Army. The German General Staff, disbanded by the treaty, simply disguised itself among its troops. The Army was also secretly engaged in developing new technologies in Russian factories and was involved in training exercises with the Russian Army.

Thus, despite appearances to the Allies, the German General Staff and its Army was allowed to achieve its primary goal, self preservation and advancement, and so it supported German democracy for the time being.

As things got better economically, there was a sense of relaxation among the German people. Since they didn't have to struggle so much for daily existence, they had time for enjoyment, outdoor recreation, the arts, and sitting around beer halls and cafes. Among these people, the name of Adolf Hitler was likely to bring a smile, perhaps getting him a bit confused with the great film comedian Charlie Chaplin who looked like him and even had some of the same body language.

Amid all this, Adolf Hitler knew it was going to be slow going for his party which had counted so many unhappy, disgruntled men among its early members. But Hitler also had a sense that the good times would not last. The German republic was living on borrowed money and borrowed time. The underlying political and racial tensions he was so keen to exploit were still there, only dormant. And



when the good times were over, they would once again come looking for him. But for now he just had to wait.

### 1926 to 1929 The Quiet Years

Adolf Hitler described the quiet years between 1926 and 1929 as one of the happiest times of his life. In the scenic mountains above the village of Berchtesgaden in the German state of Bavaria, he found an ideal home. He spent his days gazing at inspiring, majestic mountain views and dreaming of future glory for himself and his German Reich.

Those dreams centered around asserting the supremacy of the Germanic race, acquiring more living space (Lebensraum) for the German people, and dealing harshly with Jews and Marxists.

By May of 1926, Hitler had overcome any remaining rivals within the Nazi Party and assumed the title of supreme leader (Führer). Ideological differences and infighting between factions of the Nazi Party were resolved by Hitler through his considerable powers of personal persuasion during closed door meetings with embattled leaders.

The party itself experienced slow growth, numbering only about 17,000 in early 1926. Hitler had been forbidden to speak in public until 1927 by the Bavarian government. He was still on parole, facing the possibility of being deported back to his Austrian homeland.

Much to his advantage, however, he enjoyed a following among upper class socialites who were strangely drawn to this charismatic but socially awkward man. Hitler delighted in their attention and their money. He wound up with a brand new red Mercedes in which he was chauffeured around the Bavarian countryside taking in the sights with his Nazi companions.

During these quiet years, Joseph Goebbels first came to Hitler's attention and experienced a quick rise in the Nazi hierarchy. Goebbels, a brilliant but somewhat neurotic would-be writer, displayed huge talents for speech making, organizing, and propaganda. He was a rarity among the Nazis, a highly educated man, with a Ph.D. in literature from Heidelberg.

Goebbels was a little man, about five feet tall, who walked with a limp as a result of infantile paralysis. He kept a diary which reveals how quickly he became infatuated with Hitler.

"Great joy. He greets me like an old friend. And looks after me. How I love him!" - Goebbels wrote after his second meeting with Hitler.

But this 'love' was tempered by ideological differences. Goebbels belonged to the Nazi faction led by Gregor Strasser that actually believed in the 'socialism' of National Socialism and had sympathy for Marxism, a sentiment totally unacceptable to Hitler.

In his diary, Goebbels describes his reaction to a meeting in which Hitler attempted to straighten him out.

"We ask. He gives brilliant replies. I love him. Social question. Quite new perspectives. He has thought it all out...He sets my mind at rest on all points. He is a man in every way, in every respect. Such a firebrand, he can be my leader. I bow to the greater man, the political genius!"

And later, after spending a few days with Hitler at Berchtesgaden...

"These days have signposted my road! A star shines leading me from deep misery!

I am his to the end. My last doubts have vanished. Germany will live. Heil Hitler!"

Goebbels was sent by Hitler in October 1926, to the German capital, Berlin, to be its Gauleiter. Once there, he faced the huge task of reorganizing and publicizing the largely ignored Nazi Party.

Berlin proved to be a training ground for the future Propaganda Minister. He skillfully used good and even bad publicity to get the party noticed. He organized meetings, gave speeches, published a newspaper, plastered posters all over neighborhoods, and provoked confrontations with Marxists. The party membership grew.

But problems arose after Nazi storm troopers badly beat up an old pastor who heckled Goebbels during a Nazi rally. The police declared the party illegal in Berlin and eventually banned Nazi speech making throughout the entire German state of Prussia.

The ban was short-lived however. It was lifted in the spring of 1927. Hitler then came to Berlin and gave a speech before a crowd of about 5000 supporters. On May 20, national elections were held in Germany. The Nazis had a poor showing, although Goebbels won a seat in the Reichstag. For the average German, the Nazis at this time had little appeal. Things seemed to be just fine without them. The economy was strong, inflation was under control, and people were working again.

Adolf Hitler was simply biding his time, knowing it would not last. At Berchtesgaden, Hitler finished dictating the second volume of Mein Kampf to Rudolph Hess. In the summer of 1928, Hitler rented a small country house with a magnificent view of the Bavarian mountains. Years later this would be the site of his sprawling villa.

Now, at age 39, Hitler had a place he could finally call home. He settled into the little country house and invited his step sister, Angela, to leave Vienna and come to take over the daily chores. Angela arrived along with her two daughters, Friedl and Geli.

Geli was a lively twenty year old with dark blond hair and Viennese charm, qualities that were hugely appealing to a man nearly twice her age. Hitler quickly fell in love with her. He fawned over her like a teenager in love for

the first time. He went shopping with her and patiently stood by as she tried on clothes. He took her to theaters, cafes, concerts and even to party meetings. This relationship between Hitler and his niece was for the most part socially acceptable according to local customs since she was the daughter of his half sister.

It was a relationship that would ultimately end in tragedy a few years later with her suicide. But for now, in late 1929, she existed as the object of Hitler's affection.

In another part of the world, Wall Street in New York, events were happening that would bring an end to this quiet time for Adolf Hitler and would ultimately help put the Nazis in power in Germany.

On October 29, the Wall Street stock market crashed with disastrous worldwide effects. First in America, then the rest of the world, companies went bankrupt, banks failed and people instantly lost their life savings.

Unemployment soon soared and poverty and starvation became real possibilities for everyone.

The people panicked. Governments seemed powerless against the worldwide economic collapse. Fear ruled. Governments stood on the brink. The Great Depression had begun.

#### The Great Depression Begins

When the stock market collapsed on Wall Street on Tuesday, October 29, 1929, it sent financial markets worldwide into a tailspin with disastrous effects.

The German economy was especially vulnerable since it was built out of foreign capital, mostly loans from America and was very dependent on foreign trade. When those loans suddenly came due and when the world market for German exports dried up, the well oiled German industrial machine quickly ground to a halt.

As production levels fell, German workers were laid off. Along with this, banks failed throughout Germany. Savings accounts, the result of years of hard work, were instantly wiped out. Inflation soon followed making it hard for families to purchase expensive necessities with devalued money.

Overnight, the middle class standard of living so many German families enjoyed was ruined by events outside of Germany, beyond their control. The Great Depression began and they were cast into poverty and deep misery and began looking for a solution, any solution.

Adolf Hitler knew his opportunity had arrived.

In the good times before the Great Depression the Nazi party experienced slow growth, barely reaching 100,000 members in a country of over sixty million. But the Nazi party, despite its tiny size, was a tightly controlled, highly disciplined organization of fanatics poised to spring into action.

Since the failed Beer Hall Putsch in 1923, Hitler had changed tactics and was for the most part playing by the rules of democracy. Hitler had gambled in 1923, attempting to overthrow the young German democracy by force, and lost. Now he was determined to overthrow it legally by getting elected while at the same time building a Nazi shadow government that would one day replace the democracy. Hitler began his career in politics as a street brawling revolutionary appealing to disgruntled World War One veterans predisposed to violence. By 1930 he was quite different, or so it seemed. Hitler counted among his supporters a number of German industrialists, and upper middle class socialites, a far cry from the semi-literate toughs he started out with.

He intentionally broadened his appeal because it was necessary. Now he needed to broaden his appeal to the great mass of voting Germans. His chief assets were his speech making ability and a keen sense of what the people wanted to hear. By mid-1930, amid the economic pressures of the Great Depression, the German democratic government was beginning to unravel.

Gustav Stresemann, the outstanding German Foreign Minister, had died in October 1929, just before the Wall Street crash. He had spent years working to restore the German economy and stabilize the republic and died, having exhausted himself in the process.

The crisis of the Great Depression brought disunity to the political parties in the Reichstag. Instead of forging an alliance to enact desperately need legislation, they broke up into squabbling, uncompromising groups. In March of 1930, Heinrich Bruening, a member of the Catholic Center Party, became Chancellor.

Despite the overwhelming need for a financial program to help the German people, Chancellor Bruening encountered stubborn opposition to his plans. To break the bitter stalemate, he went to President Hindenburg and asked the old gentleman to invoke Article 48 of the German constitution which gave emergency powers to the president to rule by decree. This provoked a huge outcry from the opposition, demanding withdrawal of the decree.

As a measure of last resort, Bruening asked Hindenburg in July 1930 to dissolve the Reichstag according to parliamentary rules and call for new elections.

The elections were set for September 14. Hitler and the Nazis sprang into action. Their time for campaigning had arrived.

The German people were tired of the political haggling in Berlin.

They were tired of misery, tired of suffering, tired of weakness.

Germans Elect Nazis

Adolf Hitler and the Nazis waged a modern whirlwind campaign in 1930 unlike anything ever seen in Germany. Hitler traveled the country delivering dozens of major speeches, attending meetings, shaking hands, signing autographs, posing

for pictures, and even kissing babies.

Joseph Goebbels brilliantly organized thousands of meetings, torchlight parades, plastered posters everywhere and printed millions of copies of special editions of Nazi newspapers.

Germany was in the grip of the Great Depression with a population suffering from poverty, misery, and uncertainty, amid increasing political instability.

For Hitler, the master speech maker, the long awaited opportunity to let loose his talents on the German people had arrived. He would find in this downtrodden people, an audience very willing to listen. In his speeches, Hitler offered the Germans what they needed most, encouragement. He gave them heaps of vague promises while avoiding the details. He used simple catchphrases, repeated over and over.

His campaign appearances were carefully staged events. Audiences were always kept waiting, deliberately letting the tension increase, only to be broken by solemn processions of Brownshirts with golden banners, blaring military music, and finally the appearance of Hitler amid shouts of "Heil!" The effect in a closed in hall with theatrical style lighting and decorations of swastikas was overwhelming and very catching.

Hitler began each speech in low, hesitating tones, gradually raising the pitch and volume of his voice then exploding in a climax of frenzied indignation. He combined this with carefully rehearsed hand gestures for maximum effect. He skillfully played on the emotions of the audience bringing the level of excitement higher and higher until the people wound up a wide-eyed, screaming, frenzied mass that surrendered to his will and looked upon him with pseudo-religious adoration.

Hitler offered something to everyone; work to the unemployed, prosperity to failed business people, profits to industry, expansion to the Army, social harmony and an end of class distinctions to idealistic young students, and restoration of German glory to those in despair. He promised to bring order amid chaos, a feeling of unity to all and the chance to belong. He would make Germany strong again, end payment of war reparations to the Allies, tear up the treaty of Versailles, stamp out corruption, keep down Marxism, and deal harshly with the Jews.

He appealed to all classes of Germans. The name of the Nazi party itself was deliberately all inclusive - the National Socialist German Workers' Party. All of the Nazis, from Hitler, down to the leader of the smallest city block, worked tirelessly, relentlessly, to pound their message into the minds of the Germans.

On election day September 14, 1930, the Nazis received 6,371,000 votes, over eighteen percent of the total, and were thus entitled to 107 seats in the German Reichstag. It was a stunning victory for Hitler. Overnight, the Nazi party went from the smallest to the second largest party in Germany.

It propelled Hitler to solid national and international prestige and aroused the curiosity of the world press. He was besieged with interview requests. Foreign journalists wanted to know - what did he mean - tear up the Treaty of Versailles and end war reparations? - and that Germany wasn't responsible for the first World War?

Gone was the Charlie Chaplin image of Hitler as the laughable fanatic behind the Beer Hall Putsch. The beer hall revolutionary had been replaced by the skilled manipulator of the masses.

On October 13, 1930, dressed in their brown shirts, the elected Nazi deputies marched in unison into the Reichstag and took their seats. When the roll call was taken, each one shouted, "Present! Heil Hitler!"

They had no intention of cooperating with the democratic government, knowing it was to their advantage to let things get worse in Germany, thus increasing the appeal of Hitler to an ever more miserable people.

Nazi storm troopers dressed in civilian clothes celebrated their electoral victory by smashing in the windows of Jewish shops, restaurants and department stores, an indication of things to come.

Now, for the floundering German democracy, the clock was ticking and time was on Hitler's side.

#### Success and a Suicide

The years 1930 and 1931 had been good for Hitler politically. The Nazis were now the second largest party in Germany. Hitler had become a best-selling author, with *Mein Kampf* selling over 50,000 copies, bringing him a nice income. The Nazi party also had fancy new headquarters in Munich, the Brown House.

Money was flowing in from German industrialists who saw the Nazis as the wave of the future. They invested in Hitler in the hope of getting favors when he came to power. Their money was used to help pay the growing numbers of salaried Nazis and fuel Goebbels' truth machine.

The German General Staff was also investing support in Hitler, hoping he meant what he said about tearing up the Treaty of Versailles which limited their Army to 100,000 men and also prevented modernization. The Generals had been encouraged by Hitler's performance as a witness during the trial of three young regular Army officers charged with spreading Nazi doctrines in the German Army. Hitler used his appearance in the courtroom to send a message to the General Staff that there would be no attempt to replace the regular Army with an army of storm troopers and that once in power, the Nazis would raise the German Army to new heights of greatness. This was exactly what the generals wanted to hear.

It was however, the SA, his own storm troopers, that gave Hitler problems. Many of the violence prone, socialist leaning SA members wanted to become a new German revolutionary army. They also embarrassed Hitler by wreaking havoc in the streets despite his order to lay low. Hitler had to use his personal bodyguard,

the SS, under its chief, Heinrich Himmler, to put down a small SA revolt in Berlin led by Captain Walter Stennes.

Hitler installed former SA leader, Ernst Röhm, as the new leader to reorganize and settle down the SA, now numbering over 60,000 members. The SA, however, and its leadership would remain a problem for years for Hitler, culminating in a major crisis a few years down the road.

It was in his personal life, however, that Adolf Hitler was about to face a crisis that would shake him to the core.

Back in the summer of 1928, Hitler had rented a small country house at Berchtesgaden which had a magnificent view of the Bavarian mountains and years later would be the site of his sprawling villa.

For Hitler, then aged 39, it was the first place he could truly call home. He settled into the little country house and invited his step sister, Angela, to leave Vienna and come to take over the daily household chores. Angela arrived along with her two daughters, Friedl and Geli.

Geli was a lively twenty year old with dark blond hair and Viennese charm, qualities that were hugely appealing to a man nearly twice her age. Hitler fell deeply in love with her. He fawned over her like a teenager in love for the first time. He went shopping with her and patiently stood by as she tried on clothes. He took her to theaters, cafés, concerts and even to party meetings.

This relationship between Hitler and his niece was for the most part socially acceptable according to local customs since she was the daughter of his half sister.

Young Geli enjoyed the attention of this man who was becoming famous. Strangers would come over and ask Hitler for a souvenir or an autograph while they were sitting in a café. There were also the trappings of power, SS body guards, a chauffeur, and obedient aides.

But young Geli had a tendency to flirt. Although she liked the attention of this older man, she yearned for the company of young people. She had a number of romances, including one with Hitler's chauffeur, who got fired as a result.

Though Hitler cast a jealous and disapproving eye on Geli's romances, he was flirting himself with a fair-haired seventeen year old named Eva Braun, who worked in the photography shop run by his personal photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann.

Hitler's jealousy and possessiveness of his niece made her life increasingly claustrophobic, especially after she moved in with him to a fancy nine room apartment in Munich.

Everywhere she went, she had two Nazi chaperons and had to be back home precisely at the time her uncle ordered. She couldn't do anything

without his permission. And each time she tried to get free of her uncle's constraints, he tightened his grip.

Hitler's stormy relationship with Geli worsened. There were many loud arguments.

In September of 1931, Hitler ordered her to stay at his apartment and not go to Vienna while he was away. This made her furious. A huge argument followed. She desperately wanted to go. Hitler said no.

As Hitler headed outside to his car to leave for an SA meeting, Geli went to the window and yelled down to him asking one more time if she could go. Hitler yelled back a stern "No!"

He departed with an uneasy feeling about the whole situation.

The next morning, on the way to Hamburg, Hitler's car was flagged down by a taxi. Rudolph Hess was on the telephone line back at the hotel Hitler had just left and wanted to speak to him immediately.

When Hitler picked up the phone there, he was told his niece had shot herself. In a frenzy, Hitler rushed back to Munich. But by the time he got back to his apartment, Geli's body had been already removed. She had shot herself through the heart with a pistol.

The love of his life was gone, and under horrible circumstances. To make matters worse, there were rumors in the press she might have been murdered, perhaps even on Hitler's orders. However, It became obvious these these rumors were mere media lies.

Hitler became deeply depressed and spent days pacing back and forth without stopping to eat or sleep.

Hermann Göring would later say Adolf Hitler was never the same after the suicide of his beloved niece. Hitler later said Geli was the only woman he ever loved. He always kept portraits of her hung on the wall, decorated with flowers on the anniversaries of her birth and death. Whenever he spoke of her, it was often with teary-eyed reverence.

Curiously, shortly after her death, Hitler looked with disdain on a piece of ham being served during breakfast and refused to eat it, saying it was like eating a corpse.

From that moment on, he refused to eat meat.

#### Hitler Runs for President

Just three weeks after the suicide of his beloved niece, Adolf Hitler met the eighty four year old President of Germany, Paul von Hindenburg, for the first time.

Hitler pulled himself out of the severe depression he fell into after her death. Twice before he had sunk into the abyss of despair, only to emerge stronger - in



1918, lying in a hospital, blinded by poison gas, after hearing news of the Germany's defeat ending World War One - and in 1924, in prison after the failed Beer Hall Putsch.

In October 1931, the former Austrian Corporal was presented to the former Field Marshal. Hitler was a bit unnerved by the old gentleman and rambled on at length trying to impress him. Hindenburg was not impressed and later said Hitler might be suited for Postmaster, but never for a high position such as the Chancellorship of Germany.

October of 1931 marked the beginning of the political intrigue that would destroy the young republic and ultimately make Hitler Führer of Germany. Constant political squabbling among the numerous political parties in the Reichstag resulted in ineffective government.

Adding to the problem, there were now over a hundred elected Nazis in the Reichstag. Under the leadership of Hermann Göring, they regularly disrupted proceedings with vulgar, rowdy behavior to help undermine democracy in Germany.

The German people were desperate for relief from the tremendous personal suffering brought on by the Great Depression, now two years old. Millions were unemployed, thousands of small businesses had failed, homelessness and starvation were real possibilities for everyone.

Civilization itself was unraveling in Berlin where people were fighting in the streets, killing each other in the chaos.

But from their elected leaders, the people got nothing but indecision. In ever growing numbers they turned to the decisive man, Adolf Hitler, and his promises for a better future.

The republic now faced another problem. In 1932, there was supposed to be a presidential election, according to law. But Hindenburg, the glue holding the floundering democracy together, was getting too old and said he was not interested in running again.

Even if he could be convinced to run, he would be 92 by the time the seven-year term ended, with Hitler looming in the background the whole time. If he didn't live the entire term, considered likely since he was failing, then Hitler would have his chance even sooner.

Early in 1932, Adolf Hitler received a telegram from Chancellor Brüning inviting him to come to Berlin to discuss the possibility of extending Hindenburg's present term. Hitler was delighted at the invitation.

"Now I have them in my pocket! They have recognized me as a partner in their negotiations!" - Hitler told Rudolph Hess.

He went to the meeting and listened to the proposal, but gave no response. There was no reason to help the chancellor and thus help keep the republic alive.

In February 1932, President Hindenburg reluctantly agreed to run again and announced his candidacy for re-election. Hitler decided to oppose him and run for the presidency himself.

"Freedom and Bread," was the slogan used by Hitler with great effect during the Nazi campaign against tired old President Hindenburg.

Joseph Goebbels waged a furious propaganda campaign on behalf of Hitler, outdoing the previous election effort of 1930. Nazi posters were plastered everywhere. There was a whirlwind schedule of speeches for himself and Hitler. The Nazis held thousands of rallies each day all across Germany. They gave out millions of pamphlets and extra copies of Nazi newspapers. Goebbels also used new technology, making phonograph records and films of Hitler to distribute.

President Hindenburg essentially did nothing. He was content to ride on his reputation and counted on the votes of Germans who wanted to keep the radicals out of power. Goebbels had high hopes that Hitler might pull an upset and sweep into office. Hitler, however, had his doubts. He campaigned knowing he was unlikely to unseat the old gentleman. But the campaign was also an opportunity to win support for himself and his party and extend Nazi influence.

Many in Germany saw the Nazis as the wave of the future. After the stunning success of the 1930 election, thousands of new members had poured into the party. Now, in the spring of 1932, with six million unemployed, chaos in Berlin, starvation and ruin, the threat of Marxism, and a very uncertain future - they turned to Hitler by the millions.

In the presidential election held on March 13, 1932, Hitler got over eleven million votes (11,339,446) or 30% of the total. Hindenburg got 18,651,497 votes or 49%.

Hindenburg failed to get the absolute majority he needed, making a run-off election necessary. Goebbels and many of the Nazi leaders were quite disappointed.

But Hitler immediately urged them to start a vigorous campaign for the run-off to be held on April 10, less than a month away.

In the campaign that followed, Hitler criss-crossed Germany in an airplane, descending from the clouds into the arms of growing numbers of fanatics, at ever larger rallies. He gave them a positive message, promising something for everyone, then ascended back into the clouds. "In the Third Reich every German girl will find a husband!" - Hitler once promised.

But like any politician, Hitler was subject to scandal. A newspaper run by one of the opposition parties, the Social Democrats, somehow got hold of letters between SA Chief Ernst Röhm and a male doctor, concerning their mutual interest in men. Hitler knew Röhm was a homosexual and had ignored it for years because of Röhm's usefulness to him.

The issue as far as Hitler was concerned was whether Röhm had abused any underage males. Nazi lawyer Hans Frank investigated this and assured Hitler he had found no evidence. Hitler was a little more at ease. Thus, Ernst Röhm, the battle scarred, aggressive storm trooper leader would stay, at least for now, as leader of the SA, now numbering over 400,000.

The campaign for president continued with the Nazis mounting another furious campaign effort with Hitler making several campaign stops a day. President Hindenburg did less than before and didn't make a single speech, causing rumors about ill health.

On a dark, rainy Sunday, April 10, 1932, the people voted. They gave Hitler 13,418,547 or 36%, an increase of two million, and Hindenburg 19,359,983 or 53%, an increase of under a million.

The 85-year-old gentleman was elected by an absolute majority to another seven year term. But no one was at ease. Hitler and the Nazis had shown massive popularity.

Berlin was now a swirling mess of fear, intrigue, rumors, and disorder. Out of that mess arose a man named Kurt von Schleicher, a highly ambitious Army officer, driven by the idea that he, not Hitler, might possibly rule Germany.

The German republic was now as unsteady as the teetering old gentleman leading it and up against Schleicher and Hitler, was soon to be buried.

#### The Republic Collapses

Amid the swirling mess in Berlin of political intrigue, rumors, and disorder, the SA, the Nazi storm troopers, stood out as an ominous presence. In the spring of 1932, many in the German democratic government came to believe the Brownshirts were about to take over by force.

There were now over 400,000 storm troopers under the leadership of SA Chief Ernst Röhm. Many members of the SA considered themselves to be a true revolutionary army and were anxious to live up to that idea. Adolf Hitler had to reign them in from time to time so they wouldn't upset his own carefully laid plans to undermine the republic.

Hitler knew he could not succeed as Führer of Germany without the support of existing institutions such as the German Army and the powerful German industrialists, both of whom kept a wary eye on the revolutionary SA.

In April of 1932, Heinrich Brüning, Chancellor of Germany, invoked Article 48 of the constitution and issued a decree banning the SA and SS all across Germany. The Nazis were outraged and wanted Hitler to fight the ban. But Hitler, always a step ahead of them all, knew better. He agreed, knowing the republic was on its last legs and that opportunity would soon come along for him.

That opportunity came in the form of Kurt von Schleicher, a scheming, ambitious Army officer who had ideas of leading Germany himself. But he made the mistake

(that would prove fatal) of underestimating Hitler. Schleicher was acquainted with Hitler and had been the one who arraigned for Hitler to meet Hindenburg, a meeting that went poorly for Hitler.

On May 8, 1932, Schleicher held a secret meeting with Hitler and offered a proposal. The ban on the SA and SS would be lifted, the Reichstag dissolved and new elections called, and Chancellor Bruening would be dumped, if Hitler would support him in a conservative nationalist government. Hitler agreed.

Schleicher's skillful treachery behind the scenes in Berlin first resulted in the humiliation and ousting of Gen. Wilhelm Groener, a longtime trusted aid to President Hindenburg and friend of the republic. In the Reichstag, Groener, who supported the ban on the SA, took a severe public tongue lashing from Hermann Göring and was hooted and booed by Goebbels and the rest of the Nazis.

"We covered him with such catcalls that the whole house began to tremble and shake with laughter. In the end one could only have pity for him. That man is finished." - Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary in 1932.

Groener was pressured by Schleicher to resign. He appealed without success to Hindenburg and wound up resigning on May 13. Schleicher's next target was Chancellor Bruening.

Heinrich Bruening was one of the last men in Germany who stood up to Hitler with the best interest of the people at heart. He was responsible for getting Hindenburg re-elected as president to keep out Hitler and preserve the republic. He was also hard at work on the international scene to help the German economy by seeking an end to war reparations. But his economic policies at home brought dismal results. As Germany's economic situation got worse, with nearly six million unemployed, Bruening was labeled "The Hunger Chancellor."

Bruening had also continued the dangerous precedent of ruling by decree. He invoked Article 48 of the German constitution several times to break the political stalemate in Berlin.

To Schleicher and Hitler, he was simply in the way and had to go. Schleicher went to work on him by undermining the support of Hindenburg. Bruening was already in trouble with Hindenburg, who blamed him for the political turmoil that had made it necessary to run for re-election at age 85 against the 'Bohemian Corporal' Adolf Hitler.

Bruening also made an error in proposing that the huge estates of bankrupt aristocrats be divided up and given to peasants, sounding like a Marxist. Those same aristocrats, along with big industrialists, had scraped together the money to buy Hindenburg an estate of his own. When Hindenburg took his Easter vacation there in mid-May, he had to listen to their complaints about Bruening. All the while, Schleicher was at work against Bruening as well.

On May 29, 1932, Hindenburg called in Bruening and told him to resign. The next day, Heinrich Bruening handed in his resignation, effectively ending democracy

in Germany.

Schleicher was now in control. He chose as his puppet chancellor, an unknown socialite named Franz von Papen who had grave doubts about his own ability to function in such a high office. Hindenburg, however, took a liking to Papen and encouraged him to take the job.

The aristocratic Papen assembled a cabinet of men like himself. This ineffective cabinet of aristocrats and industrialists presided over a nation that would soon be on the verge of anarchy.

When Adolf Hitler was asked by President Hindenburg if he would support Papen as chancellor, he said yes. On June 4, the Reichstag was dissolved and new elections were called for the end of July. On June 15, the ban on the SA and SS was lifted. The secret promises made to the Nazis by Schleicher had been fulfilled.

Murder and violence soon erupted on a scale never before seen in Germany. Roaming groups of Nazi Brownshirts walked the streets singing Nazi songs and looking for fights.

"Blut muss fließen, Blut muss fließen! Blut muss fließen Knuppelhaugeldick! Haut'se doch zusammen, haut'se doch zusammen! Diese gotverdammte Juden Republik!" - the Nazi storm troopers sang.

(translation)

"Blood must flow, blood must flow! Blood must flow as cudgel thick as hail! Let's smash it up, let's smash it up! That goddamned Jewish republic!"  
The Nazis found many Communists in the streets wanting a fight and they began regularly shooting at each other. Hundreds of gun battles took place. On July 17, the Nazis under police escort brazenly marched into a Communist area near Hamburg in the state of Prussia. A big shoot-out occurred in which 19 people were killed and nearly 300 wounded. It came to be known as "Bloody Sunday." Papen invoked Article 48 and proclaimed martial law in Berlin and also took over the government of the German state of Prussia by naming himself Reich Commissioner. Germany had taken a big step closer to authoritarian rule. Hitler now decided that Papen was simply in the way and had to go.  
"I regard your cabinet only as a temporary solution and will continue my efforts to make my party the strongest in the country. The chancellorship will then devolve on me." - Hitler told Von Papen.

The July elections would provide that opportunity. The Nazis, sensing total victory, campaigned with fanatical energy. Hitler was now speaking to adoring German audiences of up to 100,000 at a time. The phenomenon of large scale 'Führer worship' had begun. On July 31, the people voted and gave the Nazis 13,745,000 votes, 37% of the total, granting them 230 seats in the Reichstag. The Nazi party was now the largest and most powerful in Germany.

On August 5, Hitler presented his list of demands to Schleicher - the chancellorship, passage of an enabling act giving him control to rule by decree,

three cabinet posts for Nazis, the creation of a propaganda ministry, control over the Ministry of the Interior, and control of Prussia. As for Schleicher, he would get the Ministry of Defense as a reward.

Schleicher listened, didn't say yes or no, but would let him know later. With gleeful anticipation, Hitler awaited Schleicher's response and even ordered that a memorial tablet be made to mark the place where the historic meeting with Schleicher had occurred.

Meanwhile, the SA began massing in Berlin anticipating a takeover of power. But old President Hindenburg soon put an end to Hitler's dreams. Hindenburg by now distrusted Hitler and would not have him as chancellor, especially after the behavior of the SA.

On August 13, Schleicher and Papen met with Hitler and gave him the bad news. The best they could offer was a compromise - vice chancellorship and the Prussian Ministry of the Interior.

Hitler became hysterical. In a display of wild rage that stunned Schleicher and Papen, he spewed out threats of violence and murder, saying he would let loose the SA for three days of mayhem all across Germany.

Later that same day, Hitler was called on the carpet by President Hindenburg. The former Austrian Corporal got a tongue lashing from the former Field Marshal after once again demanding the chancellorship and refusing to cooperate with Papen and Schleicher.

In the presence of the steely-eyed old Prussian, Hitler backed down. The gamble for total victory had failed. He put the SA on a two week furlough and went to Berchtesgaden to lick his wounds. They would all have to wait, he told them. Just a little longer.

On September 12, the Reichstag under the new chairmanship of Hermann Göring gave a vote of no confidence to Papen and his government. But just before that vote was taken, Papen had slapped an order on Göring's desk dissolving the Reichstag and calling yet again for new elections.

This was a problem. Everyone was getting tired of elections by now. Goebbels had a hard time getting the Nazi effort up to the same level of a few months earlier.

In the middle of the campaign, Hitler's girlfriend Eva Braun shot herself in the neck during a suicide attempt. Hitler was still haunted by the suicide of his beloved niece a few years earlier. Eva Braun was deeply in love with Hitler but didn't get the attention she craved. Hitler rushed to the hospital and resolved to look after her from that moment on.

This distraction served to slow down the already sluggish Nazi campaign. More problems came after Goebbels and a number of Nazis went along with the Communists in a wildcat strike of transport workers in Berlin, thus alienating a

lot of middle class voters.

Bad publicity from siding with the Reds plus the bad publicity Hitler got after his meeting with Hindenburg combined to lose them votes. Adding to all this were the wild antics of the SA. On November 6, the Nazis lost two million votes and thirty four seats in the Reichstag. It seemed the Nazis were losing momentum. Hitler became depressed.

But there was still no workable government in Berlin. Papen's position as chancellor was badly weakened. And Schleicher was now at work behind the scenes to further undermine him. On November 17, Papen went to Hindenburg and told him he was unable to form any kind of working coalition, then resigned.

Two days later, Hitler requested a meeting with Hindenburg. Once again Hitler demanded to be made chancellor. Once again he was turned down. This time however, Hindenburg took a friendlier tone, asking Hitler, soldier to soldier, to meet him half way and cooperate with the other parties to form a working majority, in other words, a coalition government. Hitler said no.

On November 21, Hitler saw Hindenburg again and tried a different approach. He read a prepared statement claiming that parliamentary government had failed and that only the Nazis could be counted on to stop the spread of Communism. He asked Hindenburg to make him the leader of a presidential cabinet. Hindenburg said no, and only repeated his own previous requests.

The Government of Germany had ground to a halt.

Meanwhile, a group of the country's most influential industrialists, bankers, and business leaders sent a petition to Hindenburg asking him to appoint Hitler as chancellor. They believed Hitler would be good for business.

Hindenburg was in a terrible bind. He called in Papen and Schleicher and asked them what to do. Papen came up with a wild idea. He would be chancellor again and rule only by decree, eliminate the Reichstag altogether, use the Army and police to suppress all political parties and forcibly amend the constitution. It would be a return to the days of Empire, with the conservative, aristocratic classes ruling.

Schleicher objected, much to Papen's surprise. Schleicher said that he, not Papen, should head the government and promised Hindenburg he could get a working majority in the Reichstag by causing a rift among the Nazis. Schleicher said he could get Gregor Strasser and as many as 60 Nazi deputies to break from Hitler.

Hindenburg was dumbfounded and finally turned to Papen and asked him to go ahead and form his government. After Hindenburg left the room, Papen and Schleicher got into a huge shouting match.

At a cabinet meeting the next day, Schleicher told Papen that any attempt by him to form a new government would bring the country to chaos. He insisted that the Army would not go along and then produced a Major Ott who backed up his claims.

Schleicher had been at work behind the scenes to sway the Army to his point of view. Papen was in big trouble.

He went running to Hindenburg, who, with tears rolling down his cheeks, told Papen there was no alternative at this point except to name Schleicher as the new chancellor.

"My dear Papen, you will not think much of me if I change my mind. But I am too old and have been through too much to accept the responsibility for a civil war. Our only hope is to let Schleicher try his luck." - President Hindenburg told Papen.

Kurt von Schleicher became Chancellor of Germany on December 2, 1932. There now began an incredible amount of behind-the-scenes political intrigue and backstabbing that would put Hitler in power in only 57 days.

To begin with, Schleicher made good on his promise to try to split the Nazis. He held a secret meeting with Gregor Strasser, a Nazi who had been with Hitler from the start, and offered him the vice-chancellorship and control of Prussia.

To Strasser, the offer was quite appealing. The Nazi party's recent decline, losing millions of votes and now experiencing terrible financial problems, seemed to indicate that Hitler's rigid tactics might not be the best thing for long-term success. Strasser had also acquired a distaste for the brutal men who now made up Hitler's inner circle.

Through Papen, Hitler found out what was going on. On December 5, Strasser and his infuriated Führer met, along with other Nazi leaders, in a Berlin hotel. Strasser insisted that Hitler and the Nazis cooperate or at least tolerate the Schleicher government. Göring and Goebbels opposed him. Hitler sided with them against Strasser.

Two days later, Strasser and Hitler met again and wound up getting into a huge shouting match. Strasser accused Hitler of leading the party to ruin. Hitler accused Strasser of stabbing him in the back.

The following day, Strasser wrote a letter to Hitler, resigning all of his duties as a member of the Nazi party. Hitler and the Nazi leaders were stunned. One of the founding members and most influential leaders had abandoned them.

Hitler became depressed, even threatening to shoot himself with a pistol.

Strasser headed for a vacation in Italy.

"Whatever happens, mark what I say. From now on Germany is in the hands of an Austrian, who is a congenital liar (Hitler), a former officer who is a pervert (Röhm), and a clubfoot (Goebbels).



And I tell you the last is the worst of them all. This is Satan in human form." - Gregor Strasser, 1932.

As for Hermann Göring...

"Göring is a brutal egotist who cares nothing for Germany as long as he becomes something."

Regarding Strasser, Goebbels wrote in his diary: "Strasser is a dead man."

Hitler assigned his trusted aid, Rudolph Hess, to take over Strasser's duties. Over the Christmas season, Hitler became quite depressed over the failing fortunes of his party.

And it seemed to many political observers that the danger of a Hitler dictatorship had passed.

But the new year brought new intrigue. The big bankers and industrialists who had petitioned Hindenburg on behalf of Hitler still liked the idea of Hitler in power. And Papen was now out to bring down Schleicher. On January 4, 1933, Hitler went to a meeting with Papen at the house of banker Kurt von Schroeder. Papen surprised Hitler by offering to oust Schleicher and install a Papen-Hitler government with himself and Hitler, both equal partners.

Hitler liked the idea of ousting Schleicher but insisted that he would have to be the real head of government. He would, however, be willing to work with Papen and his ministers. Papen gave in and agreed.

When Schleicher found out, he went running to Hindenburg, charging Papen with treachery. But Hindenburg had a soft spot for Papen and would not go along. Schleicher's position was already badly weakened. He was unable to get the government moving because nobody trusted him enough to join him in a working coalition. The German government remained at a standstill with the people and Hindenburg getting more impatient by the day. Something had to be done. Hindenburg authorized Papen to continue negotiating with Hitler, but to keep it secret from Schleicher.

In the small German state of Lippe, local elections were scheduled for January 15. Hitler and the Nazis took this opportunity to make a big impression. They saturated the place with propaganda and campaigned heavily, hoping to win big and prove they had regained momentum.

They received a small increase in votes over their previous election total. But they used their own widely circulated Nazi newspapers to exaggerate the significance and to once again lay claim that Hitler and the Nazis were the wave of the future. It worked well and even impressed President Hindenburg. On Sunday, January 22, 1933, a secret meeting was held at the home of Joachim von Ribbentrop. It was attended by Papen, Hindenburg's son Oskar, along with Hitler and Göring. Hitler grabbed Oskar and brought him into a private room and worked on him for an hour to convince him that the Nazis had to be taken into the government on his terms. Oskar emerged from the meeting convinced it was

inevitable. The Nazis were to be taken in. Papen then pledged his loyalty to Hitler.

Next, Schleicher went to Hindenburg with a proposal - declare a state of emergency to control the Nazis, dissolve the Reichstag, and suspend elections. Hindenburg said no.

But word of this proposal leaked out, bringing Schleicher the wrath of the liberal and centrist parties. Schleicher then backed down, bringing him the wrath of anti-Nazi conservatives. His position was hopeless.

On January 28, he went to Hindenburg and asked him once again to dissolve the Reichstag. Hindenburg said no. Schleicher resigned.

Papen and the president's son, Oskar, moved in on the old gentleman to convince him to appoint a Hitler-Papen government. Hindenburg was now a tired old man weary of all the intrigue. He seemed ready to give in. Hitler sensed his weakness and issued an additional demand that four important cabinet posts be given to Nazis.

This did not set well with the old man and he started having doubts about Hitler as chancellor. He was reassured when Hitler promised that Papen would get one of those four posts.

On the 29th, a false rumor circulated that Schleicher was about to arrest Hindenburg and stage a military takeover of the government. When Hindenburg heard of this, it ended his hesitation. He decided to appoint Adolf Hitler as the next Chancellor of Germany.

However, a last minute objection by conservative leader, Alfred Hugenberg, nearly ruined everything. On January 30, while President Hindenburg waited in the other room to give Hitler the chancellorship, Hugenberg held up everything by arguing with the Nazis over Hitler's demand for new elections. He was persuaded by Hitler to back down, or at least let Hindenburg decide. With that settled they all headed into the president's office.

Around noon on January 30, 1933, a new chapter in German history began as a teary-eyed Adolf Hitler emerged from the presidential palace as Chancellor of the German Nation. Surrounded by admirers, he got into his car and was driven down the street lined with cheering citizens.

#### Hitler Named Chancellor

When Adolf Hitler walked into the presidential office of Paul von Hindenburg to become chancellor, the old gentleman was so annoyed he would hardly look at him.

He had been kept waiting while Hitler and conservative leader Alfred Hugenberg argued over Hitler's demand for new elections. It was the final argument in what had been a huge tangled web of political infighting and backstabbing that finally resulted in Adolf Hitler becoming Chancellor of Germany.

Germany was a nation that in its history had little experience or interest in democracy. In January 1933, Adolf Hitler took the reins of a 14-year-old German democratic republic which in the minds of many had long outlived its usefulness. By this time, the economic pressures of the Great Depression combined with the indecisive, self-serving nature of its elected politicians had brought government in Germany to a complete standstill.

The people were without jobs, without food, quite afraid and desperate for relief.

Now, the man who had spent his entire political career denouncing and attempting to destroy the republic, was its leader. Around noon on January 30, Hitler was sworn in.

"I will employ my strength for the welfare of the German people, protect the Constitution and laws of the German people, conscientiously discharge the duties imposed on me, and conduct my affairs of office impartially and with justice to everyone." - the oath taken by Adolf Hitler.

But by this time, that oath had been repeatedly broken by previous chancellors out of desperation and also out of personal ambition. Chancellors Schleicher and Papen had seriously suggested to Hindenburg the idea of replacing the republic itself with military dictatorship to solve the crisis of political stagnation. He had turned them both down.

When a teary-eyed Adolf Hitler emerged from the presidential palace as the new chancellor, he was cheered by Nazis and their supporters who believed in him, not the constitution or the republic.

"We've done it!" Hitler shouted jubilantly to them.

He was to preside over a cabinet that contained, including himself, only 3 Nazis out of 11 posts. Hermann Göring was Minister without Portfolio and Minister of the Interior of Prussia. Nazi, Wilhelm Frick, was Minister of the Interior. The small number of Nazis in the cabinet was planned to help keep Hitler in check. Franz von Papen was vice-chancellor. Hindenburg had promised him that Hitler would only be received in the office of the president if accompanied by Papen. This was another way to keep Hitler in check. In fact, Papen had every intention of using the conservative majority in the cabinet along with his own political skills to run the government himself.

"Within two months we will have pushed Hitler so far in the corner that he'll squeak," Papen boasted to a political colleague.

Papen and many non-Nazis thought having Hitler as chancellor was to their advantage. Conservative members of the former aristocratic ruling class desired an end to the republic and a return to an authoritarian government that would restore Germany to glory and bring back their old privileges. They wanted to go back to the days of the Kaiser. For them, putting Hitler in power was just the first step toward achieving that goal. They knew it was likely he would wreck the republic. Then once the republic was abolished, they could put in someone of

their own choosing, perhaps even a descendant of the Kaiser.

Big bankers and industrialists, including Krupp and I. G. Farben, had lobbied Hindenburg and schemed behind the scenes on behalf of Hitler because they were convinced he would be good for business. He promised to be for free enterprise and keep down Communism and the trade union movements. "

The military also placed its bet on Hitler, believing his repeated promises to tear up the Treaty of Versailles and expand the Army and bring back its former glory.

They all had one thing in common - they underestimated Hitler.

On the evening of January 30, just about every member of the SA and SS turned out in uniform to celebrate the new Führer-Chancellor, Adolf Hitler. Carrying torches and singing the Hörst Wessel song, they were cheered by thousands as they marched through the Brandenburg gate and along the Wilhelmstrasse to the presidential palace. Cops on the beat who used to give them trouble now wore swastika armbands and smiled at them.

Everywhere was heard the rhythmic pounding beats of jackboots, drums and blaring military parade music.

They saluted Hindenburg as he looked out from a window of the presidential palace. Then they waited at the chancellery for Hitler in a scene carefully staged by Joseph Goebbels. A sea of hand held burning torches cast flickering light on red and gold Nazi banners amid the slow beating of drums in anticipation of seeing the Führer. Men, women and children along with the SA and SS waited. He kept them waiting, letting the tension rise. All over Germany, people listened to this on the radio, waiting, and hearing the throngs calling for their Führer.

When he appeared in the beam of a spotlight, Hitler was greeted with an outpouring of worshipful adulation unlike anything ever seen before in Germany. Bismark, Frederick the Great, the Kaiser, had not seen this.

"Heil! Sieg Heil!," (Hail! Hail Victory!) went the chorus of those who believed the hour of deliverance had come in the form of this man now gazing down at them.

"It is almost like a dream - a fairytale. The new Reich has been born. Fourteen years of work have been crowned with victory. The German revolution has begun!" - Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary, January 30, 1933.

#### The Reichstag Burns

Adolf Hitler, He intended only to use those rules to legally establish himself as dictator as quickly as possible then begin the Nazi revolution.

Even before he was sworn in, he was at work to accomplish that goal by demanding new elections. While Hindenburg waited impatiently in another room, Hitler

argued with conservative leader Hugenberg, who vehemently opposed the idea.

Hitler's plan was to establish a majority of elected Nazis in the Reichstag. Hindenburg dissolved the Reichstag and calling for the new elections to be held on March 5, 1933.

That evening, Hitler attended a dinner with the German General Staff and told them Germany would re-arm as a first step toward regaining its former position in the world. He also gave them a strong hint of things to come by telling them there would be conquest of the lands to the east and Germanization of conquered territories.

Hitler also reassured the generals there would be no attempt to replace the regular army with an army of SA storm troopers. For years this had been a big concern of the generals who wanted to preserve their own positions of power and keep the traditional military intact.

Hitler's storm troopers were about to reach new heights of power of their own and begin a reign of glory that would last as long as the Reich.

President Hindenburg was signing just about anything put in front of him. He signed an emergency decree that put the German state of Prussia into the hands of Hitler confidant, Vice Chancellor Papen.

Göring as Minister of the Interior for Prussia took control of the police.

Prussia was Germany's biggest and most important state and included the capital of Berlin.

Göring immediately replaced hundreds of police officials loyal to the republic with Nazi officials loyal to Hitler. He also ordered the police not to interfere with the SA and SS under any circumstances.

Göring then ordered the police to show no mercy to those deemed hostile to the State, meaning those hostile to Hitler, especially Communists.

"Police officers who use weapons in carrying out their duties will be covered by me. Whoever misguidedly fails in this duty can expect disciplinary action." - Order of Hermann Göring to Prussian Police, February 1933.

On February 22, Göring set up an auxiliary police force of 50,000 men, composed mostly of members of the SA and SS. The vulgar, brawling, murderous Nazi storm troopers now had the power of police.

Two days later, they raided Communist headquarters in Berlin. Göring uncovered the membership list of the Communist party and intended to arrest every one of the four thousand members.

Göring and Goebbels, with Hitler's approval, then hatched a plan to cause panic by burning the Reichstag building and blaming the Communists. The Reichstag was

the building in Berlin where the elected members of the republic met to conduct the daily business of government.

Also in Berlin a deranged Communist conducting a one-man uprising. An arsonist named Marinus van der Lubbe, 24, from Holland, had been wandering around Berlin for a week attempting to burn government buildings to protest capitalism and start a revolt. On February 27, he decided to burn the Reichstag building.

Carrying incendiary devices, he spent all day lurking around the building, before breaking in around 9 p.m. He took off his shirt, lit it on fire, then went to work using it as his torch.

The deep red glow of the burning Reichstag caught the eye of President Hindenburg and Vice-Chancellor Papen who were dining at a club facing the building. Papen put the elderly Hindenburg in his own car and took him to the scene.

Hitler was at Goebbels' apartment having dinner. They rushed to the scene where they met Göring who was already screaming false charges and making threats against the Communists.

"You are now witnessing the beginning of a great epoch in German history...This fire is the beginning," Hitler told a news reporter at the scene.

After viewing the damage, an emergency meeting of government leaders was held. When told of the arrest of the Communist arsonist, Van der Lubbe, Hitler became deliberately enraged.

"The German people have been soft too long. Every Communist official must be shot. All Communist deputies must be hanged this very night. All friends of the Communists must be locked up. And that goes for the Social Democrats and the Reichsbanner as well!"

Hitler left the fire scene and went straight to the offices of his newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, to oversee its coverage of the fire. He stayed up all night with Goebbels putting together a paper full of tales of a Communist plot to violently seize power in Berlin.

At a cabinet meeting held later in the morning, February 28, Chancellor Hitler demanded an emergency decree to overcome the crisis. He met little resistance from his largely non-Nazi cabinet. That evening, Hitler and Papen went to Hindenburg and the befuddled old man signed the decree "for the Protection of the people and the State."

The Emergency Decree stated: "Restrictions on personal liberty, on the right of free expression of opinion, including freedom of the press; on the rights of assembly and association; and violations of the privacy of postal, telegraphic and telephonic communications and warrants for house searches, orders for confiscations as well as restrictions on property, are also permissible beyond the legal limits otherwise prescribed."

Immediately, there followed the first big Nazi roundup as truckloads of SA and SS roared through the streets bursting in on known Communist hangouts and barging into private homes. Thousands of Communists as well as Social Democrats and liberals were taken away to SA barracks.

"I don't have to worry about justice; my mission is only to destroy and exterminate, nothing more!" - Hermann Göring, March 3, 1933.

Fifty one anti-Nazis were murdered. The Nazis suppressed all political activity, meetings and publications of non-Nazi parties.

"Every bullet which leaves the barrel of a police pistol now is my bullet. If one calls this murder, then I have murdered. I ordered this. I back it up. I assume the responsibility, and I am not afraid to do so." - Hermann Göring.

Nazi newspapers continued to print false evidence of Communist conspiracies, claiming that only Hitler and the Nazis could prevent a Communist takeover. Joseph Goebbels now had control of the State-run radio and broadcast Hitler's speeches all across the nation.

The Nazis now turned their attention to election day, March 5.

All of the resources of the government necessary for a big win were placed at the disposal of Joseph Goebbels. The big industrialists who had helped Hitler into power gladly coughed up three million marks. Representatives from Krupp munitions and I. G. Farben were among those reaching into their pockets at Göring's insistence.

"The sacrifice we ask is easier to bear if you realize that the elections will certainly be the last for the next ten years, probably for the next hundred years," Göring told them.

With no money problems and the power of the State behind them, the Nazis campaigned furiously to get Hitler the majority he wanted.

On March 5, the last free elections were held. But the people denied Hitler his majority, giving the Nazis only 44 per cent of the total vote, 17, 277,180.

Despite massive propaganda and the brutal crackdown, the other parties held their own. The Center Party got over four million and the Social Democrats over seven million. The Communists lost votes but still got over four million.

As for Van der Lubbe, the Communist arsonist, he was tried and convicted, then beheaded.

Hitler Becomes the great leader

After the elections of March 5, 1933, the Nazis controlled the state governments throughout Germany. Armed SA and SS troops barged into local government offices using the state of emergency decree as a pretext to throw out communist

office holders and replace them with Nazi Reich commissioners.

Political enemies were arrested by the thousands and put in hastily constructed holding pens. Old army barracks and abandoned factories were used as prisons.

Once inside, prisoners were subjected to military style drills and harsh discipline. This was the very beginning of the glorious Nazi concentration camp system.

At this time, these early concentration camps were loosely organized under the control of the SA and the rival SS. Many were little more than barbed wire stockades known as 'wild' concentration camps, set up by local Gauleiters and SA leaders.

On March 15, 1933, a cabinet meeting was held during which Hitler and Göring discussed how to get an Enabling Act passed by the Reichstag. This law would hand over the constitutional functions of the Reichstag to Hitler, including the power to make laws, control the budget and approve treaties with foreign governments.

The emergency decree signed by Hindenburg on February 28, after the Reichstag fire, made it easy for them to interfere with communist/Jewish elected representatives of the people by simply arresting them.

Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels put together a brilliant public relations display at the official opening of the newly elected Reichstag.

Finishing his speech, Hitler walked over to Hindenburg and respectfully bowed before him while taking hold of the old man's hand. The scene was recorded on film and by press photographers from around the world.

Later that same day, Hindenburg signed two decrees put before him. The first offered full pardons to all Nazis currently in prison. The prison doors sprang open and out came an assortment of Aryan brothers.

The second decree signed by the befuddled old man allowed for the arrest of anyone suspected of maliciously criticizing the government and the Nazi party. A third decree signed only by Hitler and Papen allowed for the establishment of special courts to try political offenders. These courts were conducted in the military style of a court-martial.

On March 23, the newly elected Reichstag met in the Kroll Opera House in Berlin to consider passing Hitler's Enabling Act. It was officially called the "Law for Removing the Distress of the People and the Reich." If passed, it would establish the legal reign of Adolf Hitler.

Brown-shirted Nazi storm troopers swarmed over the fancy old building in a show of white force. They stood outside, in the hallways and even lined the aisles inside, glaring ominously at anyone who might oppose Hitler's will.



Before the vote, Hitler made a speech in which he pledged to use restraint. "The government will make use of these powers only insofar as they are essential for carrying out vitally necessary measures...The number of cases in which an internal necessity exists for having recourse to such a law is in itself a limited one," Hitler told the Reichstag.

A two-thirds majority was needed, since the law would actually alter the constitution. Hitler needed 31 non-Nazi votes to pass it. He got those votes from the Catholic Center Party.

Meanwhile, Nazi storm troopers chanted outside: "Full powers - or else!"

The vote was taken - 441 for, and only 84, the Social Democrats, against.

The Nazis leapt to their feet clapping, stamping and shouting, then broke into the Nazi anthem, the Hörst Wessel song.

The German Republic had ended, legally.

Interestingly, the Nazi party was now flooded with applications for membership. These latecomers were cynically labeled by old time Nazis as 'March Violets.' In May, the Nazi Party froze membership. Many of those kept out applied to the SA and the SS which were still accepting. However, in early 1934, Heinrich Himmler would throw out 50,000 of those 'March Violets' from the SS.

The Nazi Gleichschaltung now began, a massive coordination of all aspects of life under the swastika and the absolute leadership of Adolf Hitler.

From the moment of birth one existed to serve the State and obey the dictates of the Führer.

Many disagreed and left the country.

Albert Einstein, who was visiting California when Hitler came to power and never returned to Germany.

In Germany, there were now constant Nazi rallies, parades, marches and meetings amid the glorious propaganda of Goebbels and the omnipresent swastika.

For those who remained there was an odd mixture of fear and optimism in the air. Now, for the first time as supreme leader, Adolf Hitler turned his attention to the driving force which had propelled him into politics in the first place, the vile influence of the Jews. Hitler prepared to execute his plans to racially purify Germany of the subhuman Jewish blight. Thus assuring a sustained racial heritage of proud White Aryans.