THE RISE OF THE NAZI PARTY AS A RHETORICAL
MOVEMENT: 1919-1933

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas
December, 1975

This interpretative study attempts to ascertain why the Nazi movement gained the support of German voters by examining its persuasive strategies.

The growth of the movement was divided into three periods. In each period, the verbal and non-verbal rhetorical strategies were explored. It was found that the movement's success stemmed largely from the display of party unity, the display of power through the Storm Troopers' use of violent street rhetoric, and the spread of Nazi ideals through speeches at meetings, on tours, and especially at the Nuremberg Party Rallies. Their communication capitalized skillfully on the conditions in Germany between 1919 and 1933.

Hopefully, the findings of this study add to our knowledge of the role of rhetoric in creating mass movements.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Propaganda was the genius of National Socialism. Not only did it owe to propaganda its most important successes, propaganda was also its one and only original contribution to the conditions for its rise and was always more than a mere instrument of power: propaganda was part of its essence (3, p. 83).

When Adolf Hitler joined the German Workers' Party in September of 1919, he found himself attached to a struggling, obscure group whose goals were uncertain and whose membership was quite small. Yet, by the spring of 1921, Hitler managed to recruit thousands of new members, attract more thousands to the weekly meetings, and even raise enough money for the publication of the party paper, the Volkische Beobachter. Despite periods of uneven growth, the National Socialists' German Workers' Party finally attained its goal, when, on November 12, 1933, it received 95.2 per cent of all votes cast in the Reichstag elections, and prepared to assume power over Germany. How were these results achieved? Hitler had appeal to the masses, to be sure, but the decisive factor was his skillful use of propaganda. Through the artful use of
agitation, Hitler made the masses aware of his party, and even convinced them that the NSDAP alone could save Germany.

From the very beginning, Hitler scorned traditional methods of political agitation to which his competitors were addicted (1, p. 61). Glaring posters announced meetings; trucks distributed propaganda materials; distinctive uniforms and badges made the citizens take notice; parades and street demonstrations were organized. Possessing an uncanny consciousness of publicity value, he made the opposition notice and turn round and fight in the press and at meetings. Meetings were purposefully held in socialist-controlled districts, and the meetings of foes were disrupted, by a monopolizing of the discussion or even the use of force, if necessary. And this was only the beginning.

Yet what of the party itself? What was so special about this group of political agitators? What was the appeal to the masses? An intellectual ideology was almost non-existent, yet it was precisely this that the public seemed to appreciate. The NSDAP aimed at the emotions of the common man, striking heavily, but effectively. The "blunt, unadorned words of the speakers seemed to favor their interests, and pointed the way fearless, uncompromising action" (1, p. 61).
The greatest concern of Adolf Hitler was not ideology--his ideology was little more than a series of slogans--but the party's success, its organization, and its varied activities (2, p. 53). His conception of ideology was nothing more than cliches; his real interest was in questions about effectiveness, timeliness, psychological tactics, organization, and propaganda. He himself admitted, in Mein Kampf, that the NSDAP was a "promotion program"; he stressed party promotion over most other party concerns. This neglect of party concerns is most evident in his party speeches, which contain no arguments in favor of the party, and no explanations of the party program. Martin Broszat states:

The Nazi Party knew how to be all things to all men prior to attaining office. Once in power, it also knew how to sidetrack its creditors or how to make good on its promises to whole classes of supporters with nothing more than a verbal token formula, a ceremonial gesture, or a semantic promotion. Germany was a showman's paradise, a country of well-crafted illusions for the gullible, whether they were farmers, military men, nationalists, or Volksch romantics (2, p. 5).

The rise to power of the NSDAP was the result of a complex set of social, historical, and psychological factors, with perhaps the major factor being the impact of the defeat Germany suffered in WWI. The whole world of bourgeois morality, along with its established institutions, broke down,
resulting in the exposure of greed, class exploitation, and prejudice. With extraordinary skill, Adolf Hitler utilized these weaknesses in the social system which had resulted in an internal crisis for most citizens. Confused, angry, and lost, the German people reached hungrily for the world that Hitler and the NSDAP promised them—but only after a long, carefully calculated program of political and social agitation.

Statement of Purpose

This paper is an attempt to study the NSDAP as a rhetorical movement utilizing various strategies in order to obtain the power it sought. Basically an interpretative study, it focuses on answering the question of how such a movement, so apparently lacking in sound, intelligent ideology, so irrational and violent, could gain the support of the German people.

Other theses have approached areas such as Hitler's rhetorical theories, or the use of the Storm Troopers (SA) as a propaganda weapon, but this paper is an attempt to study the whole movement and its rhetorical strategies including verbal and non-verbal techniques. Speeches, symbols, uniforms, banners, rallies, even street violence were all employed by the Nazi Party as part of their persuasive rhetoric, and this paper tries to explore not only how these strategies were
employed, but why the German people accepted and supported the party which utilized these rhetorical devices.

Procedure

Theodore Abel divides the Nazi movement into three "periods" which this author will utilize in breaking down and analyzing the phases of propaganda and agitation employed by the NSDAP: the First Period to be from 1919-1923, the Second Period to be from 1924-1929, and the Third Period to be from 1930-1933, when the NSDAP was preparing to assume power, having emerged victorious from the Reichstag elections. This victory signified the end of the NSDAP as an agitative movement, though its program of terrorism certainly did not end.

During each period of the rise of the NSDAP, an attempt will be made to study the party's rhetoric against the historical and social backdrop of the post-war years. The inner structure of the party will also be studied, as organizational problems were influential on the course which the Nazis followed. The rhetoric of the Nazi Party was not an isolated phenomenon; many factors came into play.

Several terms are utilized in discussing the rhetoric of this movement, the word "rhetoric" itself being taken to mean anything of a persuasive nature, intended to sway the opinions of the people. Agitation refers to rhetoric of a more violent
nature which was intended to be vivid and create an image of strength and power for the movement. Propaganda refers, like "rhetoric," to any devices or materials employed for the purpose of spreading the ideas of the movement, in the hope of attracting followers.

Related Materials

As there were many factors involved in the rise of the NSDAP, a wide variety of source material was utilized. The wealth of published material was most helpful in this respect. Histories of Germany provided insight into the socio-political world contemporary with the rise of Naziism; sources helpful in this area included Marshall Dill's *Germany: A Modern History*, John E. Rodes' *Germany: A History*, and Koppel S. Pinson's *Modern Germany: Its History and Civilization*. Much has also been written concerning the history of the Nazi Party movement itself; the following were especially helpful: Dietrich Orlow's *The History of the Nazi Party*, Theodore Abel's *The Nazi Movement*, Richard Hanser's *Putsch: How Hitler Made Revolution*. These also provided some insight into the rhetoric of the movement. Z. A. B. Zeman's *Nazi Propaganda* was an in-depth study of rhetorical strategies, Hamilton F. Burden's *The Nuremberg Party Rallies: 1923-1939* studied one important propaganda weapon employed by the Nazis. Insight into the
ideology of the movement was provided by sources such as Martin Broszat's *German National Socialism: 1919-1945*, and *Mein Kampf* reveals Hitler's contributions to rhetoric as well as ideology. Hitler's contributions have been studied by Jesse G. Delia's article, "Rhetoric in the Nazi Mind: Hitler's Theory of Persuasion," and by Paul Wegner's unpublished thesis, "Hitler's Theory of Rhetoric." Other sources in this area include Joseph Nyomarkay's *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party*, Reginald H. Phelps' article, "Hitler and the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei," and Allen Bullock's *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*.

The wealth of material written on the subject of Naziism provided a variety of approaches, attitudes, and opinions on the subject. Anyone attempting a study of the Nazi movement has little problem gathering material.

It is hoped that this paper will provide some insight into the techniques employed by persuasive movements, and in another way, provide an answer to why the Nazi Party employed these techniques so successfully.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

EARLY BEGINNINGS OF MOVEMENT (1919-1923)

The years 1919-1923 saw the NSDAP rise from relatively obscure beginnings into an agitative movement which, while still not a major party, and still not a real threat to the existing government, would soon begin to grow and start the fight for its members in the streets. The first period of growth is important for two main developments which characterized that growth until 1924: Hitler's ascendancy to leadership both within the local party and within nationalistic circles in Bavaria, and for the abortive coup d'etat, the Putsch of November 9, 1923.

Before examining the actual growth of the NSDAP, it would be wise to look briefly at the social-political milieu in which the movement would rise. An understanding of why the NSDAP was able to finally attain such great power, and why the people of Germany accepted Hitler's leadership is possible only if one considers Germany's situation at the time. To many, the fact that a party whose very platform was based on
racialism, mediocrity, emotionalism, and brutality could find such wide support in a contemporary nation is unfathomable.

The Historical and Political Mileiu

All too often, non-Germans seek the answer in one of two areas: they attribute German's acceptance of totalitarianism to some flaw within the Germans themselves, some inherent cruel, militaristic attitude of which Hitler was the symbol; or, these analysts see Hitler and his party as the incarnation of an evil force which fully gained the trust of a naive people (9, p. 525). To seriously accept either of these interpretations is to totally ignore the entire social, political, socio-economic, and psychological situation that made National Socialism so attractive to the German people. Hitler's party was the fulfillment of the aspirations of millions of Germans; the changeover to the dictatorship was pseudo-legal, not revolutionary--the people wanted Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party.

The use of National Socialism must be reviewed against the background of general social upheaval that characterized all of Europe in the decade after WWI. In almost every European country, social tension, class conflict, and economic chaos led many desperate individuals to join with groups
which advocated extremist measures in order to solve govern-
ment problems. If force was necessary, it would be used.
Thus fascist parties became important even in democratic
France, Holland, and Belgium; dictatorships were established
in Austria, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and ten eastern European
countries, with the exception of Czechoslovakia. Therefore
German's resorting to a dictatorship was part of an entire
European phenomenon.

In Germany, the war brought the end of a stable, authori-
tarian hierarchical society which had been epitomized by the
royal and imperial dynasties. Although the democratic
Weimar Republic may have been a "better" form of government,
for most (and later for many) Germans, it was not an accept-
able substitute for Wilhelminian authoritarianism. The new
Republic had become increasingly associated with defeat, in-
flation, and political dissension in the eyes of the Germans
who had originally supported it when it brought peace in
1918 (7, p. 1).

Even immediately after the peace conference in Paris,
the provisional government had to cope with revolutionary out-
breaks as well as with the problem of forming a new
constitution. The new democracy was burdened with the hated
Versailles Peace Treaty, and so defeat and democracy became closely associated in the minds of most Germans. The terms of the peace treaty, which was signed on June 28, 1919, devastated the German people politically and psychologically. Germany lost land, including territories and colonies; her armed forces were radically reduced, her fleet handed over to the League of Nations, and the Rhineland permanently demilitarised and occupied by allies for years; part of her merchant fleet was given up; and, most importantly reparations of unfixed amount were to be paid to the allies (6, p. 75). These reparations muddled German foreign relations for years, and embittered the German people, who responded with indignation, disillusionment, and genuine outrage.

The new German Social Democracy was forced, therefore, to deal with the repercussions of this treaty on social, political, and economic levels. The majority of the Social Democrats were nationalists, and were sincere in their attempts to recover the order of the old Germany. But these attempts were challenged by the extreme Left-Independent Socialists and the Spartacus group (later the Communists), who aimed to make Germany, backed by Russia, "a spearhead of world revolution" (6, p. 81). In order to keep these
revolutionaries under control (there were several bloody clashes) the Social Democrat leaders had to work closely with the military authorities and use the volunteer groups, consisting of ex-soldiers, to subdue mobs. Determined to prevent a revolution like Russia's, the provisional government was ultimately successful. But success meant the retention of conservative ideas of the old Germany; the strong influence of the old guard—the imperial civil service, the generals, the industrialists, and great landlords—was still very strong in post-war Germany. Thus Germany was changed politically, but there was no social revolution. The monarchy was changed to a republic, but the German people still sought strength in its government—strength and power that the democracy would be hard pressed to provide.

The new national assembly convened at Weimar, and attempted to create a really democratic constitution for Germany. After seven months of work, a constitution was presented, on August 11, 1919, with provisions for a federation and a Reich government and parliaments in each state (6, p.82). Borrowing from other democratic governments, the Weimar constitution provided for cabinet government, directed legislation, and even a president who would occupy a position
equal to that of the Reichstag, or parliament. The people were declared sovereign, with universal suffrage at the age of twenty.

However, even with the majority being sovereign, there were already minorities to the right and left who aspired to dictatorship. The coming years were to see nationalistic forces attempting to overcome the republic, making for a confused political scene in Germany. Revolutionary outbreaks continued, and some encounters between extremists and troops were quite violent. During 1919 most threats to the new government came from the left, the Communists; in 1920 the threat began from the right. A nationalist, a Dr. Kapp, aided by a force calling itself the Freikorps, seized Berlin and declared Kapp as Imperial Chancellor. The president, Ebert, and his chancellor, Baver, had managed to escape from Berlin, and called the workers on a national strike; all business came to a standstill. Kapp, lacking support from high officials or upper middle-class leaders, fled to Sweden. His troops abandoned the capital and the government returned. The Kapp Putsch was unsuccessful, but the repercussions were severe—the general strike got out of hand, to the point of actually stimulating the Communists to attempt to set up a German Communist Republic. Communist risings took place in many cities,
and though the government eventually regained control, conditions in Germany were still confused and unsettled.

Another symptom of the confused political scene in Germany was the number of political murders which took place. The most notorious murders were those of the former Minister of Finance, Erzberger (1921), and of Walter Rathenau, Minister of Foreign Affairs and a great industrialist who was murdered in 1922 by nationalist fanatics as a Jewish protagonist of peace and democracy. Peace and democracy were two ideals attacked later by Hitler and the nationalists as being associated with defeat. The peace treaty and all its connotations led the German people to hate even the word "peace" in certain contexts; thus it was quite easy for Adolf Hitler to later influence these feelings of hatred towards the Versailles treaty. In the years after the war, this humiliating defeat became the focal point of Nazi propaganda (10, p. 13).

Adolf Hitler had personally experienced the feelings of the German people; he had fought in the war, only to witness the decline of Germany's political influence in Europe. He was embittered, but he was certainly not alone. The Nationalist Socialist movement was one of many small nationalist political and cultural groups that sprang up all over post-war
Germany. The dissenters were politically articulate, yet were a part of the "people" which the young democracy, by its very nature, depended upon for its authority. Even these dissatisfied individuals were caught up in a world of political and social dis-entanglement—they were a vital part of a democracy of which they desired no part. In the National Socialist movement, many of these individuals were able to find an artificial society, even to the point of ceasing to function politically and emotionally in the real world; they existed within the framework of the republic only to destroy it.

Early party members undoubtedly contributed a great deal towards the organizational development of the party. The most devoted followers were the militants, who joined the National Socialists seeking this "artificial society." The totalitarian society demanded a great deal of its devoted followers; they had to submit to all norms of the society and most did, unflinchingly. The primary reasons for joining the NSDAP were socio-psychological—the certainty Hitler and his mission was sorely needed by those who felt rootless, frustrated, and alienated from society in Weimar Germany. Thus the politically alien were now a vital part of a cause which
they felt was sorely needed, of which they themselves needed in order to find fulfillment as individuals.

As most citizens were undergoing a crisis, both internally and externally, they had a need for a hero, strong leadership. Fear of an unstable reality led many to accept the relatively stable myth of Nazi ideology.

The Growth and Ideology of Nationalistic Groups

Nationalistic groups were not confined to growth in the troubled period immediately following World War I; there were many unions, societies and federations which had been in existence for some time prior to this period whose ideals of nationalism had been quite similar to those groups formed after the war. The defeat suffered in the war intensified these so-called Volkisch groups, and made their cause more secure. (Volkisch is an untranslatable German term which refers to the "people" and is used to describe the nationalistic, racially obsessed groups which Germans began to look to after WWI for national confidence. Volkisch groups had their roots in German history and myth.) It is in these groups that one may find the roots of Nazi ideology, as illogical as that ideology sometimes was.
The early Nazis came from splinter groups such as the Volkisch German Social Party, which followed in the footsteps of the anti-Semites' Party, formed during the Empire (2, p.36). Anti-Semitic groups existed as far back as the 1880's - shortly before the turn of the century a small group of young Germans was formed, and used as its model the anti-Semitic Reform Party of the 1880's. Guided by the writings of Logarde, Adolf Stocker, Karl Duhring, Otto Geogan, etc., these men eventually joined with Theodore Fritsch's Hammer-Gesellschaft (Hammer Association). During 1918-1919 the organization rapidly grew to emerge as a local chapter of the German Volkisch Protection and Defense League. (Hitler was to speak at a later meeting) There can be no doubt that this atmosphere of Volkisch anti-Semitism influenced the man Hitler, and served as the ideological starting point of Nazism.

Even the concept of racial superiority had its roots in these Volkisch movements. While Hitler was a young man in post-war Vienna, he no doubt was influenced by the writings of one Jorg Lanz von Liebenfels, who developed a so-called "theo-zoology" (2, p. 37). In Liebenfels' ramblings, he reconstructed biblical history into a racial mythology, casting
the blond God-man (the Aryan) against the racially corrupt animal--man. Thus one may conclude that the basis for Nazi ideology was not always rational; so much mythology fore-shadowed the future lack of intellectual ideology of the National Socialist movement. Yet, oddly enough, this is part of what made the movement so attractive. The German people needed a myth, heroes to worship--they needed a dream that could become a reality.

Armed with such an "ideology," the Nazi movement made skillful use of propaganda and effective organization to spread these ideas. Because of its very nature, it succeeded. Z. A. B. Zeman states: "The emotion generated by Nazi propaganda and the show the movement presented to the Germans stood out against the drabness of everyday life in the Weimar Republic. It was a splash of bright color in the subdued background of post-war Germany (10, p. 13)."

Thus Germany in 1919 was ripe for the growth of the new party, named the Duitsche Arbeiterpartei (German Workers' Party) or DAP. The principles in the origin of the movement were Anton Drexler and Karl Harrer: Drexler had organized the Independent Workers' Committee, a predecessor of the Nazi party, in Munich in 1918. Drexler had been speaking to workers, urging them to strengthen themselves against profiteers
and capitalists. Early in October he held a meeting and called for a new league of citizens, urging the workers to unite, but his audience was largely hostile (8, p. 977). A week later, Harrer approached him and inquired as to whether he would be interested in joining a "Political Workers' Circle" (Politischer Arbeiterzirkel). This circle was to become the first block of the National Socialist movement. Harrer, on a different line from Drexler's national-social-labor platform, had connections with the "intellectual" racists and was a member of the Thule Gesellschaft, an ally and cover for the activist, semi-secret, violently Volkisch Germanenorden. Harrer was assigned to spread the ideology of the Thule among workers, and Drexler was one worker he reached.

The circle, with Harrer as its leader, met from November, 1918 until the following fall. The meetings were primarily group discussions dominated by themes such as "Germany's greatest foe: the Jew," "Who is responsible for the world war?" and "Could we have won the war?" The average size of the group was three to five members. Discussion was marked by bitterness against the Jews, the need of "enlightening" the workers, and hostility to England (8, p. 977).
The meetings followed a set pattern; Harrer opened with a lengthy lecture, afterwards opening the floor to group discussion. It soon became clear to Drexler that this activity served little purpose, so in December he proposed founding a party that could enable the group to publicize their political views and win new members. The majority agreed, and on January 5, 1919, in a small tavern in Munich, the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei was launched.

For some time the DAP went virtually unnoticed; existing largely on paper, while the circle continued to hold meetings and continued to be the focal point of all activities. It was not until the spring and summer of 1919 that the party was finally able to eclipse the Zirkel, its parent organization. Events were favorable for the growth of the party; hostility towards the left and the Jews prevailed among the Munich bourgeoise. Ernest Pohner, Munich police president who later became a close ally to Hitler, noted in a weekly survey early in September increasing economic anti-Semitism and in November reported that the chief demand of anti-Semitic propaganda was for "breaking Jewish loan capital and the disproportionate influence of the Jews in the leadership of the German people" (8, 978). Later reports indicated that
workers were becoming interested in anti-Semitism as well, and the DAP entered police records when Pohner mentioned the organization as being a group of workers interested in anti-Semitism.

The DAP still had not mustered up the courage to hold public rallies, but Drexler and his allies continued to invite ever-increasing numbers of potential members to meetings. By August the party was already moderately well known among rightist groups in Munich; it was finally able to attract speakers such as Goltfried Feder, the opponent of "interest slavery" and Dietrich Eckart, at the same time publisher of the violently anti-Semitic journal Auf Gut Deutsch. Dietrich Eckart, and perhaps Hitler attended that August meeting when Eckart spoke to an audience of thirty-eight.

Adolf Hitler's First Years With the DAP

Adolf Hitler joined the DAP, after attending several meetings, in September of 1919. In Mein Kampf, he presents a dismal picture of early meetings of the DAP; he was disappointed at the small crowds and shabby surroundings (the organization often met in taverns). He referred to the programs as Vereinsmeierei, or "small town business," yet he
detected "good faith" among the members, and a longing like his own for a new movement.

From the time Adolf Hitler joined with the DAP, the movement was never the same again; he contributed invaluable energy and talent to the organization, and built an obscure group of quasi-politicians into a party that was able to attain power over all of Germany. Hitler was to belittle the early organization of the DAP, yet through Drexler's efforts the party had in their first eight months of 1919, been transformed from a neglected stepchild of Harrer's zirkel into a political group that was ready for Hitler to take over. Drexler's DAP was almost as ambitious to expand politically as was Adolf Hitler (7, p. 13).

Despite his remarks in Mein Kampf, picturing himself as an anonymous, impoverished veteran, "one of the nameless ones . . . that chance allows to live or die, without even their closest environment deigning to notice." (5, p. 243), Adolf Hitler was already rather well known in Munich army circles. He had previously ventured into politics as well, participating in courses offered by Captain Karl Mayr of the Munich Reichswehr; these courses were intended to aid in the indoctrination of returning prisoners of war. Hitler's rhetorical talents impressed Captain Mayr, thus allowed him to
speak to the soldiers, who were equally impressed, judging by fan mail received. The charisma had already begun to work. He often delivered lectures as part of "citizenship continuation courses" conducted for soldiers in the Reichswehr. Strangely enough, none of this was recorded in Mein Kampf.

Thus, when Hitler joined the DAP, it was not as an anonymous soldier, but as a man whose two careers, military and political, had worked side by side and had already gained for him some small measure of fame. After joining the party, however, he quickly rose within the organizational hierarchy; due to his extraordinary talent as a public speaker, he attained office as chief of propaganda (Werbeobmann) and as a member of the executive committee. His first formal speech made for the party was in the Eberlbrau on November 12 on the theme "Brest-Litovsk and Versailles," a favorite topic. On November 26, before an audience of 300 he spoke on the dichotomy between the promises of the republic and the existing reality of Germany. Two weeks later, in another beer hall, the Deutsches Reich, an equally large audience heard his declaim on "Germany facing her greatest degradation." After Christmas, and on into January, Hitler shared the platform with Feder and Eckart, before an audience already increasing
in size. Eckart spoke to a smaller crowd in February, but Hitler had already begun pushing for mass meetings.

The new propaganda chief was continually finding fault with the DAP's organizational and administrative structure. Appalled at inefficient business procedures, Hitler felt that without standard office equipment such as a safe, accounting books, well-kept membership roles, and even a rubber stamp and mineograph machine the DAP could not administer its affairs properly. He informed the executive committee of this, and Harrer, who had a good grasp of the DAP's financial situation, thought Hitler was insane (7, p. 15).

Mad or not, Hitler went on criticizing, seeking to mold the party into what he felt it could and should be. Like many of the rightist groups existing in Germany at the time, the DAP was ambiguous in its stand on democratic processes within the party structure. While in vehement opposition to the democracy of the Weimar Republic, the decision making process within the DAP was elaborately democratic. Majority votes decided basic policies; discussions were free and totally unrestrained; the whole membership had the right to initiate discussion; and the executive committee was required to place, as business, on the agenda, any item that even one tenth of the membership wished to bring before committee.
This elaborate machinery was a sore point with the propaganda chief, so in December he proposed a thorough reform of the party's organization. Seeking to tighten the organizational structure, Hitler demanded immediate dissolution of the bonds between the DAP and the Zirkel, in order to presumably increase the authority of the executive committee. There can be no doubt that Hitler had ambitions of leadership, but ambitions aside, the ideas he expressed revealed quite a bit of political shrewedness. He knew that if the DAP were to go anywhere as a political party, it would have to change radically in all areas—otherwise it would remain just another rightist group, content merely with conveying its knowledge to the "evils" of the republic to the people.

Hitler's proposals encountered quite a bit of opposition from the old guard of the party; the leadership had no aspirations, being content with the status of equality with the party members. When Hitler joined the DAP, leaders regarded propaganda activity as an end in itself. Only Hitler, with an eye to the future, looked to the public rally as the vehicle by which the party could achieve power. However, as propaganda chief, he was finally able to convince the old guard that the immediate task was the expansion of propaganda activities. On this issue, Drexler and Hitler sided against
Harrer, who finally resigned, realizing the futility of holding on in the view of increasing competition for leadership. Hitler had earlier drafted regulations giving the committee authority to ban the "side government" of the Zirkel, meaning Harrer, who finally left in January of 1920 (8, p. 981).

Adolf Hitler had scored a victory of sorts, although he remained under the leadership of Drexler, the new chairman. Although Drexler agreed with Hitler's ideas on propaganda, he had repeatedly opposed Hitler's proposals for centralizing the administrative machinery. The executive committee still consisted of Drexler and his friends, who still met regularly to discuss party affairs openly. However, Hitler's proposals did result in some changes; clerical matters were bureaucratized, and at the same time of Harrer's resignation, the DAP had obtained a full time staff official--its first--and a permanent central office (7, p. 17).

Organization and Dissent

In spite of the fact that the DAP was slowly evolving into a more efficient organization, the old leadership continued to oppose Hitler's efforts at reform within the organizational structure. By late spring Hitler was convinced that party
leadership would have to change before the DAP would truly become an important political force. Since it was not likely that he could win the approval of the present membership, he knew that he would have to use his talents as a propagandist to win new members and thereby dilute the old members with an influx of new Hitler supporters. Thus the DAP would have a significant number of new members whose first loyalty would be to Hitler personally; they would join the party primarily because of Hitler's association with it. If Hitler chose to do so, he could use the following to overthrow the old leadership.

Ironically, Hitler's efforts were enthusiastically supported by the old guard; Hitler and Drexler had laid the foundation for this membership drive when they prepared a party program. The two men had worked on a platform since May, writing several drafts before the final draft was ready on December 14, 1920. The document was nationalistic, with the already familiar idealism still present, but with several new emphasis. The new party program stressed the unity of the Reich, the exclusion of foreigners and Jews from all government involvement, the union of all producers against loan capital and interest slavery, and urged a closer union between intellectual and physical workers. This document, later
famous as the "Twenty-five Points," mixed nationalism, violent anti-Semitism, and socialism in forceful terminology; with this new set of goals, the DAP hoped to be all things for all people. On the home front, the program stressed placing the good of the individual over the good of the community, going so far as to threaten death to those who worked to the detriment of the public welfare. The state was to provide for its people; all citizens should be assured an adequate living, industrial trusts were to be nationalized so that government could share in the profits of big business, old age pensions were to be improved, agrarian reform was to be instituted. The state would be purified by the denial of citizenship rights to the Jews, and by the expulsion of all non-German immigrants.

Public education was to include the teaching of "state ideals" and improved physical fitness programs. Nationalism was to be furthered by purging all foreign (non-German, Jewish) influences from art, literature, and the press, and by allowing freedom of religion only when it did not "endanger the state or give offense to the moral and ethical feelings of the Germanic race (9, p. 525)."

With this new party program, the DAP felt confident enough to hold its first large meeting on February 5th or 6th of 1920. Up to this time, Hitler had experienced considerable
difficulty in gathering an audience; although the numbers in attendance were growing, it took much effort on Hitler's part to round up listeners. For days he would walk the streets of Munich, distributing typewritten leaflets. Then, slowly growing contributions made advertising in the press possible, and things improved somewhat. From this point on, the DAP's approach to propaganda was to change radically.

About one hundred persons attended the first February meeting, and Drexler read the party's very first propaganda leaflet—"Warum musste die DAP kommen? Was will Sie?" (Why must the DAP come? What does it want?)—and "anti-Jesuitism" was added as a slogan (8, p. 982). The next meeting was on February 24, and was the largest ever. Close to 2,000 attended, crowding the large Hofbrauhaus.

Hitler, in his own writings, speaks of the dangers of this meeting, though large anti-Semitic gatherings were by no means a rarity in Munich at that time. He feared that the hall would not be filled, and thus widely advertised with placards and handbills. Although he was not even listed as a speaker, Hitler also made much of his important appearance. Yet, this was an important speech, for he was to present the twenty-five points of party doctrine, launching the basis for the National Socialist German Workers Party.
Four prominent nationalistic leaders were secured as speakers, the first speaker being one Johannes Dingfelder, a familiar figure in German Volkisch circles even before the war. Dingfelder's speech, which was quite eloquent at times, cited a lapse from natural law and religion as the major cause of the war. Quoting Shakespeare and Schiller while pointing out the beauty of order, and citing recent history in order to demonstrate the horrors of disorder, Dingfelder stressed themes that the German people wanted to hear. He insisted that he was a communist, "but in the Christian sense"; he called for unselfish leaders who were spiritually pure, without influence from foreign races. He even looked ahead to the coming of a new savior for the German people, one who could reawaken the German's to their sense of duty. That new leader was waiting to speak next.

Adolf Hitler, in a speech that lasted close to two hours, interpreted the twenty-five theses of the party doctrines to an enthusiastic audience. In Mein Kampf he describes the event, somewhat dramatically, yet with amazing foresight:

> When the hall began to empty, and I saw the masses streaming like a flood through the exit, I knew that the tenets of a never-to-be-forgotten movement were going out among the German people. A spark had to be ignited, and from its flame in time must come the sword that shall regain life and freedom for the German nation. And amid the vision of
coming resurrection, I foresaw the inexorable vengence to be visited upon the traitors of November, 1918. The Movement was started on its course (5, p. 406).

The next day the Beobachter ran a column on the meeting, but devoted most of its report to Dingfelder's speech. It did, however, mention that Hitler's "striking" points did evoke "spirited" applause (8, p. 984). The speech did indeed provoke a stormy discussion, as there was a large group of opponents to the DAP present. After Hitler, two leaders of the Independent Socialists, Sessleman and Braig, spoke, as did Ernest Ehrensperger of the DAP and an opponent, who appealed for a leftist dictatorship and created such an uproar that Hitler's words were lost in the shouting.

However tumultuous its beginning, the success of the party was virtually assured from this moment on. Attendance at meetings grew rapidly, so that soon even the largest hall in Munich was inadequate for the crowds. Sooner or later anyone dissatisfied with current order would come under the irresistible influence of National Socialism and these dissatisfied numbers would later make the NSDAP the leading counter-revolutionary organization in Munich. Under Hitler's leadership, the propaganda program took much of the responsibility for the growth of the party.
From the start, Hitler's speaking appearances revolved around the standard rightist themes. Taking full advantage of the Bavarian fear of Bolshevik revolution, the DAP repeatedly made appeals to the lower and urban-class workers, rather than seeking middle-class support, as did other parties. The reason for this was not so much a heartfelt concern for society's problems, but rather a political maneuver designed to convince the government that the DAP was "genuinely" interested in preventing any further revolutionary activities among the urban workers. The DAP had the advantage of having men in authority on their side; the individuals who controlled major institutions of governmental power in Munich in 1919 and 1920 had little sympathy with the Weimar Republic. The commandant of the Reichswehr, Franz von Epp, his chief of staff, Ernest Rolm, and the Munich chief of police, Ernest Pohner were all enthusiastic about and eagerly protected any attempts by effective ultranationalistic movements to spread their ideas (7, p. 18).

Thus Hitler's style of propaganda soon attracted these men to the party, which had officially begun calling itself the NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or National Socialist German Worker's Party) in August of 1920; the NSDAP began to obtain funds from the Reichswehr. In
addition to the Reichswehr, Hitler depended upon contributions from public collections, Dietrich Eckart, and wealthy sympathizers; in December, 1920, these funds made it possible for the NSDAP to purchase the *Volkischer Beobachter*, until this time an independent Volkisch paper. Under the editorship of Alfred Rosenberg, the paper became a major party organ for the propagation of National Socialist ideas.

In spite of its growing membership, the NSDAP would never have grown to prominence within Bavaria without the efforts of Adolf Hitler; his tactical strategies paid off in time. As supporters grew in numbers, he was able to charge admission to his rallies, and as his popularity grew, individuals contributed large sums to the party. Since other parties planned few activities during these summer months, the NSDAP became particularly active during this season. Thus, by the fall of 1920, the party had gained a well-earned reputation for activism, enthusiasm, and energy in Volkisch circles, and the other parties appeared rather dull by comparison (7, p. 20).

Although the NSDAP, because of Hitler's efforts, had risen above its obscure political level of a year before, it was still not known outside the confines of Munich. Furthermore, Hitler had not yet challenged the old guard and their
organizational structure. While other groups, often with programs very similar to that of the NSDAP, had already established themselves nationally, the NSDAP was still attempting to gain favorable public attention in Munich. Faced with these conditions, the NSDAP eagerly sought the good will of the more established groups, such as the German Socialists Party; the struggling new party stressed cooperation of all groups that were fighting for common causes.

Hitler was the perfect choice for spokesman for the party; his nomadic nature and his lack of a stable job allowed him to speak at rightist conferences outside of Munich. He made so many appearances that soon his face and voice became familiar to crowds at meetings. Hitler, was in Berlin at the time of the Kapp Putsch; he attended the congress of Nationalists-Socialists groups from Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria held in Salzburg in August, 1920. Later he was to go on a speaking tour of Austria.

Adolf Hitler's Rise as a Leader

Thus Hitler slowly undermined the position of the old leadership, increasingly gaining control of the truly powerful positions in the movement. His speaking abilities could not be denied, and with the purchase of the Volksicher
Beobachter, he was able to further his propaganda campaign. In retrospect, this move was an important milestone in the organizational history of the party; since the control of the paper's editorial content was in the hands of the propaganda chief, Hitler was able to achieve a measure of power in a vital area.

Since the paper was an important link with the people in Munich as well as those in the provinces, and as Hitler had full reign with the spread of party ideology, it was a simple matter for him to address those sympathetic with the movement and thus attract new members. Although the tone of the paper's propaganda was aggressive, aimed at emotions rather than the intellect, it made an impression on the workers at which it was aimed. Hitler had the advantage in another very important way: through the pages of the VB he was able to speak to a number of people sympathetic to the movement, but who otherwise would be put off by the drama of the rallies. This group was actually quite large—much larger than the party membership, and these people would further enable Hitler to attract a following that would weaken the strength of the old guard.

The year 1920 was an important one in Hitler's rise to leadership. First of all, as a result of his increased
propaganda activities, he began to attract a close group around him as secondary leaders. Dietrich Eckart became an intimate friend, and Eckart was responsible for Alfred Rosenberg's joining the party (7, p. 21). Herman Esser, a shadowy character, became a member of this group (3, p. 74), and Emil Garsser became a middle-man between the NSDAP and wealthy potential supporters. The fact that none of these men shared any of the philosophies of the old guard was important for Hitler. They, like Hitler, were free to make more regular public appearances, and thus became associated with the movement, in the eyes of the public, as representatives and spokesmen. Thus Hitler and his group of followers were able to build an image of leadership. By the end of 1920 Hitler had managed to gain vast numbers of supporters—people attracted to him personally as much as to the party—and was able to substantially weaken the power of the old guard (7, p. 23).

By the autumn of 1920, the party was organized to the extent that it was able to gain legal status as Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Arbeiterverein, eingetragener Verein (NSDAVE.V.). To be a Verein, or registered club, the NSDAV had to adopt a set of by-laws, and it gave control to a board of directors (Vorstand) consisting of two chairmen, two
secretaries, and two treasurers. Hitler, as propaganda chief, was not a member of the board, so on the surface, he had little to do with policy-making. However, his range of activity was greatly expanded, as the majority of the activity of these units consisted of agitation and propaganda sessions, in order to educate followers concerning party ideology. Hitler undoubtedly organized the sessions, selecting topics and supplying materials.

On January 22, 1921, the party assembled in Munich for its first national congress. Now with some 3,000 members, it was a respected rightist party. Adolf Hitler's contribution to this success cannot be denied; his tireless efforts and talents as a speaker, and magnetic personality had all contributed to the influx of new membership. At this time, the strained relations between Hitler and the old guard began to surface.

Long resentful of Hitler's growing popularity, the old guard began to wage open warfare against Hitler, who they feared was planning on becoming party dictator (7, p. 23). The issue of inter-party union finally triggered open warfare; The NSDAP was planning an agreement of mutual cooperation with the German Socialist Party. The two parties were very alike, and had been negotiating for some time. But the old
leadership was more interested in depriving Hitler of much of his power and influence than it was in creating a larger and stronger party. Hitler knew what the old guard planned and fought the merger from the start.

While Hitler was in Berlin on a trip to spread good-will and collect donations, the old leadership managed to complete the agreement in Augsburg. When Hitler learned of the developments, he hurried back to Munich and resigned from the party on July 12, 1921. Shocked by this unexpected move, the executive committee hastily issued an anonymous pamphlet, accusing Hitler of being paid off by the Jews, and being a supporter of the last emperor of Austria, among other things. These ridiculous charges were compiled in a panic, and it soon became obvious that the move was unnecessary—Hitler had no intention of splitting with the party. He instead wrote a letter demanding changes in party structure and organization. He also demanded he be made party chairman, complete with dictatorial powers. He insisted that a congress be held on July 20 to effect his election. A split within the leadership forced the executive committee to give in; Drexler personally decided to give all power to Hitler—with friends in both factions, he considered the problem, and decided that Hitler was too valuable to lose. The party meant too much to
Drexler to risk it's growth. Against both Hitler and Drexler, the rest of the committee had no choice but to give in. They asked only that the congress be put off until July 29.

When Adolf Hitler became leader he put in a new set of by-laws providing for a three man policy-making committee, headed by himself. He personally appointed all committee chairmen, forming committees on propaganda, finance, youth organizations, sports, investigation and mediation.

After this "July crisis" the members of Hitler's set of close followers were given important positions as committee chairmen. Esser was head of the propaganda sub-committee, Eckart became editor of the VB. In spite of these moves, Hitler wanted more than a purge of party membership; he would not be satisfied until the party gave up all attempts at intra-party unity and became devoted followers of Hitler as dictator (6, p. 28). Knowing Drexler's extreme dislike of intra-party strife, Hitler appointed him chairman of the committee on mediation. Thus Drexler could calm the anti-Hitler faction, and at the same time, be paid back by Hitler for the political help he had given.

From July-September, Hitler was busy attempting to win the support of the majority of party members in Munich. He wanted devoted followers, and he knew his charisma would help
him. There is little record of what he and his group did, but meetings were held, and apparently his persuasion was effective; by August the Munich membership accepted Hitler as party dictator.

The Hitler cult grew because his aggressive approach attracted many young men who had, for one reason or another, little prospect of settling down under existing conditions in the Weimar Republic. Those bound by a fierce loyalty to Hitler, would make up the dictator's most steady and reliable following. Early in 1921 these loyal followers, recruited from universities, labor force, and veteran groups, were organized into regular fighting units, and became police-soldiers (1, p. 63). These soldiers were to later evolve into the famous SA (Sturmabteilung or Storm Troopers). The Brown-shirts, as they were called, served as guards at party meetings, disrupted other parties, and began to take part in the street fights which were becoming increasingly common.

The "Soldier-Politicians"

As the Communists and Social Democrats were in control of the streets, the NSDAP had to gain power as a para-military organization before it could compete. Thus, the growth of the soldier-politician. In addition to the purpose served in the
power struggle, the street fight served another vital purpose: it secured publicity for the party. Even if the press was unfavorable, it meant a notice in the news.

So it was that on November 4, 1921, at a meeting at the Hafbrauhaus, the SA was officially launched. At this meeting, a clash occurred between the Nazis and a group of "Marxists"—the first Saalschlacht, a fight in a public beer hall, that the Nazis had fought (10, p. 14). In the future, there would be many more. Until the Nazis could show themselves as a strong military force, they would not have any real power.

The SA was divided into groups of one hundred men, called the Hundertschaften; by September, 1922, there were hundreds of these units in existence in Munich. Hitler knew then that domination of the streets was vital to winning political power.

In August, 1922, several SA demonstrations took place; the SA demonstrated with other rightist groups in the streets. In October, they ventured alone onto the streets of Calburg, during the celebrations of Deutsche Tag (Germany Day) (10, p.14). Hitler arrived on a special train, together with some eight hundred SA troopers on October 14, and marched in the streets. Several clashes occurred, but when they were over, the NSDAP's troops had succeeded in defeating its opponents in the streets.
(This was quite a day for Hitler; ten years later, special decorations were handed out to surviving participants of the Calburg march.) By 1922-1923, the foundation of Hitler's para-military organization was laid.

Hermann Asering, formerly east commander of the famous Richthofen flying squadron, eventually took over as the commander of all SA units. By March, 1923, Hitler had his own set of eight bodyguards; these men were under the command of Julius Schrech, and this group was later to evolve into the SS, the group that later, under Heinrich Himmler, would be the elite corps of the party.

The fighting in the streets was also a vital part of Hitler's campaign to win control over local groups in Bavaria. However, he set up a system under the "Office of Delegate" (Delegierte) by which locals had to report all activities to Him. The delegates grew to be quite powerful in their districts, often dismissing local leaders (7, p. 37). Thus the scope of Hitler's power continued to grow.

From this point most of the party activities up to 1923 concerned themselves with attempts to restructure party organization, and with strengthening the SA. Hitler was no doubt planning action—he wanted power; control of the NSDAP was not and end in itself. His motives were still unclear, but were
hinted at in the January, 1923 party congress. This was an important milestone because it marked officially the start of Hitler's total control over the entire structure of the NSDAP. He promised that his personalized control over the party would facilitate effective attempts to overthrow the Weimar Republic.

The 1923 Party Congress

This congress had the further distinction of being the first party rally—the largest propaganda "device" of this period of the movement. Since party records were not as well kept at this time, it is supposed that the party congress met to strengthen party organization and win popular support as well. Yet it deserves closer inspection because of its innovations in techniques of propaganda (4, p. 11)—innovations which would become trademarks of the Nazi Party.

The swastika, so important in the settings of the later rallies, made one of its first appearances at this one. The symbol, found in several ancient and modern cultures, had stood for many things, fertility among them. In the years 1918-1919, German troops discovered the symbol in Finland, and the Erhard brigade painted it on their helmets when they marched in the Kapp Putsch (4, p. 13). Hitler chose the
swastika as the symbol for the party, to be placed on the official flag, whose colors he also chose. Rejecting the colors of the Weimar Republic, he chose the old imperial colors—black, white, and red—and said the red stood for the social idea of the movement, the white, for the Nationalist idea, and the swastika was a symbol for the struggle of the aryans for victory (4, p. 13).

Since the NSDAP was still a party local to Bavaria, and needed further support to gain further power, the first party day was no doubt held for its valuable publicity purposes. On January 27, 1923, Hitler published a proclamation in the _VE_, once again setting forth his views on the outrage of Germany's defeat in the war, the rise of Marxism, and the weakness of the Republic. He presented the NSDAP as a party which could cope with these problems. These themes, especially the Versailles stab-in-the-back, were to be repeated endlessly in years to come. He chastised the people of Germany for their lack of self-respect, and for their "insane" dreams of love and forgiveness curing the world's problems. He urged them to cultivate a fighting spirit instead. This article set the mood for the rally.

The rally was planned for in advance, and its atmosphere was carefully calculated to impress and to convince. Red and
yellow posters glowingly announced the meeting; the "consecration" of the flags at the rally lent an air of religious spectacle to the proceedings; participants from all over Germany were invited to receptions, and meetings were called in order to discuss the future of the party and of nationalism in Germany. Hitler climaxed each meeting with a speech in which he came off as a missionary, a savior of Germany. Music, masses of storm troopers, set the pattern for the ritual of all future rallies. A precedent had been set.

The Putsch

After the assassination of Walter Rathenau, in September, 1922, the Weimar government attempted to suppress political activities of rightist groups. The NSDAP, among others, was prohibited, but because of this prohibition, the movement rose increasingly in prominence. Even the party's foremost rival, the German Socialist Party, dissolved and advised its members to join the NSDAP. At the same time, the SA was growing as a military unit which often cooperated with non-Nazis. As various conspiracies were planned against the Weimar Republic, the NSDAP was never overlooked—it, and Hitler were too important politically.
In the spring of 1923 Hitler was appointed as political leader of the Kampfbund (Militant Association), an organization consisting of a number of militant far-right groups which banded together to coordinate their efforts against the Weimar Republic, in preparation for a coup d'etat. This appointment is important for two reasons: Hitler reversed his former position of no compromise, and joined a coalition, and as he concentrated most of his efforts towards the Kampfbund, he allowed the SA to become the focal point of all NSDAP activities. The National Socialists temporarily ceased their efforts at the promotion of the movement, and became a military party.

Although the plans were also often nebulous, until August, when it was decided that an armed force consisting of the Bavarian units of the Reichwehr, the Kampfbund units, and other assorted rightist groups would move northward to Berlin (7, p. 43). The Bavarian governmental authorities were to lead the rebellion and cooperate with the rightists.

In early November, all was ready. The SA was to function as a military battalion, and the political goals were certain. Hitler and his party rested their hopes for the future on the success of this Putsch. The revolt awaited the signal from government authorities but it never came; Ritter van Kahr,
head of the Bavarian government, informed the Kampfbund that the government would not participate. Hitler disagreed and proceeded on his own, as military leader of the Kampfbund. The para-military units were ordered to mobilize on the evening of the eighth and on the next day, he moved on to Munich. There, however, troops loyal to the government put down the Putsch. Hitler fled, was arrested, tried, and sentenced to imprisonment.

The direct consequences of the Putsch were a set-back for the NSDAP, but the movement benefitted in the end from publicity received—-from the battle and subsequent trial. Adolf Hitler became a national government figure over-night, as the German press, which had virtually ignored the movement from 1920-1923, was forced to give column space to one event as well as Hitler's speeches at the trial. One observer recorded his reaction:

I felt electrified as the word went abroad in the newspapers in 1923 that down in Munich, a man by the name of Adolf Hitler aided by a little band of followers, had tried, in an excess of patriotic zeal, to shake off Red rule and restore its honor to the German people. Tensely expectant, I pursued all news of political developments in Germany thereafter. I felt with increasing certainty that a man had arisen to lead the Fatherland toward a brighter future. Instinctively I knew that this currently obscure movement merited every support (1, p. 69).
A large number of people established their first contact with the movement through newspaper reports of the Putsch. Hitler made an impressive stand at his trial and many became supporters because of their admiration of him because of this showing. Another admirer, a war veteran, wrote:

There was no point of contact with the men in power. For they had banished the glorious old black-white and red banner and substituted a flag in its place that meant nothing to the old front fighters. What became of the memory of the dead? Then came a light in the darkness. A movement for freedom was launched in Munich. In 1923 we heard the name of Adolf Hitler for the first time. Who was that man? . . . What did he want? . . . 'Truth, honor, faith, discipline!' What marvelous words! Unity of all people of German blood! . . . Here was a man of action! . . . How that man spoke! Those days of his trial became the first days of my faith in Hitler . . . (1, pp. 69-70).

In another way, the Putsch had an effect on the future of the movement; Hitler realized that he could get nothing accomplished without the majority of the people on his side. Consequently, he would later step up propaganda and direct his organization to conform to legal procedure. Hence, the party would later participate in Reichstag elections. The Putsch taught Hitler another lesson—he knew he could not depend upon other groups. He never again adopted any policy of political compromise; in fact the policy of no compromise
would eventually become an integral part of his totalitarian state. This was the lesson in politics Adolf Hitler never forgot.

Summary

The National Socialist German Worker's Party was no more than a politician's discussion group in 1919; by 1923 it was a movement whose membership had grown considerably and whose organizational structure had vastly improved. Much of this early growth was a result of the over-enthusiasm of Adolf Hitler, whose rhetorical talents and personal charisma were responsible for attracting new members, and whose talents for organization would aid in the growth of the movement.

The people of Germany were restless, wanting a stronger government, tired of the confused politics of the Weimar Republic, and bitter over their defeat in WWI. The NSDAP was to reach out for these feelings with its rhetoric, in an attempt to persuade the people that this movement could give them back their pride and restore Germany's greatness.

The earliest means of persuasion employed by the NSDAP was the speech, simply enough. At their meetings, the group was able to spread their ideas to increasing numbers of listeners, eventually attracting speakers of some status. Capitalizing upon the hostilities prevailing among the Munich
bourgeoisie, the movement would attack the leftist groups and the Jews, the bleak reality of Germany's political scene, and the degredation of the German people. Even at this early stage, the rhetoric of the Nazis provided Germany with something it needed; in the Jews it had a scapegoat, and in the promises of the party, it found hope.

The propaganda machinery, which would grow to one of the most powerful the world has known, began its growth in the period. Adolf Hitler knew the effect of hard-hitting propaganda, but he had quite a bit of opposition in these early years, as the old guard disliked his tactics. Nonetheless he would win out, and looked ahead to organizing public rallies, in order that the rhetoric of the party could reach increasing numbers of Germans.

Speeches contained standard rightist themes, repeated time and time again, but appealing to the people, who began to crowd the meetings. But the party would have to turn to other persuasive techniques if it was to attain more power. A newspaper, the Volkischer Beobachter, was acquired, and would become a propaganda weapon, spreading Nazi ideology all over Germany. The rhetoric of the NSDAP was to be vital, including street fights (contributing to the image of power, and securing publicity), marches in the streets, and,
importantly, the first party rally, in 1923. The rally was to be the largest, best organized propaganda device of the NSDAP during the early and middle years. Symbols, flags, speeches, music, storm troopers, all set the pattern for the future rallies, one which would change little.

This early period foreshadowed the future strengths and evils of the Nazi party. It's rhetoric was aimed at the heart of Germany's misfortune, and it's vitality would lend new hope to the people. The rhetoric was stronger than the ideology which it supported, and would be the major strength of the NSDAP.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

1924-1929: THE CRITICAL YEARS

After the failure of the Munich Putsch, the NSDAP was in trouble; everyone involved felt that the party was defeated, that it had been dealt a death blow. Adolf Hitler, imprisoned in Landsberg's fortress-prison, wanted to die (8, p. 390). He felt that his day as a leader was over, his political career ruined. Newspaper reports only reaffirmed his feelings; he was accused of holding Germany up to the "ridicule of the whole world," of attempting to pull off "the craziest farce" in recent memory, of leading a "miniature revolution" that "alternately provoked amusement and disgust" (8, p. 390). The general opinion, at home and abroad, was that Hitler and his movement would soon be forgotten. But Adolf Hitler was not finished; it took him only the thirty days of his trial to retrieve his aura of leadership. His remarkable talents of persuasion would assure the survival of the NSDAP.

Hitler Emerges Victorious

Hitler went to trial at a "People's Court" before two professional judges and three lay judges. He was one of ten
defendants; the others included Ludendorff, Roehm, Weber, Frick, and several lesser leaders of the uprising. The charge against them all was high treason. This trial attracted enormous attention in spite of the derisive comments offered by the press. One hundred reporters from around the world were present, and the crowds were so great that police were needed to control them. The building itself had to be protected by armed guards and barbed-wire barricades.

The trial, which began on February 26, 1924, was dominated by the figure of Adolf Hitler from its start. More than once he told the court that his accusers should be standing trial with him; the chief witnesses for the prosecution—Kahr, Lossow, Seisser—were as guilty of conspiring against the state as the defendants, and everyone knew it (8, p. 391). This made the whole affair seem a bit preposterous. But Hitler managed to triumph over his accusers, due to his remarkable ability to make his trial the means by which he could send his words across all of Germany. He converted the witness stand into a platform for long speeches, even adding eloquent touches in deference to the court. But his themes remained the same, and the voice that once had driven loyal crowds to a frenzy was now being heard all over Germany.
From this point on, Hitler, once again self-confident, would never again come as close to acknowledging defeat. He would look upon the Putsch merely as one incident in his struggle for political power, rather than a setback indicative of some flaw in the movement (1, p. 71). He was in the process of convincing himself and others that the Putsch was a success. "The greatest gain of the eighth of November," he said at his trial, is that it did not lead to depression and discouragement ([!] , but contributed to lifting the people to the greatest heights of enthusiasm. I believe that the hour will come when the masses in the streets who today stand under our banner, the hooked cross, will unite with those who shot at us on November ninth. I believe this: that blood will not separate us forever . . . one day the hour will come when the Reichwehr will be standing at our side, officers and men (8, p. 393).

Hitler's oratory re-opened old wounds and created new ones. He touched every sensitive area that could make a patriotic German yearn for revenge. Rejecting the role of defendant, he took instead the position of prosecutor, accusing high government officials of treason; for four hours he spoke of traitorous Berlin, the stab-in-the-back, hunger, inflation, the Ruhr, and even the judge was unable to hold him back. The audience was moved to tears by the conclusion of his speech:

The army we have assembled is growing faster and faster, from day to day, from hour to hour. Now, just in these days, I harbor the proud hope
that one day the time will come when these wild bands will swell into battalions and the battalions into regiments, and the regiments into divisions. The old cockade will be retrieved from the dirt, and the old flags will lead the way again. . . . (8, p. 393)

He then made an appeal to the judgment of history, which, he said, would be the final judge, acquitting "the Quartermaster General of the Old Army, and his officers and soldiers, who only wanted the best for their folk and Fatherland . . ." The court could find him guilty a thousand times, he said, but it would make no difference. "With a smile, the goddess of the eternal court of history will tear up the indictment of the prosecutor and the verdict of the judges. For she acquits us" (8, p. 39).

To this maudlin rhetoric, the many people listened with mounting excitement. Newspapers that had never once mentioned Hitler or his party were printing front page reports of the trial. Many of the people were convinced that a new leader was on the rise. For many, this was to be their first contact with the movement; impressed by Hitler's words, inspired by his courage, they were persuaded to join with this new movement.

On April 1, 1924, all of the accused were found guilty except for Ludendorff, who was half senile, and faded out of the public eye after the trial. Adolf Hitler received the
minimum penalty for high treason: five years' fortress arrest, a most indulgent form of detention. He was to be put on probation, thus only to serve nine months of his sentence.

Hitler's prison term allowed him to perform a task which he felt was necessary for the future of the movement: the drawing together of his ideas into a structured ideology. In his cell, he was able to read voraciously, and gather his thoughts. He called prison "my university at state expense," and he was right—the state, in its efforts to silence him, provided Hitler with the opportunity to grow into an even greater propagandist (1, p. 72). While dictating Mein Kampf to the faithful Rudolf Hess, he was allowed to indulge in introspection. He reflected on past mistakes, organized his thoughts, and considered tactics and strategies to use in the future. He poured all of these ideas into his book, which he called "A Four and One-Half Years Struggle Against Lies, Stupidity, and Cowardice: Settling Accounts with the Destroyers of the National Socialist Movement." His publisher renamed it Mein Kampf, and the book was a forecast that Europe and the rest of the world should have taken seriously. The importance of the book, for all its heavy rhetoric, cannot be denied, if only for the effect it had on Hitler himself. Throughout the book, Hitler presented himself as a figure of
epic proportions, rather than as an agitator jailed after the failure of his coup d'etat. Thus his performance at his trial, coupled with the enormous amount of thinking he did while dictating his book, were to restore Hitler's confidence and result in the NSDAP's becoming more rational in its approach and more bureaucratic in its organization. The movement had a much firmer foundation, and Adolf Hitler, as a result of failure, was propelled forward. He would never surrender again; he knew his tactics would succeed.

A more direct effect of Hitler's book could be seen in its influence as propaganda. It would become an inspiration for followers of the movement. An early convert said:

My greatest political experience occurred when I bought and read a copy of Hitler's book. I saw therein a confirmation of the very views I had cherished, but which I could not express properly. Now I had the necessary equipment to take up the quarrel with my political opponents. I had found the cause to which I could devote my life, and I availed myself of every opportunity at the club, the office, at home, to spread the ideas of Hitler (1, p. 72).

Another view of the book can be seen in this statement of a Storm Trooper:

Our group, consisting of students and workers, merchants and clerks, held frequent meetings to discuss the idea of our movement. Barring party platform, there was little written material to instruct us. But in 1926 our Fuehrer's work was printed. It became the central factor in our
undertakings, and we often read the book aloud at group meetings. Even though most of the men had never seen Hitler, he was no longer a stranger to us, for his written word brought him vividly to our minds (I, p. 73).

Perhaps Rudolf Hess best expressed the effect Hitler had on his followers. Hess, the initiator and prime mover of the Fuehrer cult, joined the NSDAP in 1921 shortly after winning a contest with an essay on the "cause of suffering of the German people" (I, p. 73). In his essay, Hess, who viewed Hitler as the "strong man" needed to save Germany, discussed the need for a powerful leader, a dictator: "The greatness of a people is national consciousness, the will to self-assertion in the world. Napoleon had the powerful nationalism of the French Revolution to build upon. The German dictator must first arouse and cultivate it." A dictator had to be:

... passionate, and at the same time self-controlled, calculating and bold ... without inhibitions in putting decisions quickly into action, without consideration for himself and others, hard without pity, yet at the same time soft in his love for the people, untiring in his work; not a despot, but a great renewer and educator of the people, to dare to begin what must be! This is the greatness, the mark of leadership (I, p. 73).

Hess, seeing this "mark of leadership" in Hitler, was able to persuade others to accept these ideals, and to accept Hitler as a charismatic leader. Thus this "faith," this "Fuehrer worship" was to become the center of the movement. Although
several years were to pass before Hitler was to be regarded as the super-human leader of the German people, it is obvious that the Fuehrer cult had its beginnings in this period of the movement.

Thus Hitler's stature as emotional crutch, as charismatic leader of the German people, grew even while he was imprisoned. Joseph Nyomarkay, in *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party*, states that:

A leader is charismatic if he is regarded by his followers as a person whose powers or qualities are so exceptional that they are of divine origin and inaccessible to the ordinary person. By virtue of such extraordinary, supernatural or super-human powers, the charismatic leader is permitted to rule. The actions of the charismatic leader can violate tradition as well as the legal framework; his legitimacy, derives from his personal qualities, from his gifts of grace (11, p. 11).

This is certainly an apt description of what Hitler was to become, and make Hess' comments seem even more prophetic.

**Factional Strife**

But Hitler's appeal was not yet strong enough to prevent factional strife within the party. The NSDAP was, for all intents and purposes, destroyed when the Putsch failed. Since the party had never even considered what would happen if the revolt failed, the political organization fell apart. In fact, Hitler had virtually ignored the organizational aspects of the party's activities in the fall of 1923, so that no
groundwork political activity (12, p. 46) Most of the party's members reassured their former political status; to be sure, their views on the Weimar Republic were the same, and they would still vote Volkisch, but most lost their activism after the abortive Putsch. A small number remained militant, but their attempts to carry on in an organized manner failed; they soon were split into a number of smaller factions, fighting among themselves.

Immediately following the Putsch, a moderate wing of the former Reichsleitung sought to demilitarize the party by severing all connections with the SA. Their opposition consisted of former SA leaders who were hoping to continue work underground—to carry on the activities of the Storm Troopers as well as to re-establish ties with the free corps (Freikorps). This split was evident in Thuringia and the Upper Palatinate, as well as in Bavaria. But these controversies were early symptoms of the deeper conflict among Volkisch factions; more than a disagreement over political tactics, the real problem could be seen in the struggle between two groups over the very aims and principles of the German Volkisch movement (12, p. 47).

The older group, the "pioneers" as Josef Goebbels later called them, came into the movement after playing a part in the prewar anti-Semitic movements. These men were older
(born between 1860 and 1890), primarily of lower-middle class origins, they were desperately attempting to hold on to their insecure social status as shopkeepers or lower officials, and thus turned to the politically ineffective anti-Semitic, anti-urban, anti-industrial organizations who still held weekly meetings in beer halls (12, p. 48). They feared, more than anything else, progressive urbanization and industrialization — evils for which they felt the Jews to be responsible. Theirs was the artificial Volkisch society in the midst of modern urbanized mass society.

The second group was made up primarily of the "front generation," that is, they were born between 1890 and 1900. For most of these men, the most significant event in their lives had been their experience in the trenches of WWI, feeling a sense of "front-line socialism" (12, p. 48). Thus for this group, Volkisch meant idealism, revolutionary thought and action, rather than social reaction. They had as a primary goal the conversion of the masses to a line of thought which would contain a faith in national socialism rather than international socialism. They considered themselves revolutionaries, scorning the inactive politician.

These two groups in spite of their differences, were able to agree on several aspects of Volkisch ideology: both
shared a common belief that the Jew was an obstacle in the realization of their aims, both sought dictatorship as the only workable form of government, and both thus enthusiastically supported Adolf Hitler. But Hitler was able to maintain only an artificial unity until the Putsch.

After the uprising was suppressed, both groups felt their dream to be ended. The two wings split into totally separate organizations which had only admiration for Adolf Hitler in common. The Greater German People's Community (Grossdeutsche Volksgemeinschaft, ADVG) would become the organization most favored by the militant pioneer elements, while the revolutionaries moved toward the National Socialist Freedom Party (National Sozialistische Freiheitspartei, NSFP) (12, p. 49). The ADVG was was politically weaker, although it had as members a number of prominent former NSDAP officials --such as Esser, Streicher, and Amann. It had no real organization outside of Bavaria, and even there it was limited. The only other pioneer organization of any significance was Thuringia, where Artur Dintei and Fritz Sauckel continued under the NSDAP label.

The NSFP was the more viable organization. The only really dominant influence, however, was a party which resulted from a merger between the old German Volkisch Freedom
Party (Deutschvolkische Freiheitspartei, NVFP) and some of the northern NSDAP groups (of which Gregor Strasser was a prominent leader.) In fact, the pre-Putsch NSDAP in northern Germany had been relatively well organized, and had achieved considerable prominence.

Germany's New Optimism

The Putsch, however was not the only reason for the factionalism which plagued national socialism. In late 1923, Germany was undergoing quite a few changes, both at home and on the international scene. In fact, in the five years from 1924 to 1929, Germany experienced a sharp turn of affairs; much of the pessimism and uncertainty of the immediate post-war years was being dispelled by a new optimism, a spirit of prosperity and conciliation (5, p. 306). Germany was regaining some of her pre-war stature internationally; there seemed to be a real desire on the part of the allied powers to heal old wounds caused by the war and treat Germany as an equal once again. The fine arts and literature blossomed. But, perhaps most importantly, Germany was experiencing an economic up-swing, exemplified by the "Miracle of the Rentenmark" at the end of 1923. The Rentenmark, an interest-bearing bank note intended to aid agriculture and industry was introduced
as a drastic solution to drastic economic conditions, and, at least temporarily, it worked.

The economic "success" Germany experienced acted as a facade of progress which veiled the continuing political strife temporarily. Germany at least appeared strong and powerful; it would take an international catastrophe to reveal the "inner decay" (5, p. 306). The efforts of Gustav Stresemann, who became chancellor of Germany in August, 1923, also abated disaster in Germany. Thus Germany was ushered into a period which was to prove a critical one, the most critical since the first World War.

In 1923, the Ruhr, an area important to German industry, was still occupied by France; communists were in control in several provinces; Bavaria was threatening to secede from the Reich; economic life was caught in a period of inflation (1, p. 74). When Stresemann came into office, he declared a state of emergency and ordered the Reichswehr to take extreme measure against the leftist and rightist extremists. The Reichswehr, as a result, suppressed the provincial communist governments and frustrated the "march on Berlin" planned by the Munich Nationalists (1, p. 74).

With the threat of international strife at least temporarily eliminated, Stresemann attempted to stabilize the
currency with the Rentenmark. For several years, the Germany economy did appear to be recovering. But what really facilitated this recovery was not the Rentenmark, but the inflow of a great deal of foreign capital, mainly from the United States, for the Reich, local municipalities, and industry (7, p. 361). This money came as a result of the acceptance of the Dawes Plan, the first of a large number of loans made to Germany by Wall Street, to facilitate the payment of reparations (5, p. 307).

In April, 1924 the Dawes committee made its report, to be known as the Dawes Plan, recommending that the Ruhr be evacuated, that a sliding scale of payments be instituted for repayment, and that an international bank be founded to handle transfer of payments, that a large loan could be granted to Germany to finance reparations payments (5, p. 306). For the first time, a feasible plan had been offered up for the payment of reparations—the problem would come when the plan was put before the Reichstag.

The Dawes Plan became a major issue in the Reichstag; the ensuing battle exemplified the political strife beneath the surface of German government. The Nationalists, Communists, and Nazis all protested bitterly that Germany was once again in the hands of foreigners. A new election was pending,
so the campaign was a bitter one. The Nationalists won 96 seats, the Nazis 32, and the Communists 62. Government parties all lost considerable number of seats. There was so much dissention within Nationalist ranks, however, that the same cabinet returned to office and the Reichstag passed the Dawes Plan.

The period of economic development began. Loan money allowed Germany to reorganize her industry to a far greater extent than any other nation during this post-war period. This reorganization, along with the re-incorporation of the Ruhr and its industry into German economic life, ushered Germany industry and economy into a new era of prosperity.

Much of the loan money went into the payment of reparations, but the rest was used primarily in two ways; first a program of public works was initiated in every level of government, so that for the first time since 1914 civilian construction was working at full capacity. Secondly, and more importantly, Germany rebuilt her whole industrial plant; obsolete buildings, machinery, and equipment were destroyed and replaced, so that by 1929 German industry was an example that the world would later wish it had followed. Nazi Germany would later greatly benefit from this legacy.
With the revival of industry came the virtual elimination of unemployment. With the prosperity of the period went corresponding social gains, as new social legislation was passed. Budgets were no problem (or at least appeared to be no problem), because deficits could be absorbed by foreign loans. There were occasional warnings against the foolishness of tying German economy thus to the New York Stock Exchange, but such warnings were largely ignored.

In 1925 a presidential election was held which revealed the direction German politics would be taking. President Friedrich Ebert died in April of 1925, after a short term during which he governed conservatively, attempting to maintain a balance among the conflicting political factions. The election was sure to be an event with several possibilities for political combinations. The right-wing groups decided that they needed to back someone of national stature; the Nationalists and Peoples Party chose as their candidate Paul Von Hindenburg, the heroic old field marshall. Hindenburg was almost eighty years old, but he was an almost legendary figure in Germany. He had not yet lost his magic for he defeated Marx, the candidate endorsed by the centralists factions, by about a million votes. His campaign, based on German "honor" emerged victorious over a campaign based on German "democracy" (5, p. 310).
Stresemann's impressive foreign policy, coupled with Hindenburg's election appeased the national conservative parties, and they entered the government via posts in the cabinet. A wave of optimism swept over the government as well as over the country. But a major force could be found in Alfred Hugenberg, in control of a potential propaganda network of newspapers, radio, and movie industries; he denounced the national parties as traitors. Adolf Hitler denounced the government from his prison cell, saying that Germany had once again surrendered to the allies. These agitators were, for the most part unsuccessful in their attempts to garner support. The majority of the Germans considered them as fanatics who refused to accept that the war was over, and who hampered recovery by encouraging political strife.

Theodore Abel, aptly sums up the situation in Germany when he states:

Few people recognize the precarious foundation upon which rested the new order of things, its maintenance dependent wholly upon the ability of the government to consolidate its position and to insure the continuance of prosperity. The newly won tolerance had no roots, and was much too dependent upon economic and political exigencies to survive even a temporary adversity. Disappointment at this stage was bound to evoke a violent reaction, all the more so because the element of self-incrimination for giving in too easily would be present. Instead of a genuine peace, the people had made a speculative truce with the government. The flood that was to sweep it away was not far off (1, p. 75).
The people of Germany were, for the most part, complacent, satisfied, and refusing to listen to anti-government groups. It was this complacency, along with the accompanying hostility toward political agitation, which was to provide a challenge for Adolf Hitler when he was released from Landsberg in November of 1924.

Hitler was nonetheless determined to continue agitation. His followers were scattered; Volkisch Nationalist groups had been badly defeated at the polls; public sentiment was most hostile toward these Nationalist agitators. But Hitler was waiting for the collapse which he believed would be inevitable—the failure of the German government to maintain its uncertain "prosperity." When this collapse occurred, he wanted to have built a party to which the people, ready to accept alternatives to the fallen government, could turn. His opposition party would have a platform including the slogan "Only by force can Germany regain its rightful position in the world (1, p. 77). But no coup d'etat would be planned; the NSDAP would make its bid for power by utilizing the legal means necessary to do so. Thus Hitler's power of persuasion would prove invaluable in these critical years in the life of the NSDAP.

All of the Volkisch groups had largely awaited Hitler's release, but the movement was once again politically
un-important, lacking organizational strength and cohesion. The image once held by the NSDAP—that of a "pseudo-military shock troop" (12, p. 51), would have to change radically in order for the people of Germany to accept the Nazi party as a serious political group. Hitler needed a mass following now, with supporters all over Germany. In November, 1923 the NSDAP was not an all-German party, and Hitler knew that he would have to adopt new organizational strategy if the movement was to advance politically.

The two splinter groups—the "pioneers" and "revolutionaries"—would have to be brought together; in spite of their wide difference, they had one thing in common—their loyalty to Adolf Hitler. Dietrich Orlow states that Hitler knew that both groups would have to "place loyalty to him above their programmatic aims; in essence, he had to become the personalized fusion of their means and ends. His followers had to visualize his personal political successes and the realization of the Volkisch program—myth as inseparable developments (12, p. 52). The Hitler-as-savior-of-Germany myth had its roots here, and his rise as a leader depended upon this "myth"; carefully planned and superbly executed, the growth of the Fuhrer legend was to become the central ideology of the movement. The political martyr would become the charismatic leader.
Munich would be the site of the beginning of the growth of the new NSDAP; only there could Hitler create the image he desired, and garner mass political support for the movement. Before he could revive the party, he had to work on getting a ban on the Nazi party and the Volkscher Beobachter lifted. He met with success only two weeks after his release, for in January of 1925, the ban on the party was lifted, and in February the paper appeared for the first time in fifteen months (17, p. 4). Despite the lifting of the ban, Hitler remained silent for two months refusing to speak publically, to reveal any plans for the future, or to offer much advice to the many admirers who sought his blessings.

Greeted as returning hero by his followers, Hitler was nonetheless shrewd in his refusal to speak publically until January. He wanted his first speaking engagement to be spectacular--more than just another rally. The February 26 copy of the Beobachter carried a proclamation by the Fuhrer on the front page, and an announcement that there would be a great mass meeting at the Burgerbrauhaus on the next day, to which all former members were invited (17). Jews were expressly forbidden to attend. The rally was exactly what Hitler intended it to be.
Scheduled to begin at 8:00 P.M., February 27, the rally attracted visitors in lines by mid-afternoon. Some four thousand were admitted, but another two thousand had to be turned away. The audience contained rival leaders of factions, but Hitler's rally was staged with much handshaking and smiling which bore witness to the good chances existing for party unity. Before the meeting was over, these rival leaders would pledge their alliance to Hitler as the sole leader of the party.

During a speech that lasted between two and three hours, Hitler proved he had retained his talent as an orator, and assured his position as unquestioned leader of the movement. The speech was a masterpiece, sending Hitler to new prominence in the Munich political scene. Speaking as though the Putsch had never occurred, he invoked memories of past unity and images of the old pseudomilitary NSDAP. He appealed to those who "in their hearts had remained old National Socialists" to join together once again under the symbol of the swastika (12). He also gave both the major factions an enemy--for the pioneers there was Jewry, and for the "revolutionaries," Marxism.

The audience was so mesmerized by Hitler's words that when Hitler stated that with the party's approval, he would take full charge of every aspect of the movement, he received
a rousing ovation, with cries of "Heil" and the rival leaders rushed to the stage, pleading loyalty to Hitler, to each other, and to the movement. In one speech, Hitler managed to launch the NSDAP on a new course, assure party unity, and establish himself as supreme leader of the movement. At future speaking engagements, Hitler repeated his Burgerbrauhaus performance, several times and managed to achieve personal contact with almost all of the membership in Munich.

Esser and Streicher, Hitler's personal representatives working in the countryside, paralleled Hitler's work in Munich. Utilizing Hitler's tactics, they were quite successful in persuading the locals to accept Hitler as their leader, and the NSDAP as the party of their choice. The Hitler cult, in spite of setbacks, had obviously retained its appeal. As the result of a single speech, the NSDAP was on its way once again.

Hitler's Rhetoric: Theories and Power

It would be wise at this point to look at Hitler's theories on speaking— theories which, in part, were developed during his imprisonment. After the rally he was once again temporarily forbidden to speak in public. His speaking, obviously a source of inspiration and controversy, was to become the major propaganda weapon of the party.
Persuasion held an important place in Adolf Hitler's personal and political philosophy. His theory of persuasion was based in part on his racial theory; the persuader, endowed with the ability to perceive natural laws embodied in the Volkisch idea, was obligated to lead the Germanic race toward the "truth" (p. 137). The "truth" consisted of theories of Aryan superiority and rights to world supremacy. The speaker, according to Hitler, had a right and a duty to go to the masses, as he would be endowed by natural right to persuade the people. In Mein Kampf he stated:

Passion alone will give to him, who is chosen by her, the worlds that, like boats of a hammer, are able to open the doors to the heart of the people. He to whom passion is denied and whose mouth remains closed is not chosen by Heaven as the prophet of its will (p. 137).

Realizing that mass support was vital to the ultimate success of the Nazi party, Hitler had stressed that, in the Weimar Republic, "Wisdom is nothing and the majority everything; today, where the ballot of the masses decides, the decisive value lies with the most numerous group and this ... the crowd of the simple ones and the credulous" (p. 329). This statement alone says much about Hitler's approach to persuasion: logic does not assure power ("wisdom is nothing"), but winning the support of the masses does.
Hitler realized that full contact must be made with these people, and he made this contact through persuasion; thus persuasion was of the utmost importance in the NSDAP's ideological structure. It would probably be safe to say that persuasive theories made up the greater part of Nazi ideology. What was said was not as important as what effect it had on the people, how they responded. Thus Hitler's audiences, most not intellectual enough to have developed critical powers, would be battered into a state of passive receptiveness by the torrential flow of Hitler's words (17, p. 5).

But Hitler saw persuasion as serving still another function—the creation of social order (4, p. 139). He had faith that one day the German people would be masters of the world, so they would need to live together in harmony. Persuasion would serve its purpose insofar as it would foster identity among the German people. Hugh Dazill Duncan states:

The purpose of rhetoric, Hitler tells us, is to satisfy the longing of a people for communion with each other. Symbols are powerful in the degree that they make it possible for people using them to identify with each other. Communion, the sense of community, is hard to achieve because men are separate and divided among themselves (6, p. 227).

Hitler used persuasion to pull men together, to close this natural gap between men in society; he demanded that his followers sacrifice individuality for the sake of group ideals and goals, thus achieving the sense of community.

Persuasion was actually a process wherein an individual would go through a conversion of sorts. The Nazis utilized psychological tactics from the first contact with its
listeners, and the cycle was successfully completed when an individual decided to devote his life to helping the Nazi Party realize its ambitious. *Mein Kampf* does not contain any specific steps in this conversion process, but James Delia views the process as consisting of three distinct phases: (1) indoctrination through propaganda, (2) immediate conditioning in the mass meeting, and (3) consummation of persuasion through the speech (4, p. 140).

In the first phase, propaganda functioned as the first contact the party had with the individual. It was necessary for the party to attract potential members from the start, in order that these people would be more receptive in later phases of the process of persuasion. Propaganda was directed at the masses, of course, and its success depended upon how well it was received and attended to by the majority. According to Hitler:

... all propaganda has to be popular and has to adopt its spiritual level to the perception of the least intelligent of those toward whom it intends to direct itself. The more modest, then, its scientific ballast is, and the more it exclusively considers the feeling of the masses, the more striking will be its successes (10, p. 233).

Thus Hitler aimed at the feelings; the emotions, and took into consideration that the masses possess limited receptivity and a high degree of forgetfulness. "All effective propaganda
has to limit itself only to a very few points and to use them like slogans until even the very last man is able to imagine what is intended . . . "(10, p. 233).

The mass meeting allowed for direct contact with the masses. It also served to place the audience in the necessary state of mind for conversion (4, p. 141). Hitler strongly believed that the mass audience was basically irrational—that is, most people were easily swayed into acceptance of an idea, if that idea was acceptable to the majority of those around them. In other words, the National Socialists' conception of the common man was that he had no ability to decide anything for himself, lacked objectivity, was incapable of reasoning with any rationability (9, pp. 216-217). After ten years in power Hitler would later state, "What luck for governments that the people they administer don't think" (14, p. 184). Hitler's theory of persuasion centered around the idea that passion, emotion motivated people to subjugate themselves to the will of a strong leader. The mass demonstration activated this passion (4, p. 142). The success of the later Nuremberg party rallies testified to this.

Variables such as time and place were also taken into consideration, for Hitler fully realized that if a meeting was to be properly staged, the setting would play an important
part in audience manipulation. The speaker was instructed to select a meeting place where "traditional memories and images exist" (10, p. 710), and should hold the rally or meeting "near the end of the day because appeals to the emotions and feelings are far more effective at night than during the day" (10, p. 710).

Adolf Hitler was not an impromptu speaker; prepared in great detail in advance, his speeches on paper are not at all indicative of the effect they had when delivered. His power as a speaker was based on the relationship he established with his listeners; he established a rapport not only through what he said, but how he projected his image as father-leader-savior of the German people.

The opening of every speech Hitler delivered was no indication of what was to come. He began hesitantly, his wording stiff, his voice monotonous. But after he got the feel of his audience, he relaxed physically and mentally, and the words began to flow passionately. The voice became high pitched and loud as each point of the speech was driven home. Every change of thought called for gentler tones, which rose to a crescendo when the climax was reached. A flailing right arm slashed through the air to further punctuate each idea. By the time each speech was finished, Adolf Hitler's audience
had reached a state of agitation which almost equaled that of
the speaker himself. The tactics all worked. The listeners
had "shared a profound experience with the speaker" (17, p. 5).

The themes of Hitler's speeches were as characteristic
as his hand gestures. In order to convince the masses that
the government of Germany had to be changed, he would ramble
for hours on the faults of the Weimar Republic. He accused
the leaders of being criminals who were enemies, destroying
the nation and bringing disrespect to the German people; he
accused them of being corrupt, weak traitors to their country.
The government was always pictures as being responsible for
the hunger and unemployment in Germany, defiling the former
honor and greatness of the German people.

These accusations held his audience spellbound, and
Hitler would follow up with an appeal to the honor of his
listeners, urging them to become militant nationalists, pre-
pared for armed resistance. "We demand conscription for
everybody. If you believe you must be free, then learn that
the sword alone can give you freedom. If 60,000 Germans have
the will to be fanatically national, then weapons will sprout
from their fists" (1, p. 65).

His climaxes rarely varied, containing appeals to the
nationalists feelings within the people. He would state that
the only way for the German people to establish a Volkstaat, a truly German state, would be to accept National Socialism. He insisted that his party called for a re-establishment of the old German ideals of honor and glory—ideals which were lacking in the Weimar Republic. Warped racial theories also created an image of German superiority over Jews and non-Aryans.

Obviously such speech making was intended to make the Nazi Party appear vibrant and attractive in comparison to the Weimar government. It worked. Adolf Hitler was also able to project an image of Himself as the new leader for the people. His speeches called for a new leader who could rise up and destroy Marxism, a leader who stood alone, opposed to parliamentary leaders. But such speeches also posed a threat to the government, and often meant trouble for Hitler.

The Bavarian ban on Hitler's public speaking provided the incentive for the first major propaganda campaign by the NSDAP. During his conversations with the Bavarian Prime Minister in January of 1925, it is supposed that Hitler promised to conduct the political affairs of his party within the legal framework. The bar on the NSDAP was lifted on the condition that revolutionary agitation would cease. But when Hitler got up to speak at the meeting at the Burgerbrauhaus,
he was unable to contain his anger at the existing government. His appearance, through which he attained both a personal and a political victory, was the cause for another ban, effective on March 9, on his public speaking in Bavaria. Other states were soon to follow suit, and finally, the only states which would allow Adolf Hitler to speak were Thuringia, Braunschweig, and Mecklenburg.

The ban did not have the intended effect, however. Hitler made the best of the ban, as he had of the prison sentence. The party turned the attack around and utilized the occasion for propaganda purposes. On the 26th of April, 1926, a meeting was called to celebrate Hitler's thirty-seventh birthday; at the same time, a handbill was distributed which pictured Hitler with two strips of tape across his mouth which bore the inscription "ban on speaking" and the caption: "alone among 2000 million people of the world, he is not allowed to speak in Germany!" (17, p. 6). Hitler appeared at the birthday meeting, but remained silent; Julius Streicher spoke on "Why is Hitler not allowed to speak?" A letter written by the Nazi-organized "Action Committee for the Organization of People's Protest Against the Ban on Adolf Hitler's Speaking" was presented to Hitler, with assurances
that one-thousand, two hundred thirty-four "propaganda cells" of the NSDAP had collected signatures for the protest.

Barred from public speaking, Hitler turned his attention to organizational tasks. Between 1925 and 1928 he managed to set the propaganda machine into motion and set up National Socialists cells (Gaus) and Storm Troop units all over Germany (1, p. 77). This long-range planning would allow Hitler to take control of administrative affairs of the NSDAP on a nation-wide scale. The movement was ready for its long battle for political power.

1926: Anti-Nazi Legislation is Overcome

The critical years after 1925 were characterized by many struggles by the National Socialists: the fight for party members and voters, the problems with hostile rival parties, resistance to government suppression of agitation, and more factional strife within the party (1, p. 78). The NSDAP still had a long way to go.

In the years following the ban on Hitler's speaking, the party used every means it could to get the ban lifted. Early in 1927 the legal committee of the Reichstag refused to accept a petition submitted by Dr. Frich, a Nazi deputy. The government worker in charge admitted that the ban was unconstitutional, but stated that foreigners had no right to benefits granted by
the constitution. It was precisely statements of this type which aided the Nazis in their propaganda campaign. They protested loudly, and insisted that any government which would treat a man who had spent four and a half years as a front line German soldier as a foreigner was corrupt and contemptible. But, they said, it was typical of politics in the Weimar Republic.

After two years the propaganda campaign began to get results. On February 11, 1927, Saxony, the last of the states to have imposed the ban, lifted it. On March 5, Bavaria followed, as well as Prussia in September, 1928 (17, p. 7).

Government suppression of the Nazi party was quite common in the twenties. Administrative measures taken against the movement included the forbidding of public collection for contributions in Munich, the banning of the party in Berlin (May, 1927), and the banning of an opening ceremony at the Braun house, new party headquarters in Munich, (July, 1929). Several junior army officers were tried for treason for having Nazi leanings. Such measures were exploited by the Nazis and used for propaganda purposes; the movement was never seriously hindered by such actions. The administration was constantly made to look foolish, unjustly fighting a respectable patriotic party (17, p. 7).
In 1926, the Hitler youth organization was founded, and would gradually attract great numbers of younger people to Naziism. The movement was growing in confidence as well as membership. Mass meetings were developing their unique style: no democratic procedure, no questions asked, programs tightly organized around a speech by Hitler or another prominent member. The Parteitag—the party day—was the culmination of Nazi activities and meetings up to this point, and it was planned as one of the grandest experiences of party life for the members of the movement. In July, 1926, the party felt strong enough to hold another such rally.

The last party rally had taken place before the abortive Putsch. The second Parteitag of the NSDAP took place in Weimar, because at this time, Thuringia was one of the few states in which Hitler could still speak (15). In a proclamation printed in the Beobachter the day before the rally, Hitler reviewed the history of the party since 1923, the year of the last rally. He made it clear that the rally was not to be a place for political discussion of Germany's destiny; the NSDAP was going to decide Germany's destiny itself. Hitler wanted the Party Day to have as its purpose only demonstrations and a show of unity and strength (3, p. 31), to give incentive to members of the movement. Later, this idea of the displaying
of strength would come to be an important part of Nazi persuasion. Haig A. Basmajian stated:

If there was one thing that all Nazi symbols of persuasion had in common that was, 'strength' and 'power:' eagles, blood, marching, goose-stepping, the Heil salute, the Fuehrer title, swords, fire, swastika, all connoted strength (2, p. 70).

This Parteitag was as meticulously planned as its predecessors. The Beobachter published a long and detailed list of rally regulations on July 3, including timetables, regulations, and information. Special guards, mass living quarters, meeting halls, would all be provided for participants; in order to help subsidize expenses, each participant was obligated to purchase a Party Day medal for fifty pfennings.

On the first day of the rally, some ten thousand National Socialists assembled in the main square of Weimar. The day before, a special train carrying two thousand members from Bavaria arrived in the city; demonstrations of enthusiasm had been staged at each of the stations on the train's route. They then marched through the city to the meeting halls, where they were welcomed by party leaders of Thuringia, who had planned the rally--Ernst Ziegler, Arthur Dinter, and Fritz Sauckel.

Activities were begun at 7:00 A.M. the following day, when the SA and SS assembled for the ceremony of the
consecration of the flags. This ceremony would come to have much value for propaganda purposes: the flag was the "centerpiece of the Nazi decorative scheme" (17, p. 9). It was the subject of songs, a military symbol, a rallying point, it provided the hypnotic decoration for public meetings. The colors of the flag stood for National Socialism, the white circular center for socialism. But the swastika, mentioned earlier as a symbol of strength, had uncertain significance, as its origins could be seen in Inca, Roman, and Trojan history. For Hitler, the swastika is believed to have had racial connotations, and symbolized the victory of Aryan man, and of creative work, as always, anti-Semitic. The flag was always an object of near-adoration by Nazis; the consecration of the flags was almost religious in its significance.

Speeches were made all day long, the topics ranging from the German economic situation (blamed on the Versailles Treaty, Jews, and the Weimar Republic), and the worthlessness of free elections, to financial difficulties within the party itself. But perhaps one of the most important speeches of the day, as far as discussion of political agitation is concerned, was the speech given by Josef Goebbels in the afternoon. He spoke briefly, but set down the basic principles by which he and the NSDAP would run its famous
propaganda machine (3, p. 34). Rejecting the use of high-pressure tactics, advocating instead the effective use of mass media: oratory, better newspapers (rather than middle—or lower—class newspapers) as political mouthpieces, and vibrant and suggestive posters for psychological value.

Hitler's address revealed the basis of the true philosophy of Naziism; he spoke of the irresponsible masses, thus the state's responsibility to preserve the race. This, he stated, should be the primary concern of politics (3, pp. 34-35). He pointed out that Germany had allowed itself, because of economic troubles, to lose self-respect. He strongly discouraged emigration, and offered National Socialism as the means by which Nationalism could once again be revived in the German people.

A prophetic resolution was passed in party congress. It stated that all Germans were eligible for membership in the party, provided they pledge support to Hitler and his fight for power. People who lived outside the country could be admitted only if they pledged to work tirelessly for the annexation of their territory to Germany.

Germany's press was as yet unimpressed by the NSDAP, and reactions ranged from indifference to anger. Several commented on the rowdy, unemployed party members, ironically
referring to them as the "elite." The *Volkischer Beobachter* was, of course, enthusiastic; it took care to warn its readers for the first time against "Jewish controlled" press.

The rally of 1926 was held at a time when the NSDAP had just passed through a critical time in its history. But it had survived, and the rally bears witness to the fact that the leaders had an unfailing belief in their cause, and a determination to achieve power at all costs. Once again, the Nazi party was a "disciplined political organization with clearly established lines of authority" (12, p. 74). And Adolf Hitler was that authority, having emerged victorious over factional strife, rival leadership, financial difficulties, and bans on his speaking. In fact, due to the image projected at the rally, many smaller organizations decided to merge with the NSDAP. Once again Hitler and his movement were a vital part of rightist politics in Germany.

1927: More Organizational Problems

and Another *Parteitag*

After the *Parteitag* of 1926, the movement had its problems to face as well. The power Hitler held over his followers could never be denied, but his followers numbered thirty-five thousand among the fifteen million six hundred thousand active voters in Germany at the time (12, p. 76). The situation in
Germany was still relatively stable, and the NSDAP had to work to convert loyalty into power.

If results were to be obtained, the movement had to turn to the local headquarters, or Gaus, or Ortsgruppe, for effective promotion of the movement. The NSDAP's bureaucratic structure was changing, growing; Hitler worked to centralize authority. But work had to be done at the local level, and it was, often with little or no help from the central organization in Munich. The Ortsgruppe, or local group operating within the community was the location for many of the struggles for the growth of the movement, in face-to-face confrontations among individuals (1, p. 78). The local party worker thus held much of the responsibility for the promotion of the party.

The primary aim of an Ortsgruppen was the winning of the new members and votes for the party. Personal, face-to-face contact offered a wide scope for individual effort, and thus the personality of the propaganda worker counted for a great deal. An important example of what a field worker could accomplish can be found in a quotation from a local worker:

We, the early champions of the Third Reich, fought largely on our own accord. Ready to do all in our power, we frequently did things no command could have foreseen. Action, after all, is the outstanding preoccupation of the true fighter; but this action must be such as to serve the great cause to which he has pledged support.
During my numerous trips, which frequently involved extended periods in the country, I found opportunity to spread the National Socialist doctrine. At first it was necessary to proceed with consummate caution, since the people, but lately betrayed were wary of everything new. It was best if one could say with a good conscience that though one was acquainted with National Socialist technique, and though one was sympathetic to the idea, one was not actually a member of the party.

By this strategem I succeeded in the course of conversations with simple farmers to inoculate them with the National Socialist "serum." Later on, when one or another was more or less won over, there would be meetings in the tiny parlor of a little peasant cottage, to which all and sundry would come, without any suspicion of attending a political meeting. Conversations were always planned with a view to spreading National Socialist activities (l,p. 78).

The worker goes on to state that his method was valuable, since it worked on people who were wary of large meetings.

Another important feature of local propaganda was the distribution of literature and the placing of placards. This occupied a great deal of the worker's time. Local workers would battle with workers of rival parties to get their leaflets distributed over a wide area, or out first. Leaflets criticizing the government, and degrading Jews and government officials were distributed widely.

During 1926 the NSDAP had experienced some success, but it suffered from internal strife; Hitler had to attempt to set up a new organizational structure while attempting to deal with factionalism. Money was a problem also, there were just
too few members to pay the necessary cost of propaganda campaigns. The party was barely getting by on a "steady diet of organizational routine propagandistic negativism" (12, p. 113). Even Hitler's speech at the July membership meeting reflected the state the party was in—he did not project any positive emphasis. The party was not dying, it was just not as vital anymore.

A new beginning could be seen at the 1927 national congress. First of all, the meeting was staged at Nuremberg, the perfect city for a gathering of militants. It contained a large and well-organized local NSDAP chapter, and a body of sympathizers to whom anti-Semitism was appealing. These cheering supporters created an illusion of success and popularity for the party. From 1927 on, all official party congresses would be held in Nuremberg.

Approximately 160,000 interested people attended the rally; it took thirty men working around the clock for weeks to take care of sleeping arrangements (3, p. 38). By August 19, more than 5,000 party members, including leaders, had arrived. The city of Nuremberg was to get so hectic at rally time that in future years, up to fifty per cent would leave the city.
The congress began officially on August 20, with Adolf Wagner of Bavaria reading Hitler’s opening statement, as the Fuehrer wished to save his voice for the mass meetings. Dr. Frich then addressed the assembly, voicing the usual complaints about the situation in Germany, but calling for moderation in the quest for power. This appeal did not come from any source of wisdom; it was an expected warning, but unneeded as the party was at a low ebb.

Several other speakers mounted the platform to discuss various issues: Count Reventlow, who headed the Deutsch-Volkische Freiheitspartei (DVFP), right-wing faction of the NSDAP, spoke on the evils of German foreign policy, and Gattfried Feder reported on the state of the economy as the Nazi viewed it.

On the evening of the second day the SA assembled outside the city to prepare for a torchlight parade. The men marched past the hotel Deutscher Hof, where Hitler was staying, and were saluted by him as they passed by his balcony. The SA was out in full force, although in May the group and the party had been banned in Prussia, and in a number of other German states, so had the uniform. The SA exploited this ban, as the ban on Hitler’s speaking had been exploited, for propaganda purposes. The troops would arrive at meetings in white
shirts, or half naked, or in their underclothes (17, p. 16). After the ban, Goebbels created a slogan for the Berlin SA: "Trotz Verbot, Nicht Tot"—"Not dead despite the ban." On the way to the party rally, many of the Berlin Storm Troopers changed into uniforms on the special trains conducting them to Nuremberg; those who did not change before arriving back home in Berlin were arrested.

On the last day of the rally, the SA gathered in an area outside the city called the Luitpeldhain for the consecration of the flags. According to the Beobachter, thousands were present to witness the ceremony. Hitler, in his address, reviewed the history of the movement and of the flag. Amazingly enough, he also invoked God's help for the success of the NSDAP.

Another parade returned the spectators to the city. Houses lining the parade route had been decorated with swastikas and flowers, and windows overlooking the Hauptmarkt, where the speeches were to be made, had been rented to sympathizers of the movement. Hamilton Burden describes the scene:

The SA band from Potsdam opened the parade at 11:00 A.M.; leading the first detachment was Adolf Hitler. As each marching group approached the receiving stand, the party leaders stepped to the front of the platform to salute. All 30,000 members of the SA were in the parade; they marched in companies, battalions, and regiments. Each group was led by its own band and carried its own flag...
As the SS formations came by, the crowd burst into spontaneous cheers. Enthusiasm grew until spectators finally broke into the National anthem (3, p. 44).

The parade did not end until some two hours had passed.

The closing ceremony included the usual speeches on the situation in Germany, Jewish economic evils, etc. But two speeches contained discussions of topics that would be of importance in later years; they were almost prophetic.

Alfred Rosenberg discussed Germany's lack of living space, a problem which would play a major role in Germany's claims to territory in the mid- and later 1930's. He declared that the NSDAP had the responsibility for locating this living space. The next speech was by Dr. Dinter, who outlined, for the first time, an organized program of anti-Semitic legislation that looked to the future, to the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. Arguing that "racial chaos" would be the result of Jewish influence, and citing "biological laws" which stated that "Jewish character" lingers through generations like an inherited disease, Dinter offered suggestions that would curb the influence of the Jew:

(1) Judaism should be banned in Germany and the Jews' German citizenship should be revoked . . .

(2) Jews should not have the right to be elected to government posts, nor should they be allowed to teach or be judges.
(3) Laws should be passed to forbid marriage of Jews with Aryans. A Jew having intimate relations with a non-Jew should be hanged.

(4) Jews should not be allowed to buy property . . .

(5) All Jews who settled in Germany after 1914 should be expelled, and their property confiscated (3, p. 44).

The first mention of a solution to the "Jewish problem" was mentioned here, in the Parteitag of 1927.

The other speeches were more or less routine, even Hitler's. Goebbels spoke on the value of propaganda, and Hitler, in his only speech of the rally, spoke on the lack of living space, and ranted against majority rule.

Opinion was divided as to the success of the Party Day, but it should be noted for several reasons. First of all, the press took more notice, whether positive or negative, than it had of any previous rally. Secondly, the day seemed to be good for the morale of the party members. The enthusiasm they showed in the marches carried over into the business sessions, as they seemed eager to work harder for Hitler and the party. Lastly, the SA and SS were brought to the forefront.

The Valuable Propaganda Weapon

The SA and SS, in spite of the bans against them, would grow into a powerful unit useful for offensive warfare and
propaganda. In the late Twenties the Storm Troopers were facing opposition from the Social Democrats and Communists; so they would meet secretly and late at night, work to break up Communist or Socialist meetings. The small terrorist groups were effective, and they could operate regardless of the ban. In the words of a Nazi pamphlet, the SA became "the fist and the propaganda arm" (17, p. 17), of the movement; the group provided publicity for the NSDAP, and they injected a violence into the effort that would prove indispensable.

The members of the SA were proved to be of the Nazi Party; they felt self-assured, as they belonged to a select group (17, p. 17). Their enthusiasm made them a close-knit group; a common enemy gave them something to fight against. They already had something to fight for. Otto Strasser, a Nazi who fled Germany in 1935, provides insight into the SA's motives:

The battle, however, rather than destroying the purpose of our meeting, actually strengthened it enormously. All those who still remained in the hall after one fight had taken our side in a sort of spontaneous partnership. The bitter struggle had brought about the spirit of comraderie which is engaged when men go through physical conflict together. A short time before they had been doubtful of us, suspicious, as are all human beings of an offer of something for nothing. We had become allies if only by force of circumstance (13, p. 107).
While Hitler worked his way up within the legal framework, the SA and the Nazis were battling in the streets. Most major parties had "political troops" at their disposal at this time, so the SA was not unique. However, as a major propaganda weapon, the organization would come to rank higher, perhaps than Hitler himself.

Another of the major propaganda "weapons" of the NSDAP was Josef Goebbels. At first a worker for the Strassers, who built up an NSDAP organization in northern Germany. The two brothers were working independently of Hitler; although he avoided an open confrontation in 1926, the situation was never a comfortable one. When Goebbels was appointed Gauleiter in Berlin, he was already Hitler's man, however, for Hitler had persuaded that he was the only real leader of the party. Goebbels remained fiercely loyal to Hitler until his death.

Goebbels was an excellent speaker. More professional than Hitler, he could adapt to fit the mood of the audience, and could change emotion instantly. When he arrived in Berlin, he had to use all of his talents as a propagandist to break the hold the Communists and Social Democrats had on the working-class. The tactics he used were equal to the task he faced, and he improved on even Hitler's standards of agitation with shock tactics that made people sit up and take notice.
Early in February, 1927, he began advertisement of a meeting that would take place in the Pharus-Seele, in the middle of the working-class district. Glaring red and black posters announced:

The middle class (Burgerstaut) is approaching its doom. A new Germany must be forged: workers of the brain and of the hands, you can decide the fate of Germany on Friday 11 February at Pharus-Seele: Subject: The Breakdown of the Bourgeois class-state (17, p. 23).

The announcement itself introduced no new topic—the breakdown of the middle-class would not amaze a Communist; no new wording, no really new approach—but the real message was quite clear: The NSDAP was declaring war against its enemies in the working class district.

The Pharus-Seele, a large emporium of entertainment, had always been used by the Communists for weekly meetings. Goebbels arrived, agitated and impatient, shortly before 8:00 P.M. The SS leader greeted him with the news that the hall had been closed by the police at 7:15 because it was too full, and that two-thirds of the audience was made up of members of the Red Front, a Communist fighting organization (17, p. 23). Goebbels later reported that the situation was one which he expected and wanted.

When Goebbels walked out and attempted to open the meeting, he was unable to do so, because fighting broke out.
Twenty SA men were surrounding the platform, but they were outnumbered. Accounts of the fight conflict, but the speech was given under bizarre circumstances. Goebbels delivered his speech, after the fighting was over, surrounded by wounded SA men. Thus the concept of the heroic SA Storm Trooper, the martyr, was born.

Up to 1929, the technical means of mass communication—press, films, radio, and television—were absent in Russia and Germany during the rise to power of the totalitarian regimes. So the NSDAP utilized what was at hand: propaganda trucks carrying posters and people shouting slogans; advertisement of the *Volkischer Beobachter* on mock armored cars. Apart from the spoken word and printed matter, the Nazis had no way of reaching the public until the end of the decade, when their fortunes would change after an alliance with one Alfred Hugenberg.

They did still have their Party Day, and held another in 1929. No congress was held in 1928 due to the decline in popularity of the party that year—a year in which the Nazis were soundly defeated at the polls. The Social Democrats had increased their vote from 7.8 million to 9.0 million, but the right-wing German National Party dropped from 6.2 million to 4.3 million. The Nazis only managed to garner 810,000 votes,
12 out of 491 seats in the Reichstag (3, p. 47). The Weimar Republic scored victory after victory, in spite of its shaky facade of prosperity. But by the beginning of 1929, things were beginning to take a different turn—one that would favor the NSDAP.

Good Fortune

The first stroke of good fortune came with the alliance with Hugenberg. Alfred Hugenberg was one of the three largest publishers in Germany: in 1926 he had acquired controlling interest in UFA, a film company, which ran its weekly newsreel as well as a chain of movie theatres. Shortly before meeting Hitler, Hugenberg had become a leader of the German National Party (17, p. 25). A man with strong political convictions as well as the desire to possess political power, Hugenberg was attracted to Hitler and his party. Why Hitler was attracted to an alliance with Hugenberg is obvious.

Important groups that joined with Hitler were the Stahlhelm, and the Pan-German League: important individuals to join were Albert Voegler, President of the United Steel Corporation, and Hjalmar Schacht, President of the German Reichsbank. All of these people were rightists who had lost out in the elections of 1928, and supported the NSDAP only
for the political gains they could achieve (3, p. 48). But, Hitler and the party gained as well. Hugenberg's propaganda machine was in large part responsible for Hitler's rise to power. As a result of these gains, the NSDAP was able to recover from its losses of 1928, and gain the confidence to hold another party congress.

The program of the congress testifies to the changes that had been made in the party. Fireworks, motorcades, thirty-four new standards, 60,000 men, and 2,000 Hitler Youth were all a part of the Parteitag of 1929. A war memorial to the dead of WWI had been built in Nuremberg, and the Nazis adopted it as the center for their worship of the hero from the time of the rally on.

Fanfares announced the opening of the Party Day, which began at 11:00 A.M. on August 2nd in the main hall of the Kulturuereinshaus. Hitler's usual opening statement was read by Adolf Wagner, and then came the series of speakers. Gottfried Feder spoke on the financial restrictions of the Young Plan and other plans of the allied powers. He stressed the determination of the NSDAP to fight the Young Plan and the "dictatorship of the international stock market."

Goebbels spoke next, his usual speech on propaganda. He was followed by Rudolf Buttman, who spoke on idealism as a
creative force in politics. August 3 was highlighted by a firework display at night. As a crowd of 150,000 watched, a brass band flanked by torch-carriers marched into the stadium at which the display was being held. The fireworks, made by Saver, a famous fireworks manufacturer, were most impressive; the finale was a huge swastika surrounded by green leaves, crowned by an eagle. Most of the following day was taken up by a memorial service to the dead of WWI. The ceremony was spectacular, on a scale which had never been reached before. Formations of SA and SS assembled early before a stone coffin covered with wreaths, which had been placed before the War Memorial. Hitler arrived, accompanied by the SA leaders and the carrier of the standards and Youth banners. General Van Epp greeted Hitler, and then both men, accompanied by SA leader Pfeffer stepped up to the memorial to review the men of the field. The crowd cheered at the spectacle of rows of flags being carried in front of the leaders; the band accompanied the ceremony with a march. Hitler, as each flag and standard was carried past, touched each one with the "blood-flag," the party banner that had been carried during the ill-fated Putsch, and was stained with the blood of the wounded (3, p. 50).
"Germany Awaken!" became the slogan for the party once again as the masses repeated it before Hitler's speech to the Storm Troopers. His speech repeated already familiar themes and mannerisms, and when it ended, the march of the SA men began. Participation in the march was so large that it supposedly took one delegation an hour to pass in review. All in all, it took the 60,000 participants four hours to march by the reviewing stands.

A large meeting began at 5:00 P.M. in the Kulturuereinshaus, which boasted a series of speakers. The themes were once again familiar ones, but for the first time lines were drawn separating National Socialism and Communism. The NSDAP, now stronger, felt it could now compete on a greater scale than ever before.

Small incidents of violence marred the Party Days—some shootings, incidents with the police, a stabbing. In Hitler's final address he referred to the incidents, and advised his followers to avoid confrontations with police.

This, the last rally of the 1920's was by far the largest and most impressive ever. The years of fighting, anti-government action, of revolution were supposedly over, though the increased violence foreshadowed some troubles. But "cynical denunciation of peace policies" by Hitler and
his "blunt praise of aggression and war to achieve national power forecast the frightening years to come" (3, p. 54).

When a suitable opportunity would present itself, the NSDAP would be ready to attract even more followers. That opportunity came with the crash of the New York Stock Market, signalling the beginning of the Great Depression.

Summary

After the catastrophic Munich Putsch, the NSDAP had to regroup, desperately attempting to regain its foothold on the political scene. But Adolf Hitler had no trouble regaining his leadership; he utilized his trial as an effective rhetorical tool, using his remarkable talents of persuasion to turn the tables on his prosecutors. He even used his prison term wisely, writing his infamous Mein Kampf, which would also be a major rhetorical weapon for the NSDAP.

These years saw the growth of the "Fuhrer Cult," which would prove to be important to the image projected by the party. Even while imprisoned, Hitler was able to keep his stature as a charismatic leader, the man with all the strength. But even Hitler's appeal did not prevent the factional strife which characterized this period, even after he was released from prison.
Germany's new period of optimism, facilitated by the false prosperity of the twenties, was responsible for a setback for National Socialism. Only the Great Depression would fully reveal the real decay of the German government. Thus the NSDAP's anti-Weimar rhetoric was unwelcome this period, often evoking violent reactions. Adolf Hitler greeted this as a challenge when he was released from prison in November of 1924. He believed that the collapse of the government was inevitable.

Hitler, however, had learned his lesson from the failure of his coup d'etat. He knew that the NSDAP would have to seek its power through the use of legal (or quasi-legal) means, and that rhetorical strategies would have to be carefully aimed on a slightly more moderate course. Thus these were years of new organization within the party. Hitler's talent was one of the major contributions to the success of this re-organization, and the subsequent settling of disputes. His image as leader would settle scores of disputes in the years to come.

Hitler's speeches were carefully planned, and the first rally after his release was staged to present an image of optimism and party unity. Hitler's theories of persuasion, developed while he was imprisoned, were vital to the
gathering of mass support during these years. The party's strategies were aimed at the emotions of the common man, in an attempt to capture the support of the lower and middle classes. Several times during this period, Hitler's own anger at the government would get the best of him, and his speeches were banned. But the NSDAP would use even this as a propaganda weapon; handbills were distributed, speeches were made, and a formal protest was presented. Every setback was a challenge to the party; every government ban was utilized as an excuse for the creation of martyrs, an excuse to make the government appear foolish and at fault.

Party rallies during this period were just as persuasive as before, utilizing all of the rhetorical strategies the NSDAP could muster. This was a time when the NSDAP had to try more than ever to present an image of unity and strength. The Storm Troopers would play an important role in this regard.

The SA had to cope with government bans as well, and its fiercely loyal members never gave up. They, too, showed sophistication in that they could turn a ban back on the government and come out ahead of it.

The propaganda machine was strengthened by the appearance of Josef Goebbels, contributed many valuable ideas to the rhetorical strategies of the party. He advocated techniques
of persuasion which would make people sit up and take notice of the Nazis. He, too, was well schooled in sophisticated means of persuasion. Even at the disastrous meeting at the Pharus-Seele, he was able to create a rhetoric out of chaos.

The alliance with Alfred Hugenberg, communications magnate, was another stroke of good fortune in this period. His connections in publication and film would prove to be invaluable to the spread of Nazi rhetoric.

The Nazis, in spite of factional disputes, government bans, and the rallying of Weimar Democracy, persevered during this period and after the depression, never gave up until they had power.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER IV

THE VIOLENT YEARS END IN VICTORY FOR THE NSDAP

The Depression and German Politics

The NSDAP was able to make great gains as a result of the economic crisis. The tragic, final years of the Weimar Republic were dominated by the depression, which had spread quickly from the United States to other advanced nations. The impact felt by Germany was most severe because the false prosperity of the twenties had been based almost entirely upon short-term loans from the United States—loans which were quickly called after credit became tight (6, p. 327). This sudden recall of the loans, along with a decline in stock values and a reduction in trade, swelled Germany's recession to devastating proportions (10, p. 522). By the spring of 1930 Germany's situation was even worse than it had been in 1923; there was no help to be found abroad, as the crisis was world-wide. Hitler and his party would be able to exploit the situation and attract millions of discontents to their side. The time was a chaotic one; the fall of the Weimar
Republic was imminent, as was the eventual rise of Adolf Hitler's party to power.

The years of "prosperity" had served to cover the old political and social unrest of the years immediately following World War I. The economic tensions opened old wounds, and the years from 1930 to 1933 were filled with class warfare accomplished by "grave psychological, social, and political repercussions" (10, p. 522). The middle class was shaken by business failures, unemployment, and the accompanying hunger increased class antagonisms between the wealthy and the poor. Even hatred between nations grew as the relationships between the "have" and the "have not" countries became more strained.

As a result of all this class warfare, extremism made gains over more moderate politics. All over Europe people turned more and more to the central government, awarding it more and more power (6, p. 327). In its desperation to escape from the chaotic economic situation, the public insisted that the state take on more responsibility for the economic stability of the nation. Many countries turned to dictatorship as the solution. This desperate search for order was to greatly change the political scene in Germany; in the Reichstag elections held between 1930 and 1933, rightist and leftist parties gained at the expense of the old ruling parties.
As parliamentary government became increasingly impossible due to the gains of the right and left groups, President Hindenburg eventually invoked Article 48, allowing rule by Presidential Decree. Thus this period of German history became important for the relationships between important political leaders and the aged Hindenburg (6, p. 327).

Two issues dominated the Reichstag business during 1929 and 1930: unemployment insurance and the Young Plan. As soon as unemployment began to rise to serious proportions, the various parties became involved in a bitter battle over the value of the unemployment insurance plan which had been worked out but two years before, in 1927. Rightist parties, representing the employer interests, fought for lower insurance premiums, while the Social Democrats, the controlling party at this time, refused to change the law at a time when it was urgently needed. But the type of insurance called for was just the type that was needed when credit was hardest to obtain. So a long parliamentary battle ensued.

At the same time the Young Plan, the controversial plan for reparations payments to the allies, was another source of heated debate. During the battle Stresemann died, felled by a stroke, and without his influence the problem worsened to
such a degree that after the plan was finally passed in March 1930, Chancellor Muller gave up and resigned.

Thus Heinrich Bruning, leader of the Center party, was appointed as chancellor. The new chancellor was a man almost totally lacking charisma—a politician who appealed with logic and statistics, never with emotion (6, p. 328). Such a man was certainly ill-equipped to deal with the passionate Adolf Hitler. In fact, Bruning was to have difficulty dealing with both the Communists and the Nazis. Embarking almost immediately upon an authoritarian, right-wing course, he quickly came under fire as a man who was attempting to undermine the German democracy. But there was really very little he could have done considering Germany’s situation at the time (6, p. 328).

In a vote of confidence, the Center party and the Nationalists voted for Bruning, in spite of his threats to dissolve an uncooperative Reichstag, and he managed to keep a slim majority. But the Nazis and Social Democrats voted against him. The period from April to July of 1930 was an uneasy one for the parties, and for Bruning, who could never be sure of his small majority. His orthodox economic programs never pleased everyone; the Social Democrats felt his programs and cut-backs hurt the working classes, and the Nationalists felt they
harmed the upper classes. The Communists had nothing to do with the government, and the Nazis meanwhile were making gains in local elections.

Although the depression was affecting all segments of German society, the NSDAP still had not received the support of the workers who had lost their jobs on the production lines, and were turning to the Communists. Those who joined with the Nazis were those who still retained their middle-class status, but who feared the future (8, p. 175). Their fears of economic hardships and fears of loss of status led them to support the Nazis, the party which was still utilizing a rhetoric filled with familiar appeals to old values and a promise of relief, of better times in the future (2, p. 24). The frantic enthusiasm of these individuals was to greatly aid the Nazi movement; the party's membership continued to rise sharply all over Germany after 1929. Hitler was ready to accept these new members.

Hitler had been struggling since 1927 to establish some sort of firm organizational framework for the party. His work paid off, due to his unflinching insistence upon complete leadership of the party. By 1930 the NSDAP was staffed with personnel who were, by education and social status, conditioned to adapt to the party's growth as a middle class
party (8, p. 171). Hitler had staffed the NSDAP with men who perfectly duplicated society's divisions; the upper ranks of the party bureaucracy were filled by those whose pre-NSDAP occupations had been the most prestigious (8, p. 171). Concentrating their efforts on the urban and rural middle classes, and ready to accept an influx of new members, the NSDAP was ready for the election which would come on September 14, 1930. But there would be trouble first.

Violence was increasingly becoming a problem on the streets of Germany's major cities. Armed street fighting was prevalent, led by the Nazis and Communists, and agitated by other dissidents. This violence was to soon become a major rhetorical weapon in the hands of the Nazi party; the violent image projected by the Storm Troopers would make the party appear powerful. But the government took a dim view of the street fighting, and in June the Prussian Minister of the Interior attempted to curb the violence with an edict forbidding the Nazis to wear uniforms or emblems. But the agitation continued, and Nazis would later use such bans for propaganda purposes.

On July 15, 1930, Bruning went to the Reichstag demanding that its members approve his economic policy and pass a balanced budget, threatening to evoke Article 48 and to
dissolve the Reichstag if he did not get his way. In spite of the threat, a bloc consisting of Communists, Social Democrats, Nationalists, and Nazis defeated several of Bruning's proposals. The government decreed its program as an emergency measure, and the Reichstag had one last chance for agreement—it could approve the decrees or demand a withdrawal (6, p. 330). When the voting was finished, the Reichstag had elected to demand a withdrawal, in spite of aggrieved protests from the Social Democrats that perhaps more time was needed in order to explore all constitutional possibilities.

The executive threat was carried out, and Hindenburg signed a decree of dissolution of the Reichstag. September 14 was set as the date for the next election. In the meantime Hindenburg would decree a number of Bruning's projects, including programs for deflationary tax increases, balancing the budget, and working on unemployment insurance.

No longer running by parliamentary methods, the government depended on Hindenburg to function. The eighty-three year old field marshal, physically and mentally weak, depended upon his son Oscar to convey all important business to him. Thus Oscar's was a key position. Another man of great influence, perhaps the most influential member of the president's
inner circle, was General Kurt von Schleicher. Intelligent, politically shrewd, he could wield great power while satisfied with being in the background, not having to take responsibility. His importance grew because of his personal ties with Hindenburg; he was close friend of the Hindenburg family, and was the man to whom the old field marshal would listen when he did not feel like listening to Bruning. Schleicher was the most important figure in the presedential group from 1930 to 1932 (6, p. 331). Bruning was forced to rely upon Schleicher's influence, since Hindenburg did not really care too much for his unemotional chancellor. Bruning felt that he needed to increase his legislative majority—thus the election. It was to prove a massive blunder.

The NSDAP and Another Election

Before the government announced the new election, the Nazi party had been floundering about, not really progressing, yet not in real trouble. The flow of new members continued, but few of them seemed to be caught up in the emotionalism necessary for the movement to strengthen itself. Also, the ban on the wearing of the uniforms and on the demonstrations necessary for propaganda purposes stifled many of Hitler's
hopes for pseudo-legal takeover. But when the election was announced, the NSDAP shook off its lethargy and went to work.

The party moved quickly to saturate the countryside with National Socialist propaganda. Presenting itself as the last hope of the middle class in its struggle against Marxism, the NSDAP felt its appeal, in the words of Hitler, to be "preservation and securing of the bases of our Christian-German culture, the nationalization of the people, and the defense of federalism" (8, p. 182). The party also hoped to win the support of the apolitical voter, and attempted to make its appeal stronger than ever through attacks on Communist ideals, and appeals to old-fashioned values.

The campaign gave the leaders of the party's functionary corps an opportunity to show off their ability to function as bureaucrats, if only in a romanticized way. After a national planning conference was held on July 27, Hitler, more than a hundred Reich speakers, and many more local leaders travelled tirelessly around Germany, holding a huge series of rallies. Hitler alone delivered at least twenty major speeches during the period of August 3 - September 13, which served to keep Hitler, his party, and its issues before the people (8, p. 183). Every step was meticulously planned, organized by the central
office in Munich, and put into effect by the local party leader, the Gauleiter.

As divisional campaign manager, the Gauleiter functioned to make the most of his complex unit of human resources under a great deal of pressure, the Gauleiter nonetheless proved to be a vital part of the Nazi movement's propaganda network. Thus the organizational structure of the NSDAP was to undergo quite a test before the elections of 1930, and was to come through shining.

The campaign was a bitterly contested one. Fifteen parties offered themselves up for election, but the Nazis worked the hardest, directing their efforts to the desperate rural dwellers as well as the urban middle-class. The small farmers had begun to feel a sense of panic, as a break-down in the price structure of agricultural produce had hurt them badly. Thus the Nazi movement set out to identify itself with these farmers, hitting the countryside with its words of comfort. Nazi propagandists simply disregarded former declarations on agricultural policy, and launched a campaign which was totally opportunistic (13, p. 28). On March 6 an "official party announcement on the attitude of the NSDAP towards the peasantry and agriculture" was published, and an "agricultural department" was created within the party, in order to create
agricultural policy which would benefit the farmers, yet attempt, at the same time, to appease the large landowners.

The efforts of the Nazi party were spectacularly rewarded. The party garnered almost six and one-half million votes, and its representation jumped from twelve to one hundred seven. It was now the second largest party in the Reichstag (13, p.28).

The Social Democrats, still the largest party, nevertheless lost a number of seats. The Communists were third, raising their delegation to seventy-seven seats. The bourgeois parties suffered seriously, due to the Nazis and Communists playing upon the sufferings of the people.

The results of the 1930 elections were important in that they proved the ability of radical politics to draw articulate votes away from the Weimar Republic's values. More and more people looked to the NSDAP as an alternative to democracy.

Koppel Pinson stated the importance of this victory to the Nazis:

Up to September, 1930, the NSDAP was still a negligible factor on the political scene. For most Germans the term 'Nazi' was still associated more or less with something like inmates of a lunatic asylum. The elections of September, 1930... changed the entire picture. From then on, they became the most dynamic factor in German political life, until their dynamism became the ruling power in Germany (9, p. 483).
A new generation of voters was turning away from Weimar, seeking radicalism as an answer to their vast needs. Weary of instability and fearful of the Communists, Nationalistic conservatives also saw the NSDAP as an answer (10, p. 526). The Nazi party seemed well-equipped to serve the needs of a variety of individuals. It had something for everyone. But supporters of the republic were frightened by the ominous victory and were soon to begin a vigorous campaign against the Nazi party.

The Nazis and Other Extremists Gain by Exploiting Germany's Ills

1930 was not only an election year—it also marked the second year of the depression in Germany. Unemployment was approaching an agonizing four million. From this point on, the Nazis would exploit the economic crisis, attacking reparations, the Jews, the chancellor. They drove trucks with huge posters entitled "our Chains!" and outlining Young Plan statistics; they decorated their meetings with the slogan, "Don't buy from the Jew: the gravedigger of the small trader!" They constantly referred to Bruning as the "Hunger Chancellor" (12, p. 21). But the Nazis picked their targets carefully, never denouncing a potential benefactor, even if he might, in reality, be responsible for some of the economy's
ills. Sington and Weidenfeld relate one such example of Nazi favoritism in these critical years:

They lashed Jacob Goldschmidt, the Jewish director of the Darmstädter National Bank, which had financed the Lahusen textile firm, the first big German concern to crash. The placards advertising Goebbels' speeches attacking Goldschmidt were staccato, challenging and corrosive. 'People in Need! Who Will Save You? Jacob Goldschmidt!' Angriff published drawings of Goldschmidt, his features set in a sinister, criminal expression, with the caption: 'This is What He Looks Like!'

Of course, Angriff did not mention that Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's friend and benefactor, was a co-director with Goldschmidt in the Darmstadtener Bank; nor that Lahusen, who had at least the same share of responsibility for the economic crisis, was a Nazi and had financed the Party; nor did they attack the German employers for the economic disaster and the misery of the workers. They know their benefactors and they know their scapegoats (12, pp. 21-22).

Meanwhile Germany's Reichstag was in turmoil. After the election, the Social Democrats, fearing Bruning's threat of dictatorial rule, decided to support him, thus assuring the chancellor of a majority. When the Reichstag convened in October of 1930, the Nazi and Communist delegations created an uproar by singing, shouting, and totally disrupting the proceedings. Until he resigned, this was what Bruning faced; the extremists continued their obstructive politics, attacking every program the chancellor presented. Bruning remained serene, convinced that these chaotic days were merely
temporary, and that Germany would be able to restore democracy when conditions improved (6, p. 332). In March the Reichstag adjourned for seven months, an unusually long period; thus admitting its own impotence.

The year 1931 saw Europe falling deeper into the depression. Austria was badly afflicted, and Germany hoped to work out a customs union (Anschluss) which would be mutually beneficial. Since the treaties of 1919 forbade a union, the World Court had to review the request. The Court decided that such a union was a breach of treaty, so nothing came of Bruning's efforts to help Austria and his own country.

In May a desperate situation presented itself. The Kreditanstalt, Austria's largest bank, one which had important ties throughout Germany and central Europe, declared bankruptcy. The impact on Germany could have been catastrophic, for important German banks would follow suit. Herbert Hoover, however, suggested a year's moratorium on reparations payments to the United States. France also agreed, reluctantly, after Germany made some concessions. Germany's economy continued to flounder, however, as capital continued to be drained. In the autumn of 1931 Germany's creditors finally agreed to hold off collecting loan payments for a period of
six months. This "standstill" agreement was later extended for several years; this helped Germany through the crisis (6, p. 333).

The Government Seeks to Curb Nazi Activities

Meanwhile the government was also involved with attempts to curtail the propaganda activities of the Nazi movement. In the years 1930 - 1932 it issued a series of decrees, the first of which stated:

Following the developments of the Communist Party and the National Socialist Party, both parties are to be regarded as organizations whose aim is the forcible overthrow of the existing order. Any official who belongs to such an organization or is active in its behalf, thereby violates his obligations toward the State, and is guilty of a breach of discipline. Membership in these organizations, participation in their activities, or extending any support whatsoever to them is therefore forbidden.

The Minister of State hereby calls the attention to all officials to this order, with the warning that in the future disciplinary action will be undertaken against all officials who fail to comply with its specifications (1, p. 94).

The elections of 1930 had frightened the government. Ordinances became more and more limiting. In March, 1931 Bruning put through the first of a series of "emergency ordinances" prohibiting mass meetings and the wearing of uniforms in public; the police were endowed with the authority to censor all pamphlets and posters, as well (1, p. 94). Not
four months later, another supplementary decree virtually outlawed freedom of the press. An order of October, 1931 gave the police full power to close meeting places even if there was the slightest suspicion that a meeting was to be held there.

Hitler desperately wanted to avoid charges of illegality; he ordered all party members and persons sympathetic to the movement to strictly observe the regulations. He even threatened expulsion from the party if one was caught in violation of the ordinances. The general reaction to all of this was a great deal of resentment, but most in the movement found ways of getting around the law. One party member's explanation revealed much about the attitude prevalent in the movement:

Then our garb of honor, the brown shirt, was forbidden. Nothing daunted us, we marched in white shirts. For our conviction lay not in our shirts, but in our hearts. The government speedily recognized this, but not until it had forbidden us to wear white shirts, too. I still recall a time a police officer warned me prior to a meeting that white shirts were not to be worn. The policeman asked me to see to it that this order of the Reichpraesident was honored. I announced the importance of the order, and five minutes later the SA appeared at the foot of the speaker's platform, clad in nothing but their trousers. Thus we escaped further chicanery. Shaking their heads, the police saw we were not to be downed (1, p. 95).
The strategies of the Nazi Party were too sophisticated to be damaged by government suppression. A mere ban on the shirts worn by the SA could not stop them, they only banded together fiercely, feeling a stronger sense of comradeship than ever before. Repression only made the Nazis more determined to accomplish their goals. The government had great difficulty enforcing its decrees, since so many were in sympathy with the movement. Even government workers chose to ignore the orders, more often than not. One such official relates how he found a way out of the dilemma:

When the government forbade membership in the National Socialist party to its employes, every teacher and official had to sign a declaration and affirm in word and writing that he was not a member of the Party and did not participate in its activities. I too signed such a declaration, but neither my colleagues nor I withdrew from the Party. We simply notified headquarters, so that in case of a check up our names would not appear on the list of party members. For the rest we continued to pay our dues and carry on our propaganda work, though we had to be doubly careful now! (1, p. 95)

The police staged raids and mass arrests, sending hundreds of Nazis to prison between 1930 and 1932. But still the NSDAP persevered, for even in the police, there were many sympathizers. In fact, the presence of sympathetic policemen and even judges proved to be the greatest obstacle to the effectiveness of the government decrees and court
orders (1, p. 96). Police moves were reported in advance, judges suspended sentences. A police officer, secretly involved as a party member, exemplifies one who could easily aid the NSDAP:

I had learned from friendly police officials, that a bloody encounter was being planned, not by the Communists only but also by the Marxist police, irrespective of whether or not the SA mem should give cause for it. I immediately went to the local group leader and reported the danger threatening the forthcoming SA parade. All sections of the SA were thereupon promptly notified and the planned probation did not materialize (1, p. 96).

Party members would insist upon being tried before lenient judges, known to be sympathizers. The government orders were not effectively stifling the rapid growth of the Nazi Party; too many government workers were on the side of the movement and its cause. More importantly, Adolf Hitler was beginning to attempt to make himself respectable (6, p. 333).

The Harzburg Front

On October 11, 1931, in the small town of Harzburg, a group convened which included Hitler, Hugenberg, Schact, Fritz Thyssen (head of the United Steel Works), and Franz Seldte (head of the Stahlhelm, the Nationalists' paramilitary organization). At this time, an alliance was formed which was to greatly influence the course of Germany's history—The Harzburg Front. Anxious to gain the support of
business and industry, Hitler skillfully conducted a campaign to tone down the radical image of the Nazi party. The culmination of this campaign was revealed when, on January, 1932, he was invited to address the Industry Club in Dusseldorf. He spoke at length against Communism, knowing how much the industrialists feared it, and managed to convince his powerful audience not only that the Nazi party would not threaten big business, but that it would also serve to prevent leftist radicalism. Anxious to gain support from Hitler's thousands of followers, the business leaders turned their support to the NSDAP. That whole episode was a testimony to Adolf Hitler's powers of persuasion; any man could convince the farmers, the urban middle-class, and big business that his movement could be on the side of them all, would have to be a master at the art of persuasion. Adolf Hitler was certainly such a man.

Another Election

Early 1932 saw Hindenburg's term drawing to a close. Bruning, not wanting to incur the expense of a campaign, wanted the Reichstag to pass a special amendment extending Hindenburg's term for a year or two. However, an amendment to the constitution and a two-thirds vote would be necessary,
and that vote could not be achieved without Nazi support. Bruning met with Hitler to try to persuade him, but Hitler would have none of it, saying that Bruning was only trying to further his own career.

Thus Hindenburg, though reluctant to run again, was persuaded, by Schleicher (6, p. 333), no doubt, to stand for re-election. He had the support of all the parties of the center, including the parties which had opposed him in 1925. Hitler, now a German citizen, ran, as did Theodor Duesterberg (a Nationalist), and Ernst Tholmann (a Communist).

Bruning managed Hindenburg's campaign, working with an emotion which was surprising. His efforts paid off when Hindenburg won the March 13 election with eighteen and one-half million votes. Hitler received eleven million; Duesterberg, two and one-half million; and Tholmann, almost five million. In a run-off, Hindenburg garnered over nineteen million votes to Hitler's thirteen and one-half million.

Democracy had its majority, and immediately tested its strength. Fearful of an anti-Communist insurrection, the government ordered the dissolution of the SA and SS on April 14, 1932 (4, pp. 167-168). This ban, like the others, was circumvented by the Storm Troopers; when the order was
issued, the men formed clubs with false names and continued their activities. The SA had been having other problems for some time, however.

Adolf Hitler and the SA
Paralelling the rapid growth of the party had been Hitler's growth as the leader of the movement. His status grew until he became personal and bureaucratic leader, totalitarian head of the NSDAP. But the relationship between Hitler and the SA still had not been settled. The paramilitary organization had not always been under Hitler's "infallible" rule, and after the Putsch, the group still retained their old esprit de corps (8, p. 305). By the end of 1930 Hitler and the leaders of the SA had grown apart, no longer agreeing on strategies. Hitler's insistence upon adherence to the law clashed with the SA leaders who still proclaimed the need for violence and revolution.

In September of 1930 Franz von Pfeffer, head of the Storm Troopers, resigned over these differences. In April of 1931 the SA leaders in Berlin and eastern Germany declared that Hitler and the SA were two entirely different concepts. Walter Stennes, Obergruppenfuehrer (area commander) of eastern Germany, led a revolt. Bullock feels that the revolt was the
result of Hitler's order of February, 1931, which prohibited the SA from fighting in the streets (4, p. 150).

Hitler made use of the SS, still part of the NSDAP, to quell this revolt. Once again, he made an issue of personal loyalty—those loyal to him, he rewarded with promises to lead the SA personally. Those who revolted were suspected by Hitler of being paid agents; Stennes sued Hitler and other party officials for libel after a story in the Angriff accused Stennes of operating as a police spy, and during the trial Hitler testified that "I could only come to the conclusion that if anyone opposed me or my movement, he must have been a paid agent" (8, p. 306). In that statement, Hitler revealed much of his attitude toward himself as a leader, and concerning loyalty to his movement. Hitler was a leader who believed in all-or-nothing loyalty from his followers, and believed that if a man identified himself with the Nazi movement, then said anything against it, then that man was traitor to the cause. But it was just this attitude which made Hitler such a strong leader, and enabled the party to weather several crises.

Thus Hitler, the myth-person, enlarged upon his role as unrivaled leader of the Nazi party, and the party passed through the crisis of the SA revolt. But the violence in the
streets was far from over, as the government was soon to find out. For the chief value of the SA would be its "display of force and terror which its units were able to generate on the shortest notice" (7, p. 99).

More Problems for Bruning, and a New Chancellor

The government, though, was busy at this time with problems of its own. April, 1932 was a year of Land elections throughout Germany, and the Nazis were able to make great gains. Although they still did not control a majority, they were, for all practical purposes, the largest party (6, p. 334).

Bruning was losing ground, in spite of his achievements; Schleicher took it upon himself to turn Hindenburg against the Chancellor, since he felt that Bruning could not bend in the direction that the army wanted him to. The industrialists also turned against Bruning, claiming that the Chancellor's deflationary programs were bad for their business.

Bruning, aware of the forces against him, fought in vain to make amends. But his final blunder was his attempt to split up some bankrupt estates in eastern Germany in order to create jobs; Hindenburg was a landowner in that part of the country, and he was sensitive in that area. On May 29, 1932,
the President asked the Chancellor for his resignation. The President's actions were not democratic, but he was in control. He had his way.

The day after Bruning resigned, Hindenburg, on the advice of Schleicher, named Franz von Papen as Chancellor. Von Papen was a handsome, charming, wealthy aristocrat who enjoyed playing at politics. But Schleicher wanted him to be able to head a cabinet of non-political experts which would send Germany on an aristocratic, conservative path (6, p. 335). Schleicher had even sought Hitler's approval by legalizing the SA and SS once again. Hitler's acceptance, or rather, his toleration of the new government obviously meant a great deal.

The cabinet of ministers was filled with aristocrats, and three men of that group were important for lasting into the Nazi period: Baron Constantin von Neurath (Foreign Office), Count Schwerin-Krosigk (Minister of Finance), and Franz Gurtner (Ministry of Justice). The new government dissolved the Reichstag a few days later, calling for a new election, a Nazi demand. The poor, hungry Germans had yet another election to finance.

The new elections were not held until July 31, so between the dissolution of the Reichstag and the elections, two important developments were occurring (6, p. 336). The first
was an international conference which took place at Lausanne during June and early July. At this conference the reparations problem was finally settled; Bruning and Stresemann had done much of the preparations, but it was Papen who claimed the glory. The Young Plan was abolished, and after Germany made a token payment to the European recovery fund, the reparations payments could cease.

The Battle for Prussia

The other event was much more serious. No government had been set in Prussia after the April elections, and the Nazis were ahead of the other parties in the battle for power. Papen urged the formation of a new government, though he knew it was impossible at that time; he wanted to take over by Presidential Decree, and thus gain control of Germany's largest state, with its efficient police force (6, p. 336).

The battle for power in Prussia was the most serious--civil war was imminent. But this violence served as the stage upon which the Nazis were able to demonstrate their power. Even violence served a purpose in the rhetorical strategies of the Nazi movement. The SA, now legal, was able to vigorously work against the enemies of the party, the Communists in particular (7, p. 84).
Violence was increasingly common between 1930 and 1932, due to the emotions generated by the Nazis—disapproval was as passionate as approval, and as violent. Theodore Abel describes the intensity of the young men who fought for their cause:

The techniques of the battle front were combined with the methods of American gangsterism in pitched battles, assaults, and attacks of all sorts between well-trained and frequently armed units. The fighters belonged largely to the younger generation, who, having the largest stake in the promise of a better future, chafed under the existing economic and political conditions. Loyalty to a cause or a leader had a strong appeal to young men, and adventure, too was alluring. They readily risked their lives for the sake of the slogan "Schluss, damit!" (Let's end it!) (1, p. 99).

The fiercest battles were fought between the NSDAP and the Communist Red Front and Iron Front, composed of trade unions, workers' associations, the pro-republican Reichsbanner. The Nazis sought to spread their propaganda in radical neighborhoods, hoping to reach any people who might be even slightly interested in hearing what the Nazi movement had to say. The anti-Nazis, naturally, sought to halt these activities. The clash was inevitable and bloody. The SA justified their actions in these terms:

That we took recourse to drastic action and that many of our opponents came to feel the hard fist of the SA goes without saying. For we made it our maxim that 'terror must be broken by terror;'
Furthermore, we felt that all opposition had to be stamped into the ground. We could show no consideration for the individual when the destiny of sixty million people was at stake.

We marched on and on, for Hitler, freedom, for bread. There could be no turning back for us. Our only thought was to show ourselves worthy of our comrades, of the Great War, as well as of those of our ranks who slept beneath the turf (1, p. 100).

Group hostilities were alarmingly frequent and violent. The aggressive tactics of both sides included guerrilla warfare, deaths were frequent on both sides. Nazis were knifed, shot, stoned, but they never gave up. One particularly enthusiastic SA member, describing a street fight, at the same time reveals much about the attitude possessed by the members of the movement at the time:

Every SA man has a tale to tell. I was ordered to guard duty at a meeting . . . About fifteen minutes before the meeting I met a number of SA comrades and we proceeded, nine men strong, along Richard Wagner Strasse. An acquaintance coming our way warned us to change our direction . . .

Even at a distance we could see a huge crowd gathered there. The Communists were in full force; the order to attack us had already been given. In close formation we marched through the crowds. Not a sound issued from us or the Communists. Evidently they were impressed by the courage of a handful of men cutting through the mob. I kept wondering when they'd seize one of us and make short shrift of him; incredibly, they let us pass. Perhaps they judged nine of us were too many for 250 of them to deal with.
This statement revealed the attitude of self-assurance possessed by so many of the SA, an attitude which would do much for the image projected by the movement. The young man went on to describe the battle which ensued when the Communists decided to attack the Nazis:

... a hail of stones rained down upon us. It was only then that I noticed a crowd of women, their aprons loaded with stones, which they handed to their men to throw at us ... fortunately, no one was disabled.

Since I was responsible for these men, and since there was no possibility of our being ambushed at the other end of the street, the most sensible course, it seemed to me, was to withdraw. The soldiers of Adolf Hitler were too few and too precious to be sacrificed unnecessarily (1, pp. 107-108).

Later, after the meeting, there was another brief battle, and the young SA man never admitted, in his narration of the events, any fear, or surrender to the Communists. This was important for the total effect of the Nazi street rhetoric, the SA men were impressive in their apparent courage and sense of duty to their cause, and this would do much to attract members to the movement.

The violence was not limited to the streets, meetings were frequently the sites of partisan warfare. Violence became the way of life for the Nazi SA. The climax of the situation was reached on July 17, on the occasion of a procession by the NSDAP through the left-wing community of
Altona in Prussian territory. The obvious provocation was too much for the Communists to bear; the procession became a brawl and during the firing which broke out, several people on both sides were killed.

Finally Papen had found the pretext he needed in order to gain control of Prussia. He summoned Braun and Severing, the Prussian Minister of the Interior, and informed them that the peace in Prussia was obviously not being maintained, and presented them with a decree from Hindenburg which would remove them from office and place Prussia under the control of the federal Chancellor (6, p. 337). When Severing and the Social Democrats protested that this action was unconstitutional, Papen declared a state of emergency and sent the local army in to remove the Social Democrats. Severing left after a threat of force, and Papen proceeded to place his people in the Prussian government.

The Nazis Make More Gains

The July 31 election campaign provided the Nazis with yet another opportunity to achieve a majority in the Reichstag. Hoping desperately for a victory, the movement also took advantage of the opportunity to promote its ideals as never before. By 1932 the Nazi propaganda machine had spread all
over Germany, and Goebbels had been made head of the new Party Propaganda Department, taking over part of Gregor Strasser's duties. Goebbels was responsible for running an intricate organization whose goal was the winning of more and more votes in the local and national elections (12, p. 22). (The Nazis were confident enough to even plan ahead; Fritz Reinhardt was appointed as Reich Propaganda Chief II, to plan the propaganda organization for the future Third Reich.)

When the 1932 elections approached, Hitler decided to test his popularity and the effectiveness of his propaganda machine in a new way. The NSDAP profited from the economic crisis, as well. The Lufthansa Aviation Company had faced hard times with the trade depression, and so Goering approached them with an irresistible offer--Lufthansa was asked to lease a small fleet of planes to the NSDAP for the purpose of flying Hitler and an entourage all over Germany on an election-promotion campaign (12, p. 22). Lufthansa needed the business desperately, so the company overcame its qualms over being a propaganda instrument, and agreed.

This agreement was of vital importance to the success of the Nazi movement. Hitler was able to fly to every town and small village, carrying the message of the NSDAP all over Germany. This was one of the largest public relations
campaign ever conducted by a political campaign. Sington and Weidenfeld describe the effect:

The self-boosting campaigns of Aimee McPherson, Pussyfoot Johnson, and Horatio Bottomley paled before this clock-work succession of huge mass meetings following one another with bewildering speed all over Germany, each one harangued by a frenzied Hitler newly alighted from his aeroplane, and who sped off through the night air amid acclamations from 100,000 throats to another meeting 500 miles away. It was American high-speed method grafted to German hero worship and semipagan rites. It was mass agitation on the greatest scale the world had ever seen (12, p.23).

The people loved the excitement and sensationalism, and the NSDAP was able to convince more people of its political ideals than ever before. Hitler flew 30,000 miles and was able to address 200 meetings. Fifteen million Germans were able to hear him speak. This exposure of the powerful leader-figure to so many German citizens was of great value to the advancement of the movement, as Hitler was, by this time, the embodiment of the Nazi ideals. Once again, his personal magnetism was responsible for a large number of votes.

Effective publicity planning enabled Hitler to attract the attention not only of Germany, but of all Europe; regional party headquarters saw to it that the press was notified of every detail of speeches, meetings, and plans. The campaign closed with a rally at Grunwald Stadium in Berlin, with Hitler addressing an audience of 100,000, supported by twelve
Storm Trooper bands and 15,000 SS torchbearers. The most modern techniques of mass persuasion—films, phonograph records, posters, and dramatic photography (5, p. 65)—coupled with the overall display of popular support, were primarily responsible for the rise of Hitler to a power position within the government. He impressed big business, and Papen and Hindenburg soon would not be able to deny the influence of the Nazi Party on the political scene in Germany.

The results of the Reichstag election were encouraging; the Nazis did not achieve their longed-for majority, but they came close. Receiving 13,745,000 votes and acquiring 230 seats in the Reichstag, the Nazis were now the largest single party. But their popular vote was not much larger than that received by Hitler in the presidential election in April, which foreshadowed one last crisis for the Nazis, to be faced at the end of the year. The Communists also gained, increasing their membership to eighty-nine, taking seats from the Social Democrats. Papen could only count on the Nationalists and the People's Party, and together these only garnered forty-four votes.

Thus it was becoming increasingly clear that the future of Germany's government would have to include participation by the Nazis (6, p. 337). By mid-1932 the NSDAP had grown in
spite of governmental restrictions, inter- and intra-party crises. Dietrich Orlow aptly summed up the position of the NSDAP in 1932:

Hitler's self-definition and the organizational principles that derived from it structured and ingested the thousands of Germans who flocked to the party after the effects of the depression became visible. By mid-1932 the organizational accomplishments of the NSDAP were impressive. The party which had been a laughable fringe group three years before had now effectively politicized (in the Hitlerian sense) perhaps one-fifth of Germany's politically articulate population. Moreover, this rapid growth had been accomplished without sacrificing either the radicalism or the centralization of the party. The NSDAP remained a unitary political organization, all of whose internal and external decisions were ultimately made by one man. The interest-group affiliates were additional supports for the authority of the party leadership, not undermining influences as they tended to be in other mass parties. . . . In addition, the NSDAP, as a result of the special relationship of the organizational apparatus to Hitler, had successfully eluded the dilemma of oligarchy which beset other mass parties. . . . (8, p. 306).

Hitler Negotiates for Power

Hitler, determined to gain full power, initiated a policy of "all-or-nothing," which even radical Nazis feared would ultimately ruin their chances. Hitler, however, could not be swayed. Early August was filled with conferences among Hitler, Papen, Schleicher, and later Hindenburg. Papen offered Hitler the Vice-Chancellor; but still Hitler held out, even after
assurances that Hindenburg would never accept a Nazi leader as Chancellor. (Hindenburg insisted on a non-partisan presidential government).

Hindenburg himself met with Hitler, offering him a position in Papen's cabinet. When Hitler refused, the old President read him a lesson in good manners and chivalry (6, p. 338). Hitler was humiliated, but he remained steadfast. He was determined to attain full governmental power, even if it meant the destruction of the NSDAP, and this caused another crisis for the party.

Gregor Strasser refused to accept the position Hitler was taking and resigned. This episode was painful for Hitler, for he and Strasser had been longtime close associates. But, as always, Hitler reacted as he had to earlier crisis, by enforcing his powers of leadership. Although several individuals in executive positions within the party agreed with Strasser, they were loathe to break their ties of loyalty with Hitler. Thus the party survived another crisis, probably its most serious one. Hitler had learned years before that he could not compromise his authority or his goals, in spite of the dangers it presented to the party. He had a destiny to fulfill; in his mind, if he did not fulfill that historical destiny, he would have misread history, and that would have
been unthinkable (8, p. 308). But it goes without saying that Hitler's rigid principles could have eventually weakened the party, if he had not attained power when he did.

Another Election Weakens the Nazi Movement

Papen felt that the Nazis had reached their apex, and that further elections would weaken the party; he planned to force one election after another to cause the Nazis to lose votes, and thus be unable to finance further campaigns (6, p. 338). So, when the Reichstag elected in July convened on September 12, Papen came prepared with a degree of dissolution already signed by Hindenburg. Goering, chairman of the largest party and thus the presiding officer, ignored Papen and called for a motion on a vote of no confidence which the Communists had prepared. Papen finally left, placing the decree of dissolution on Goering's desk. Although the motion carried, Papen was able to say it was illegal, since the Reichstag had been dissolved. Elections were to be held on November 6.

The campaigning was desperate and violent, as usual. Papen was proven correct in his assumptions about the Nazis; the election results were frightening for them. They lost about 2,000,000 votes and twenty-five seats in the Reichstag.
Papen nonetheless still had to command a minority, even though support for his government almost doubled. The Communists did very well—they now possessed one hundred seats, at the expense of the Social Democrats, who had lost the Prussian government to Papen.

The weeks following the election were hard on the Nazi Party. The SA was called in to help in a special way. Unemployment in Germany had reached new heights, and financial conditions within the NSDAP were deplorable because of the expense of elections (7, p. 85). Conditions were so bad that the NSDAP required its unemployed SA men to give up their unemployment checks to the party; many did not even have an unemployment check to give. The SA men went to the streets to ask for donations. However, this did serve to unify the members, and the developments within the government would soon release the Nazis from their troubles.

Hitler's Final Victory

Schleicher had decided that Papen was becoming too independent, and was becoming too close to Hindenburg. Also, Schleicher had become friends with Gregor Strasser, and thus had become acquainted with the left-wing Nazis and was more willing to work out some sort of agreement (1, p. 111).
Papen was convinced by his cabinet, (several were adherents of Schleicher's) to talk with the various party leaders in an effort to garner more support; nothing was gained, so Papen foolishly resigned, thinking that Hindenburg would carry on negotiations, fail, and offer Papen the Chancellorship once again.

Hindenburg, after several days negotiations, summoned Hitler to him and offered him the Chancellorship. Hitler refused, as there were several conditions attached. He wanted full power, and Hindenburg refused. Schleicher had carefully maneuvered to get Papen out of office, but did not expect to become Chancellor himself. But on December 2 that is what he had to do. Hindenburg was tired of the whole problem; he forced Schleicher to take office in order to work out the situation himself. Schleicher did not want to be Chancellor but he worked desperately to gather some support. It did not work, as none of the parties really trusted him very much.

Meanwhile, a very important meeting was taking place between Hitler and Papen. Papen, furious at what Schleicher had done to him, was ready to talk with the Nazis, and Hitler, fearful because of the desperate financial problems and the dissension in the NSDAP, was also ready to sign an agreement.
The two met in the home of banker Kurt von Schroeder on January 4, 1933 (1, p. 111). As a result of the meeting, the Harzburg Front was re-established and steel interest began to contribute badly needed money to the NSDAP.

Schleicher had no hope of dealing with the Reichstag, which was about to re-convene, so he resigned on January 28, 1933. The next two days were filled with desperate bargaining. Papen, hard at work, managed to persuade Hitler to take office as Chancellor with a coalition cabinet. He also managed to placate Hindenburg, convincing him that as Vice-Chancellor, he could keep Hitler from total dictatorship. Thus, on January 30, 1933, a new government with Adolf Hitler as Chancellor and Papen as Vice-Chancellor, was announced. A new era was opened with German history—the era of the Third Reich.

That night, a deliriously happy SA marched in celebration. The goal of their leader had at last been achieved. William Shirer aptly describes the scene, and the spirit that pervaded it:

That evening, from dusk until far past midnight the delirious Nazi Storm Troopers marched in a massive torchlight parade to celebrate the victory. By the tens of thousands, they emerged in disciplined columns from the depths of the Frergarten, passed under the triumphal arch of the Brandenburg gate and down the Wilhelmstrasse their bands blaring the old
martial airs to the thunderous beatings of the drums, their voices bawling the new Harst Wessel song and other tunes that were as old as Germany, the jack boots beating a mighty rhythm on the pavement, their torches held high and forming a ribbon of flame that illuminated the night and kindled the hurrahs of the onlookers massed on the sidewalks. From a window in the palace Hindenburg looked down upon the marching with his cane, apparently pleased that at last he had picked a Chancellor who could arouse the people in a traditionally German way. Whether the old man, in his dotage, had any inkling of what he had unleashed was doubtful. . . (11, p. 19)

The fateful decision to raise Hitler to the position of Chancellor was reached in closed-door discussion, and history will never know all of the details. But, despite the complicated nature of the negotiations, one thing was clear; the Nazis had much in their favor. They were determined to fight as long as it was necessary to gain control of the government; they had a great deal of support among the masses despite the losses suffered in the November 1932 elections, they were still the strongest party in the Reichstag. (3).

But those opposed to the Nazis were just as determined to control Hitler, preventing him from totalitarian rule. All but two of Hitler's cabinet ministers did not belong to the NSDAP, and were appointed to keep a check on the two Chancellor's actions. Of course, this action failed, for it ignored one very important fact. Theodore Abel explains:

Hitler was not merely the head of a political party, but was the leader of a movement. A party
might well be expected to conform to established procedure, but a movement seldom adheres to regulations and precedents. Being revolutionary in character it is bound to sweep aside all considerations once it gets into power, until it has completely asserted itself (I, p. 111).

Hitler's followers, consciously or not, were aware of this. For them, Hitler's victory was the final victory for the cause. They set about establishing a dictatorship as soon as possible, launching a period of even more violence. But despite the fierce campaign, and the fact that on February 28 Hitler had been given emergency powers by Hindenburg, the Nazis failed to get a majority vote in an election held on March 6. However, the German Nationalists gave up their fifty-two seats to the NSDAP, thus allowing Hitler's party to obtain its majority in the Reichstag by sixteen seats.

When Adolf Hitler was given emergency powers, he was given power over the basic civil rights of the German people. He was literally the absolute leader of Germany, and with his party's majority in the Reichstag, he could work at passing the legislation necessary for the advancement of the Nazi cause.

An unbelievable amount of legislation was passed within a nine month period: laws set up courts for the prosecution of enemies of the NSDAP, an Enabling Act allowed rule by
decree until 1937 (at which time it was renewed), a national boycott of Jewish businesses was passed, laws were set up to remove Jews and anti-Nazis from civil service and the legal profession, unions were forced to disband so that a Deutsche Arbeitsfront could be set up, and these were only examples.

Summary

The last years of the Weimar Republic were chaotic and tragic; the depression probably hit Germany hardest of all of the countries in Europe. The failing democracy, in its feeble attempts to cure the economy's ills, made easy prey for the Nazis and other extremist groups.

The people of Germany were hard-hit by the high unemployment rate, and in their desperation, began to turn to the Communist and Nazi parties. Nazi rhetoric at this time was designed to exploit the fears of the people, and the country was saturated with speeches. Adolf Hitler made a great effort to go out before all of the Germans, and his image as leader of a vital movement served to convince many of the sincerity and strength of the Nazi movement.

Hitting hard at the middle class, the Nazis sought to convince these masses that theirs was the party which would preserve the "bases" of the German culture. With their nationalistic appeals, the Nazis appeared to be a party which
cared about the things that mattered so much to the middle class. Fearful of the communists and anxious because their former status was lost, the middle class reached out for the familiar appeals of the Nazi rhetoric. They were offered a return to former stability, and a leader who seemed strong enough to succeed.

During this period no major party rally was held, due to a lack of funds, and a busy schedule for Hitler. Hitler travelled tirelessly all over Germany, holding a series of small rallies, delivering speech after speech to rural and urban voters. With so many elections during this period, Adolf Hitler was constantly before the people, hoping to persuade more and more of them to vote Nazi.

During this period in their growth, the Nazis employed street rhetoric as never before. Violence among rival parties was common, and the Nazis were not willing to fall back behind the Communists, their primary rival for power at this time. The violence employed by the SA (the Storm Troopers) was an important aspect of the image presented by the Nazi party movement. A strong party was needed to make the Weimar Republic appear weakened in comparison. In order to appear strong, the Nazis fought hard on the streets, daring to show up at Communist meetings, and boldly appearing
frequently in communist-controlled districts. Of course, many were injured or killed, but this served to create martyrs for their cause. The Nazi movement could always find a rhetorical use for an event, no matter how disastrous that event would have been for any other groups.

Besides "working" in the streets, the Nazis were busy within the government itself. Adolf Hitler, as the leader and spokesman for his now powerful party, made use of every opportunity to gain power, except when offered only limited power. Anxious to remain within the legal framework as much as possible, he discouraged flagrant violations of the law. But he knew that his "soldiers" could work their way around the law, with the help of sympathetic judges and lawmen. Every decree issued by the government to suppress Nazi activities was turned around to make the government appear foolish in the eyes of the people. Every attempt to curtail propaganda activities was looked upon as a challenge, and met a degree of sophistication seldom seen before in Germany.

The state of the Weimar Republic was reflected in the number of elections held during this period—four major elections, and various local elections during a four-year period. Three Chancellors came and went (Bruning, Van Papen, Schleicher), and the situation in Germany, with the exception
of one brief rally, worsened. The government's loss was always the Nazis' gain; the movement only did well, as a rule, when the government was not doing so well. But Hitler worked and waited for the fall which he felt was inevitable.

The Nazi Party grew until it was impossible for the government to ignore it as a political power in Germany. Hesitantly, leaders offered Hitler conditional Chancellorship. But Adolf Hitler was the fanatical leader of an extremist movement, and he refused to take less than full power. He risked everything in order to gain everything. The remarkable thing about Hitler as a leader was that he was able to overcome criticism within his party, for many felt he should adopt a more careful approach to the Chancellorship. But Hitler managed to assert his absolute leadership over his members; demanding unflinching loyalty, the party members, he told them to go along with him or get out of the party. They went along. Hitler's self-definition became his followers sense of identity.

The rhetoric of the movement gained more power with the aid of Alfred Hugenberg's communications empire. The Nazis were able to spread their ideas, with the aid of films, magazines, and reputable newspapers, to all of Germany. Also, the agreement with Lufthansa allowed Hitler to conduct his famous airborne campaign of 1932, gaining exposure to more
people than any of the opposing candidates. The Nazi movement fell back again. The people loved the sensationalism and excitement of the Nazis, and they saw it everywhere, on film, recordings, posters, and in photographs.

This popular support did much to convince the government powers that Adolf Hitler should be given the chancellorship. After much closed discussion, he was selected as Chancellor on January 30, 1933. The Nazis were no longer part of a movement to gain power—they were now a power.
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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

After so many years, the rise of the Nazi Party, for some, becomes shrouded in a mist of unreality; few who did not live during that era can really grasp the truth of what the Nazis accomplished, and it is difficult to believe that such a movement could attain such a great deal of power. Yet despite the passage of years, Hitler and his party remain a source of much controversy. Man, perhaps, out of some sense of guilt, is still attempting to explain how and why it all happened. This paper has been another attempted explanation—a study of the Nazi Party as a rhetorical movement, which gained power primarily through its artful use of persuasive techniques.

The National Socialist German Workers' Party began as one of the many small political discussion groups which existed in post-World War I Germany. But this group gained a member named Adolf Hitler, and it grew to be a full-fledged movement.

This study has attempted to look at the Nazi movement's persuasive techniques, and the historical developments and
inner-party workings which influenced its growth and its approach to persuasion. The major factors in the Nazi rhetoric which were studied were Adolf Hitler's remarkable ability as a leader, non-verbal techniques such as visual display of party unity through the use of uniforms, symbols, songs, banners, mass rallies, etc., and the Storm Troopers' (SA) use of violent street rhetoric, and the spread of Nazi ideals through the many speeches at meetings, rallies, and tours. The Nuremberg Party Rallies were also an important factor, for they employed all of the above (promotion of Hitler, display of unity and power, many speeches) and were thus a very important propaganda device.

As with most rhetorical movements, the Nazi movement began with a feeling of discontent. Its members had a vague sense of need—a need for a new Germany, or new leaders, perhaps. But Adolf Hitler knew that this group needed more than desire. It needed organization, and he set out to persuade these individuals that they needed to organize their discontent into a mass movement.

The whole movement was controlled by Hitler, either directly or indirectly, from the start. He had boundless enthusiasm and a need for power, and the ideals he contributed became the ideals of the movement. He eventually gained power
at least partially because his speaking revealed him as a vibrant personality who stood out against the drabness of the Weimar Republic.

Hitler was, of course, the embodiment of the charismatic leader of a movement; persuading by his image as much as by his words, he could demand unflinching loyalty and receive it. The loyalty of his followers brought the movement through more than one major crisis. Theodore Abel explained Hitler's ability as a leader:

While Adolf Hitler . . . was establishing himself as a 'leader of men' at the expense of party politics, he was intentionally or unintentionally doing the right thing for the establishment of a movement. For the history of great movements of the past, such as the Reformation, Methodism, and the French and Russian Revolutions, clearly show that belief in a 'man of destiny' is vital to the furtherance of social movements.

His followers look upon him, not as an efficient manager, but as a prophet, a symbol of their aspirations, a legendary figure for whom they experienced unbounded reverence. This the Fuhrer cult, together with the wildly emotional tone of his propaganda, achieved for Hitler (1, p. 215).

In Herbert Simons' article on the leadership necessary for the success of a movement (6) he discussed two types of leaders: the militant, needed to excite the populace and gain attention, and the moderate, skilled at organization, who can deal with the status quo and get things done. But Hitler was unique in that he was both militant and moderate leader for
his movement. He aspired to total power, and used violent, unorthodox means to gain that power. Yet he had an uncanny ability for organization as well, and could settle down and regroup when needed. He never gave up, and viewed setbacks as challenges which made him work harder than ever for his cause. The strength of the party eventually gave him access to the status quo, and although the status quo looked upon him as a militant, they were forced to deal with him.

Hitler's personality enabled him to attract a "Hitler class" (6, pp. 1-11), an unshakably loyal group of followers, whom he would later organize into the elite SS corps. These men, along with the Storm Troopers, were of vital importance to the image presented by the NSDAP. Their value lay in the display of terror and force which they generated. This show of strength was of unestimatable value to the propaganda put out by the movement; the Nazis were kept on the streets, in the public eye, and were able to keep ahead of all the other groups competing with them for power (7, p. 215).

The marching, armed soldiers of the Nazi movement created a military image which the people of Germany seemed to need at the time. Hitler sensed that need and used it to his advantage, as John W. Wheeler-Bennett described:
The SA, with its military formation, its ranking hierarchy, its banners, and its bands, was designed to satisfy the German craving for uniforms and emblems, for that military glamour and display which the drab rule of the Weimar had done its poor best to suppress (8, pp. 203-204).

Thus, the SA ranks, their marching and striking music, their uniforms, all played a very important role in attracting votes for the NSDAP. The people wanted to be governed by strength, and Germany needed her self-respect back. The Nazi movement offered this to the people in its rallies, meetings, and speeches.

This display of strength, along with the uniforms of the SA and SS was also a vital part of the non-verbal rhetorical techniques employed by the Nazis. Hitler was very much concerned with the image his movement projected—the way things appeared. It was important that the party appear unified, both to outsiders and its members. The songs, symbols, (such as the famous swastika and eagle) and distinctive uniforms, all gave members of the movement a sense of identify with that movement. They felt they belonged, and were able to persuade others to belong also.

Party and non-party members who attended the Nazi Party rallies could not help but be caught up in the spectacle of them. The rallies were carefully calculated to influence potential voters, and to inspire party members. They were
most effective. Commonly staged at night, the major meeting of the rally were striking displays of party strength and unity. Huge searchlights ran over grandiose settings and thousands of people; hundreds of flags and banners waved over the crowds; the Storm Troopers marched in to the blaring music of their bands, which filled the crowds with excitement. and then Hitler, the leader of all this, would speak. One could very well see how so many people would be impressed by such a spectacle. Thus these rallies were a very important persuasive weapon in the hands of the Nazi movement.

Another very important factor in the persuasion employed by the movement was the speech. Hitler's uncanny speaking ability was one of the greatest strengths of the movement. In fact, his oratory was probably one of the primary sources of his power. He was a demagogue, who demanded that his listeners believe his often maudlin rhetoric, and amazingly enough, they did (8, pp. 203-204).

His rhetoric was based on complex theory, which he himself devised and explained in some detail in Mein Kampf. He stressed the importance of the spoken word, and insisted that speeches be carefully calculated to reach the deepest emotions of the audience. He never sought to appeal to reason, knowing that the greatest mass of the people did not care for
intellectualism. His ideas obviously worked, for he could hold an audience for hours while he raved about a variety of topics, ranging from the Versailles Treaty to the Jewish conspiracy.

Hitler's theories of persuasion launched a propaganda machine which had no equal among its contemporaries. Repetition, familiar slogans, huge posters in vibrant colors all contributed to make the propaganda of the movement vital and unique. Werner Maser commented on the power of Nazi rhetoric:

One of the more unhappy consequences of Mein Kampf was the fact that Hitler and his glib functionaries raised rhetoric to a position of dangerous importance in Germany. In Mein Kampf Hitler had propounded certain ideas and guidelines on the subject of propaganda and they had been followed faithfully; propaganda had contributed much to influencing the freedom of the human will the phrase used by Hitler himself to denote the potential effect of what he would have called adroit propaganda. Hitler had no use for independent opinions, differences of view or freedom of speech; he was interested solely in enforcing complete obedience upon others. . . . (2, p. 169).

The Nazi movement followed the path of most rhetorical-social movements, going through Blumer's four stages of social unrest, popular excitement, formalization, and institutionalization. From unorganized, uncertain social unrest, it developed through years of organization and growth. Hitler and his followers utilized rhetoric skillfully, exciting the populace
and thus gaining votes and political influence. The movement's more formalized political structure made it an increasingly important factor on the political scene in Germany, eventually enabling the Nazi Party to obtain the power it sought. Thus the Nazi movement was institutionalized.

Yet it differed from most organized movements in that it never really had a clear ideology. There was much the Nazis spoke out against—National Socialism was anti-Communist, anti-Socialist (!), anti-Semitic, anti-foreign, anti-internationalism, anti-Versailles, anti-Catholic, and on and on. The movement had few positive aims, other than totalitarian power and the so-called "purification" of the German race (2, p. 169).

Nazi "ideology" shifted with the necessity of the times. When a point of view was not accepted by the people, it would shift, so that more votes could be collected. This is not to say that there was not a permanent set of beliefs—certain mythical ideals such as adoration of the supreme leader, supremacy of the Aryan race, and the belief in the restoration of Germany's greatness—were always present. But when set against other doctrines, the ideology of National Socialism appeared quite irregular and illogical. Rather than ideology,
the Nazis had goals, and they set about to achieve them in whatever manner was most successful.

This paper has attempted to study the above factors in the success of the Nazi movement, but has not isolated the factors. The rise of Hitler's party was viewed against the tumultuous backdrop of Germany's past-World I history, as developments within the struggling Weimar government certainly influenced the course of the movement. The Weimar Republic had many problems and weaknesses, and against the sophisticated rhetorical strategies of Adolf Hitler's party, it paled in comparison. The Nazis were able to capitalize upon the country's ills, insisting that they had a better way, but depended upon the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic in order to survive. In the short periods of revival of optimism in Germany, the Nazis lost votes but when the Great Depression threatened the stability of Weimar democracy, the long years of Nazi attack on that government assured its fall.

This paper has looked at the Nazi movement in three different stages of its growth—the early beginnings of 1919-1923, the organizational stage, 1924-1929, and the violent years which brought success, 1930-1933. In each of these stages, an attempt has been made to study the rhetorical
techniques employed, the organizational efforts within the party against the history of the period.

The period of growth over the years 1919-1923, saw the National Socialist German Workers' Party grow from a small political discussion group into a full-fledged movement. This growth was due to the enthusiasm of Adolf Hitler, who joined in 1919, but early leaders Drexler and Harrer were ambitious also, and worked to organize the group. Early efforts at persuading the masses included speeches, meetings, and the first Parteitag (party rally). As the meetings attracted more and more people, a newspaper, the Volkscher Beobachter, was acquired, and became an important propaganda weapon. Even at this earliest stage the rhetoric displayed an unusual vitality, foreshadowing the future success of the Nazi movement.

The second phase, covering the years 1924-1929, found the Nazis trying to recouperate after their premature coup d'etat, the Munich Putsch. Hitler managed to keep his stature as leader, although imprisoned for nine months. He wrote Mein Kampf while in prison, and his book would contain all of the plans, rhetorical strategies, and "ideals" of the future Nazi Party. These years saw the growth of the Fuhrer cult, important for the image projected by the movement.
But this period was hard on the movement, insofar as Germany was experiencing a new optimism, and a false prosperity. Thus the Nazis lost some of the votes of the former discontents. The rhetoric shifted more to attack opposing parties, and to present the Nazi movement as strong and unified. Hitler was also employing more legal or quasi-legal methods, having learned his lesson from the failure of the Putsch.

The party experienced some factional strife, but the party rally was carefully planned in order to project an image of unity, with much hand-shaking and speech-making, along with the usual non-verbal rhetoric.

The last period, covering 1930-1933, saw the fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Adolf Hitler and his party to power. The depression hit Germany perhaps harder than it did any other country in Europe, and the Nazis were hard at work convincing the people that the government was too weak, and needed to be changed. Obviously, the Nazis had little trouble convincing many of that fact. Once again, the Nazis projected an image of strength and unity which made the Weimar government appear weaker and more disoriented than it really was.
Violent street rhetoric was quite common in these years, and this too enforced the image of power and strength. Adolf Hitler flew all over Germany on several campaigns, and was able to bring his strong image and his party before more people than ever before.

Despite government bans on the SA and SS, the Nazis grew in numbers and political power. With the aid of the Lufthansa planes and Alfred Hugenberg's communications empire, and soon the government could no longer deny that the Nazi party was a strong political power.

Thus Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, and the Nazis achieved their goal—full power. They were able to rule Germany for twelve years, eventually plunging the world into its second World War. When the allies liberated Europe and went into Germany, they finally saw the reality of Adolf Hitler's reign of terror. Since that time many have tried to find an explanation of the growth of the Nazi movement. This paper has tried to explain how that movement grew and attained power through a complex set of historical circumstances, skillfully applied rhetorical technique.
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