

of the small group of Junkers inside Germany. Instead, the Junkers would have preferred to annex the non-German areas to the east in order to obtain additional land and a supply of cheap Slav agricultural labor. The Junkers wanted agricultural tariffs to raise the prices of their crops, especially rye and, later, sugar beets. The industrialists objected to tariffs on food because high food prices made necessary high wages, which they opposed. On the other hand, the industrialists wanted high industrial prices and a market for the products of heavy industry. The former they obtained by the creation of cartels after 1888; the latter they obtained by the naval-building program and armaments expansion after 1898. The Junkers agreed to these only in return for a tariff on food which eventually, through "import certificates," became a subsidy for growing rye. This alliance, of which Bülow was the creator, was agreed on in May 1900, and consummated in December 1902. The tariff of 1902, which gave Germany one of the most protected agricultures in the world, was the price paid by industry for the Navy bill of 1900, and, symbolically enough, could be passed through the Reichstag only after the rules of procedure were violated to gag the opposition.

The Quartet was not Conservative but, potentially at least, revolutionary reactionaries. This is true at least of the landlords and industrialists, somewhat less true of the bureaucracy, and least true of the army. The landlords were revolutionary because they were driven to desperation by the persistent agricultural crisis which made it difficult for a high-cost area like eastern Germany to compete with a low-cost area like the Ukraine or high-productivity areas like Canada, Argentina, or the United States. Even in isolated Germany they had difficulty in keeping down the wages of German agricultural labor or in obtaining agricultural credit. The former problem rose from the need to compete with the industrial wages of West Germany. The credit problem rose because of the endemic lack of capital in Germany, the need to compete with industry for the available supply of capital, and the impossibility of raising capital by mortgages where estates were entailed. As a result of these influences, the landlords, overburdened with debts, in great jeopardy from any price decline, and importers of unorganized Slav laborers, dreamed of conquests of lands and labor in eastern Europe. The industrialists were in a similar plight, caught between the high wages of unionized German labor and the limited market for industrial products. To increase the supply of both labor and markets, they hoped for an active foreign policy which would bring into one unit a Pan-German bloc, if not a Mittel-europa. The bureaucracy, for ideological, especially nationalist, reasons, shared these dreams of conquest. Only the army hung back under the influence of the Junkers, who saw how easily they, as a limited political and social power, could be overwhelmed in a Mittel-europa or even a Pan-Germania. Accordingly, the Prussian Officers' Corps had little interest in these Germanic dreams, and looked with favor on the conquest of Slav areas only if this could be accomplished without undue expansion of the army itself.

#### Chapter 27—The Weimar Republic, 1918-1933

The essence of German history from 1918 to 1933 can be found in the statement There was no revolution in 1918. For there to have been a revolution it would have been necessary to liquidate the Quartet or, at least, subject them to democratic control. The Quartet represented the real power in Germany society because they represented the

forces of public order (army and bureaucracy) and of economic production (landlords and industrialists). Even without a liquidation of this Quartet, it might have been possible for democracy to function in the interstices between them if they had quarreled among themselves. They did not quarrel, because they had an esprit de corps bred by years of service to a common system (the monarchy) and because, in many cases, the same individuals were to be found in two or even more of the four groups. Franz von Papen, for example, was a Westphalian noble, a colonel in the army, an ambassador, and a man with extensive industrial holdings, derived from his wife, in the Saarland..

Although there was no revolution—that is, no real shift in the control of power in Germany in 1919—there was a legal change. In law, a democratic system was set up. As a result, by the late 1920's there had appeared an obvious discrepancy between law and fact—the regime, according to the law, being controlled by the people, while in fact it was controlled by the Quartet. The reasons for this situation are important.

The Quartet, with the monarchy, made the war of 1914-1918, and were incapable of winning it. As a result, they were completely discredited and deserted by the soldiers and workers. Thus, the masses of the people completely renounced the old system in November 1918. The Quartet, however, was not liquidated, for several reasons:

1. They were able to place the blame for the disaster on the monarchy. and jettisoned this to save themselves;
2. most Germans accepted this as an adequate revolution;
3. the Germans hesitated to make a real revolution for fear it would lead to an invasion of Germany by the French, the Poles, or others;
4. many Germans were satisfied with the creation of a government which was democratic in form and made little effort to examine the underlying reality;
5. the only political party capable of directing a real revolution was the Social Democrats, who had opposed the Quartet system and the war itself, at least in theory; but this party was incapable of doing anything in the crisis of 1918 because it was hopelessly divided into doctrinaire cliques, was horrified at the danger of Soviet Bolshevism, and was satisfied that order, trade-unionism, and a "democratic" regime were more important than Socialism, humanitarian welfare, or consistency between theory and action.

Before 1914 there were two parties which stood outside the Quartet system: the Social Democrats and the Center (Catholic) Party. The former was doctrinaire in its attitude, being anticapitalist, pledged to the international brotherhood of labor, pacifist, democratic, and Marxist in an evolutionary, but not revolutionary, sense. The Center Party, like the Catholics who made it up' came from all levels of society and all the Catholics who made it up, came from all levels of society and all shades of ideology, but in practice were frequently opposed to the Quartet on specific issues.

These two opposition parties underwent considerable change during the war. The Social Democrats always opposed the war in theory, but supported it on patriotic grounds by voting for credits to finance the war. Its minute Left wing refused to support the war even in this fashion as early as 1914. This extremist group, under Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, became known as the Spartacist Union and (after 1919) as the Communists. These extremists wanted an immediate and complete Socialist revolution with a soviet form of government. More moderate than the Spartacists was another group calling itself Independent Socialists. These voted war credits until 1917 when they refused to continue to do so and broke from the Social Democratic Party. The rest of the Social Democrats supported the war and the old monarchial system until November 1918 in fact, but in theory embraced an extreme type of evolutionary Socialism.

The Center Party was aggressive and nationalist until 1917 when it became pacifist. Under Matthias Erzberger it allied with the Social Democrats to push through the Reichstag Peace Resolution of July 1917. The position of these various groups on the issue of aggressive nationalism was sharply revealed in the voting to ratify the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk imposed by the militarists, Junkers, and industrialists on a prostrate Russia. The Center Party voted to ratify; the Social Democrats abstained from voting; the Independents voted No.

The "revolution" of November 1918 would have been a real revolution except for the opposition of the Social Democrats and the Center Party, for the Quartet in the crucial days of November and December 1918 were discouraged, discredited, and helpless. Outside the Quartet itself there was, at that time and even later, only two small groups which could possibly have been used by the Quartet as rallying points about which could have been formed some mass support for the Quartet. These two small groups were the "indiscriminate nationalists" and the "mercenaries." The indiscriminate nationalists were those men, like Hitler, who were not able to distinguish between the German nation and the old monarchial system. These persons, because of their loyalty to the nation, were eager to rally to the support of the Quartet, which they regarded as identical with the nation. The mercenaries were a larger group who had no particular loyalty to anyone or to any idea but were willing to serve any group which could pay for such service. The only groups able to pay were two of the Quartet—the Officers' Corps and the industrialists—who organized many mercenaries into reactionary armed bands or "Free Corps" in 1918-1923.

Instead of working for a revolution in 1918-1919, the two parties which dominated the situation—the Social Democrats and the Centrists— did all they could to prevent a revolution. They not only left the Quartet in their positions of responsibility and power—the landlords on their estates, the officers in their commands, the industrialists in control of their factories, and the bureaucracy in control of the police, the courts, and the administration—but they increased the influence of these groups because the actions of the Quartet were not restrained under the republic by that sense of honor or loyalty to the system which had restrained the use of their power under the monarchy.

As early as November 10, 1918, Friedrich Ebert, chief figure of the Social Democratic Party, made an agreement with the Officers' Corps in which he promised not to use the power of the new government to democratize the army if the officers would support the new government against the threat of the Independents and the Spartacists to establish a soviet system. As a consequence of this agreement Ebert kept a private telephone line from his office in the Chancellery to General Wilhelm Groener's office at the army's headquarters and consulted with the army on many critical political issues. As another consequence, Ebert and his Minister of War Gustav Noske, also a Social Democrat, used the army under its old monarchist officers to destroy the workers and radicals who sought to challenge the existing situation. This was done in Berlin in December 1918, in January 1919, and again in March 1919, and in other cities at other times. In these assaults the army had the pleasure of killing several thousand of the detested radicals..

A somewhat similar anti-revolutionary agreement was made between heavy industry and the Socialist trade unions on November 11, 1918. On that day Hugo Stinnes, Albert Vögler, and Alfred Hugenberg, representing industry, and Carl Legien, Otto Hue, and Hermann Müller representing the unions, signed an agreement to support each other in order to keep the factories functioning. Although this agreement was justified on opportunist grounds, it clearly showed that the so-called Socialists were not interested in economic or social reform but were merely interested in the narrow trade-union objectives of wages, hours, and working conditions. It was this narrow range of interests which ultimately destroyed the average German's faith in the Socialists or their unions.

The history of the period from 1918 to 1933 cannot be understood without some knowledge of the chief political parties. There were almost forty parties, but only seven or eight were important. These were, from extreme Left to extreme Right, as follows:

1. Spartacist Union (or Communist—KPD)
2. Independent Socialist (USPD)
3. Social Democrats (SPD)
4. Democratic
5. Center (including Bavarian People's Party)
6. People's Party
7. Nationalists
8. "Racists" (including Nazis)

Of these parties only the Democrats had any sincere and consistent belief in the democratic Republic. On the other hand the Communists, Independents, and many of the Social Democrats on the Left, as well as the "Racists," Nationalists, and many of the



People's

Party        19   65   45   51   45   30   7   11   2

Nationalists   44   71   95   103   73   41   37   52   52

Nazis        0   0   32   14   12   107   230   196288

On the basis of these elections Germany had twenty major Cabinet changes from 1919 to 1933. Generally these Cabinets were constructed about the Center and Democratic parties with the addition of representatives from either the Social Democrats or the People's Party. On only two occasions (Gustav Stresemann in 1923 and Hermann Müller in 1928-1930) was it possible to obtain a Cabinet broad enough to include all four of these parties. Moreover, the second of these broad-front Cabinets was the only Cabinet after 1923 to include the Socialists and the only Cabinet after 1925 which did not include the Nationalists. This indicates clearly the drift to the Right in the German government after the resignation of Joseph Wirth in November 1922. This drift, as we shall see, was delayed by only two influences: the need for foreign loans and political concessions from the Western Powers and the recognition that both of these could be obtained better by a government which seemed to be republican and democratic in inclination than by a government which was obviously hand in glove with the Quartet.

At the end of the war in 1918 the Socialists were in control, not because the Germans were Socialistic (for the party was not really Socialist) but because this was the only party which had been traditionally in opposition to the imperial system. A committee of six men was set up: three from the Social Democrats (Ebert, Philip Scheidemann, and Otto Landsberg) and three from the Independent Socialists (Hugo Haase, Wilhelm Dittman, and Emil Barth). This group ruled as a sort of combined emperor and chancellor and had the regular secretaries of state as their subordinates. These men did nothing to consolidate the republic or democracy and were opposed to any effort to take any steps toward Socialism. They even refused to nationalize the coal industry, something which was generally expected. Instead they wasted the opportunity by busying themselves with typical trade-union problems such as the eight-hour day (November 12, 1918) and collective bargaining methods (December 23, 1918).

The critical problem was the form of government, with the choice resting between workers' and peasants' councils (soviets), already widely established, and a national assembly to set up an ordinary parliamentary system. The Socialist group preferred the latter, and were willing to use the regular army to enforce this choice. On this basis a counterrevolutionary agreement was made between Ebert and the General Staff. As a consequence of this agreement, the army attacked a Spartacist parade in Berlin on December 6, 1918, and liquidated the rebellious People's Naval Division on December 24, 1918. In protest at this violence the three Independent members of the government resigned. Their example was followed by other Independents throughout Germany, with the exception of Kurt Eisner in Munich. The next day the Spartacists formed the German Communist Party with a non-revolutionary program. Their declaration read, in part: "The

Spartacist Union will never assume governmental power except in response to the plain and unmistakable wish of the great majority of the proletarian masses in Germany; and only as a result of a definite agreement of these masses with the aims and methods of the Spartacist Union."

This pious expression, however, was the program of the leaders; the masses of the new party, and possibly the members of the Independent Socialist group as well, were enraged at the conservatism of the Social Democrats and began to get out of hand. The issue was joined on the question of councils versus National Assembly. The government, under Noske's direction, used regular troops in a bloody suppression of the Left (January 5-15), ending up with the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the Communist leaders. The result was exactly as the Quartet wanted: the Communists and many non-Communist workers were permanently alienated from the Socialists and from the parliamentary republic. The Communist Party, deprived of leaders of its own, became a tool of Russian Communism. As a result of this repression, the army was able to disarm the workers at the very moment when it was beginning to arm reactionary private bands (Free Corps) of the Right. Both of these developments were encouraged by Ebert and Noske.

Only in Bavaria was the alienation of Communist and Socialist and the disarmament of the former not carried out; Kurt Eisner, the Independent Socialist minister-president in Munich, prevented it. Accordingly, Eisner was murdered by Count Anton von Arco-Valley on February 21, 1919. When the workers of Munich revolted, they were crushed by a combination of regular army and Free Corps amid scenes of horrible violence from both sides. Eisner was replaced as premier by a Social Democrat, Adolph Hoffman. Hoffman, on the night of March 13, 1920, was thrown out by a military coup which replaced him by a government of the Right under Gustav von Kahr.

In the meantime, the National Assembly elected on June 19, 1919, drew up a parliamentary constitution under the guidance of Professor Hugo Preuss. This constitution provided for a president elected for seven years to be head of the state, a bicameral legislature, and a Cabinet responsible to the lower house of the legislature. The upper house, or Reichsrat, consisted of representatives of eighteen German states and had, in legislative matters, a suspensive veto which could be overcome by a two-thirds vote of the lower chamber. This lower chamber, or Reichstag, had 608 members, elected by a system of proportional representation on a party basis. The head of the government, to whom the president gave a mandate to form a Cabinet, was called the chancellor. The chief weaknesses of the constitution were the provisions for proportional representation and other provisions, by articles 25 and 48, which allowed the president to suspend constitutional guarantees and rule by decree, in periods of "national emergency." As early as 1925 the parties of the Right were planning to destroy the republic by the use of these powers.

A direct challenge to the republic from the Right came in March 1920, when Captain Ehrhardt's Brigade of the Free Corps marched into Berlin, forced the government to flee to Dresden, and set up a government under Wolfgang Kapp, an ultra-nationalist. Kapp

was supported by the army commander in the Berlin area, Baron Walther von Lüttwitz, who became Reichswehr minister in Kapp's government. Since General Hans von Seeckt, chief of staff, refused to support the legal government, it was helpless, and was saved only by a general strike of the workers in Berlin and a great proletarian rising in the industrial regions of western Germany. The Kapp government was unable to function, and collapsed, while the army proceeded to violate the territorial disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles by invading the Ruhr in order to crush the workers' uprising in that area. Seeckt was rewarded for his non-cooperation by being appointed commander in chief in May 1920.

As a consequence of these disturbances, the general election of July 1920 went against the "Weimar Coalition." A new government came in which was completely middle-class in its alignment, the Socialists of the Weimar Coalition being replaced by the party of big business, the German People's Party. Noske was replaced as Reichswehr minister by Otto Gessler, a willing tool of the Officers' Corps. Gessler, who held this critical position from March 1920 to January 1928, made no effort to subject the army to democratic, or even civilian, control, but cooperated in every way with Seeckt's secret efforts to evade the disarmament provisions of the peace treaties. German armaments factories were moved to Turkey, Russia, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. German officers were drilled in prohibited weapons in Russia and China. Inside Germany, secret armaments were prepared on a considerable scale, and troops in excess of the treaty limits were organized in a "Black Reichswehr" which was supported by secret funds of the regular Reichswehr. The Reichstag had no control over either organization. When the Western Powers in 1920 demanded that the Free Corps be disbanded, these groups went underground and formed a parallel organization to the Black Reichswehr, being supplied with protection, funds, information, and arms from the Reichswehr and Conservatives. In return the Free Corps engaged in large-scale conspiracy and murder on behalf of the Conservatives. According to The Times of London, the Free Corps murdered four hundred victims of the Left and Center in one year.

The middle-class Cabinet of Konstantin Fehrenbach resigned on May 4, 1921 and allowed the Weimar Coalition of Socialists, Democrats, and Center to take office to receive the reparations ultimatum of the Allied governments on May 5th. Thus, the democratic regime was further discredited in the eyes of Germans as an instrument of weakness, hardship, and shame. As soon as the job was done, the Socialists were replaced by the People's Party, and the Wirth Cabinet was succeeded by a purely middle-class government under Wilhelm Cuno, general manager of the Hamburg-American Steamship Line. It was this government which "managed" the hyperinflation of 1923 and the passive resistance against the French forces in the Ruhr. The inflation, which was a great benefit to the Quartet, destroyed the economic position of the middle classes and over middle classes and permanently alienated them from the republic.

The Cuno government was ended by a deal between Stresemann and the Socialists. The former, on behalf of the People's Party, which had hitherto been resolutely anti-republican, accepted the republic; the Socialists agreed to support a Stresemann Cabinet;



and a broad coalition was formed for a policy of fulfillment of the Treaty of Versailles. This ended the Period of Turmoil (August 1923).

The Period of Fulfillment (1923-1930) is associated with the name of Gustav Stresemann, who was in every Cabinet until his death in October 1929. A reactionary Pan-German and economic imperialist in the period before 1919, Stresemann was always a supporter of the Quartet, and the chief creator of the German People's Party, the party of heavy industry. In 1923, while still keeping his previous convictions, he decided that it would be good policy to reverse them publicly and adopt a program of support for the republic and fulfillment of treaty obligations. He did this because he realized that Germany was too weak to do anything else and that she could get stronger only by obtaining release from the more stringent treaty restrictions, by foreign loans from sympathetic British and American financiers, and by secret consolidation of the Quartet. All these things could be achieved more easily by a policy of fulfillment than by a policy of resistance like Cuno's.

The Bavarian government of the Right, which had been installed under Gustav von Kahr in 1921, refused to accept Stresemann's decision to readmit the Socialists to the Reich government in Berlin. Instead, Kahr assumed dictatorial powers with the title of state commissioner of Bavaria. In reply the Stresemann Cabinet invested the executive power of the Reich in the Reichswehr minister, an act which had the effect of making von Seeckt the ruler of Germany. In terror of a rightist coup d'état (putsch), the Communist International decided to allow the German Communist Party to cooperate with the Socialists in an anti-Right front within the parliamentary regime. This was done at once in the states of Saxony and Thuringia. At this the Reichswehr commander in Bavaria, General Otto von Lossow, shifted his allegiance from Seeckt to Kahr. Stresemann-Seeckt in Berlin faced Kahr-Lossow in Munich with the "Red" governments of Saxony and Thuringia in between. The Reichswehr chiefly obeyed Berlin, while the Black Reichswehr and underground Free Corps (especially Ehrhardt's and Rossbach's) obeyed Munich. Kahr-Lossow, with the support of Hitler and Ludendorff, planned to invade Saxony and Thuringia, overthrow the Red governments on the pretext of suppressing Bolshevism, and then continue northward to overthrow the central government in Berlin. The Reich government headed this plot off by an illegal act: The Reichswehr forces of Seeckt overthrew the constitutional Red governments of Saxony and Thuringia to anticipate Bavaria. As a result, Lossow and Kahr gave up the plans for revolt, while Hitler and Ludendorff refused to do so. By the "Beer-Hall" Putsch of November 8, 1923, Hitler and Ludendorff tried to abduct Kahr and Lossow and force them to continue the revolt. They were overcome in a blast of gunfire. Kahr, Lossow, and Ludendorff were never punished; Hermann Goring fled the country; Hitler and Rudolf Hess were given living quarters in a fortress for a year, profiting by the occasion to write the famous volume *Mein Kampf*.

In order to deal with the economic crisis and the inflation, Stresemann's government was granted dictatorial powers overriding all constitutional guarantees, except that the Socialists won a promise not to touch the eight-hour day or the social-insurance system. In this way the inflation was curbed, and a new monetary system was established;

incidentally, the eight-hour day was abolished by decree (1923). A reparations agreement (the Dawes Plan) was made with the Allied governments, and the Ruhr was successfully evacuated. In the course of these events the Social Democrats abandoned the Stresemann government in protest at its illegal suppression of the Red government of Saxony, but the Stresemann program continued with the support of the parties of the Center and Right, including, for the first time, the support of the anti-Republican Nationalists. Indeed, the Nationalists with three or four seats in the Cabinet in 1926-1928 were the dominant force in the government, although they continued to protest in public against the policy of fulfillment, and Stresemann continued to pretend that his administration of that policy exposed him to imminent danger of assassination at the hands of the Right extremists.

The German Cabinets from 1923 to 1930, under Wilhelm Marx, Hans Luther, Marx again, and finally Hermann Müller, were chiefly concerned with questions of foreign policy, with reparations, evacuation of the occupied areas, disarmament agitation, Locarno, and the League of Nations. On the domestic front, just as significant events were going on but with much less fanfare. Much of the industrial system, as well as many public buildings, was reconstructed by foreign loans. The Quartet were secretly strengthened and consolidated by reorganization of the tax structure, by utilization of governmental subsidies, and by the training and rearrangement of personnel. Alfred Hugenberg, the most violent and irreconcilable member of the Nationalist Party, built up a propaganda system through his ownership of scores of newspapers and a controlling interest in Ufa, the great motion-picture corporation. By such avenues as this, a pervasive propaganda campaign, based on existing German prejudices and intolerances, was put on to prepare the way for a counterrevolution by the Quartet. This campaign sought to show that all Germany's problems and misfortunes were caused by the democratic and laboring groups, by the internationalists, and by the Jews.

The Center and Left shared this nationalist poison sufficiently to abstain from any effort to give the German people the true story of Germany's responsibility for the war and for her own hardships. Thus the Right was able to spread its own story of the war, that Germany had been overcome by "a stab in the back" from "the three Internationals": the "Gold" International of the Jews, the "Red" International of the Socialists, and the "Black" International of the Catholics, an unholy triple alliance which was symbolized in the gold, red, and black flag of the Weimar Republic. In this fashion every effort was made, and with considerable success, to divert popular animosity at the defeat of 1918 and the Versailles settlement from those who were really responsible to the democratic and republican groups. At the same time, German animosity against economic exploitation was directed away from the landlords and industrialists by racist doctrines which blamed all such problems on bad Jewish international bankers and department store owners.

The general nationalism of the German people, and their willingness to accept the propaganda of the Right, succeeded in making Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg president of the republic in 1925. On the first ballot none of seven candidates received a majority of the total vote, so the issue went to the polls again. On the second ballot

Hindenburg received 14,655,766 votes, Marx (of the Center Party) received 13,751,615, while the Communist Ernst Thälmann received 1,931,151.

The victory of Hindenburg was a fatal blow to the republic. A mediocre military leader, and already on the verge of senility, the new president was a convinced anti-democrat and anti-republican. To bind his allegiance to the Quartet more closely, the landlords and industrialists took advantage of his eightieth birthday in 1927 to give him a Junker estate, Neudeck, in East Prussia. To avoid the inheritance tax, the deed to this estate was made out to the president's son, Colonel Oskar von Hindenburg. In time this estate came to be known as the "smallest concentration camp" in Germany, as the president spent his last years there cut off from the outside world by his senilities and a coterie of intriguers. These intriguers, who were able to influence the aged presidential mind in any direction they wished, consisted of Colonel Oskar, General Kurt von Schleicher, Dr. Otto Meißner, who remained head of the presidential office under Ebert, Hindenburg, and Hitler; and Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau who owned the estate next to Neudeck. This coterie was able to make and unseat Cabinets from 1930 to 1934, and controlled the use of the presidential power to rule by decree in that critical period.

No sooner did Hindenburg become a landlord in October 1927 than he began to mobilize government assistance for the landlords. This assistance, known as Osthilfe (Eastern Help), was organized by a joint session of the Reich and Prussian governments presided over by Hindenburg on December 21, 1927. The stated purpose of this assistance was to increase the economic prosperity of the regions east of the Elbe River in order to stop the migration of Germans from that area to western Germany and their replacement by Polish farm laborers. This assistance soon became a sink of corruption, the money being diverted in one way or another, legally or illegally, to subsidize the bankrupt great estates and the extravagances of the Junker landlords. It was the threat of public revelation of this scandal which was the immediate cause of the death of the Weimar Republic by Hindenburg's hand in 1932.

The combination of all of these events (the real power of the Quartet, the shortsighted and unprincipled opportunism of the Social Democrats and the Center Party, the coterie around Hindenburg, and the Osthilfe scandal) made possible the disintegration of the Weimar Republic in the years 1930-1933. The decision of the Quartet to attempt to establish a government satisfactory to themselves was made in 1929. The chief causes of the decision were (1) the realization that industrial plants had been largely rebuilt by foreign loans; (2) the knowledge that these foreign loans were now drying up and that, without them, neither reparations nor internal debts could be met except at a price which the Quartet was unwilling to pay; (3) the knowledge that the policy of fulfillment had accomplished about as much as could be expected from it, the Allied Control Missions having ended, rearmament having progressed as far as was possible under the Versailles Treaty, the western frontier having been made secure, and the eastern frontier having been opened to German penetration.

The decision of the Quartet did not result from the economic crisis of 1929, but was made earlier in the year. This can be seen in the alliance of Hugenberg and Hitler to force

a referendum on the Young Plan. The Quartet had accepted the much more severe Dawes Plan in 1924 because they were not then ready to destroy the Weimar regime. The challenge to the Young Plan not only indicated that they were ready; it also became an indication of their strength. This test was a disappointment, since they obtained only five million votes adverse to the plan from an electorate of 40 million. As a result, for the first time, the Nazis began a drive to build up a mass following. The moment for which they had been kept alive by the financial contributions of the Quartet had arrived. The effort would never have succeeded, however, were it not for the economic crisis. The intensity of this crisis can be measured by the number of Reichstag seats held by the Nazis:

April	Dec.		July	Dec.	March	
1924	1924	1928	1930	1932	1932	1933
7	14	12	107	230	196	288

The Nazis were financed by the Black Reichswehr from 1919 to 1923; then this support ceased because of army disgust at the fiasco of the Munich Putsch. This lack of enthusiasm for the Nazis by the army continued for years. It was inspired by social snobbery and fears of the Nazi Storm Troops (SA) as a possible rival to itself. This diffidence on the part of the army was compensated by the support of the industrialists, who financed the Nazis from Hitler's exit from prison in 1924 to the end of 1932.

The destruction of the Weimar Republic has five stages:

Brüning:	March 27, 1930	May 30, 1932
von Papen:	May 31, 1932	November 17, 1932
Schleicher:	December 2, 1932	January 28, 1933
Hitler:	January 30, 1933	March 5, 1933
Gleichschaltung:	March 6, 1933	August 2, 1934

When the economic crisis began in 1929, Germany had a democratic government of the Center and Social Democratic parties. The crisis resulted in a decrease in tax receipts and a parallel increase in demands for government welfare services. This brought to a head the latent dispute over orthodox and unorthodox financing of a depression. Big business and big finance were determined to place the burden of the depression on the working classes by forcing the government to adopt a policy of deflation—that is, by wage reductions and curtailment of government expenditures. The Social Democrats wavered in their attitude, but in general were opposed to this policy. Schacht, as president of the Reichsbank, was able to force the Socialist Rudolf Hilferding out of the position of minister of finance by refusing bank credit to the government until this was done. In March 1930, the Center broke the coalition on the issue of reduction of unemployment

benefits, the Socialists were thrown out of the government, and Heinrich Brüning, leader of the Center Party, came in as chancellor. Because he did not have a majority in the Reichstag, he had to put the deflationary policy into effect by the use of presidential decree under Article 48. This marked the end of the Weimar Republic, for it had never been intended that this "emergency clause" should be used in the ordinary process of government, although it had been used by Ebert in 1923 to abolish the eight-hour day. When the Reichstag condemned Brüning's method by a vote of 236 to 221 on July 18, 1930, the chancellor dissolved it and called for new elections. The results of these were contrary to his hopes, since he lost seats both to the Right and to the Left. On his Right were 148 seats (107 Nazis and 41 Nationalists); on his Left were 220 seats (77 Communists and 143 Socialists). The Socialists permitted Brüning to remain in office by refusing to vote on a motion of no confidence. Left in office, Brüning continued the deflationary policy by decrees which Hindenburg signed. Thus, in effect, Hindenburg was the ruler of Germany, since he could dismiss or name any chancellor, or could permit one to govern by his own power of decree.

Brüning's policy of deflation was a disaster. The suffering of the people was terrible, with almost eight million unemployed out of twenty-five million employable. To compensate for this unpopular domestic policy, Brüning adopted a more aggressive foreign policy, on such questions as reparations, union with Austria, or the World Disarmament Conference.

In the crisis of 1929-1933, the bourgeois parties tended to dissolve to the profit of the extreme Left and the extreme Right. In this the Nazi Party profited more than the Communists for several reasons: (1) it had the financial support of the industrialists and landlords; (2) it was not internationalist, but nationalist, as any German party had to be; (3) it had never compromised itself by accepting the republic even temporarily, an advantage when most Germans tended to blame the republic for their troubles; (4) it was prepared to use violence, while the parties of the Left, even the Communists, were legalistic and relatively peaceful, because the police and judges were of the Right. The reasons why the Nazis, rather than the Nationalists, profited by the turn from moderation could be explained by the fact that (1) the Nationalists had compromised themselves and vacillated on every issue from 1924 to 1929, and (2) the Nazis had an advantage in that they were not clearly a party of the Right but were ambiguous; in fact, a large group of Germans considered the Nazis a revolutionary Left party differing from the Communists only in being patriotic.

In this polarization of the political spectrum it was the middle classes which became unanchored, driven by desperation and panic. The Social Democrats were sufficiently fortified by trade unionism, and the Center Party members were sufficiently fortified by religion to resist the drift to extremism. Unfortunately, both these relatively stable groups lacked intelligent leadership and were too wedded to old ideas and narrow interests to find any appeal broad enough for a wide range of German voters.

The whole of 1932 was filled with a series of intrigues and distrustful, shifting alliances among the various groups which sought to get into a position to use the

presidential power of decree. On October 11, 1931, a great reactionary alliance was made of the Nazis, the Nationalists, the Stahlhelm (a militaristic veterans' organization), and the Junker Landbund. This so-called "Harzburg Front" pretended to be a unified opposition to Communism, but really represented part of the intrigue of these various groups to come to power. Of the real rulers of Germany, only the Westphalian industrialists and the army were absent. The industrialists were taken into camp by Hitler during a three-hour speech which he made at the Industrial Club of Dusseldorf at the invitation of Fritz Thyssen (January 27, 1932). The army could not be brought into line, since it was controlled by the presidential coterie, especially Schleicher and Hindenburg himself. Schleicher had political ambitions of his own, and the army traditionally would not commit itself in any open or formal fashion.

In the middle of this crisis came the presidential election of March-April 1932. It offered a fantastic sight of a nominally democratic republic forced to choose its president from among four anti-democratic, anti-republican figures of which one (Hitler) had become a German citizen only a month previously by a legal trick. Since Hindenburg appeared as the least impossible of the four, he was reelected on the second ballot:

	First Ballot	Second Ballot
Hindenburg	18,661,736	19,359,533
Hitler	11,338,571	13,418,051
Thälmann, Communist	4,982,079	3,706,655
Düsterberg, Stahlhelm		2,557,876

Hindenburg continued to support Brüning until the end of May 1932, when he dismissed him and put in Von Papen. This was done at the instigation of Von Schleicher who was hoping to build up some kind of broad-front coalition of nationalists and workers as a facade for the Reichswehr. In this plan Schleicher was able to get Hindenburg to abandon Brüning by persuading him that the chancellor was planning to break up some of the bankrupt large estates east of the Elbe and might even investigate the Osthilfe scandals. Schleicher put in Papen as chancellor in the belief that Papen had so little support in the country that he would be completely dependent on Schleicher's ability to control Hindenburg. Instead, the president became so fond of Papen that the new chancellor was able to use Hindenburg's power directly, and even began to undermine the influence of Schleicher in the president's entourage.

Papen's "Cabinet of the barons" was openly a government of the Quartet and had almost no support in the Reichstag and little support in the country. Papen and Schleicher realized that it could not last long. Each began to form a plot to consolidate himself and stop the polarization of political opinion in Germany. Papen's plot was to cut off the financial contributions from industry to Hitler and break down the Nazi Party's independence by a series of expensive elections. The chancellor felt sure that Hitler

would he willing to come into a Cabinet of which Papen was head in order to recover the financial contributions from industry and prevent the disruption of his party. Schleicher, on the other hand, hoped to unite the Left wing of the Nazi Party under Otto Strasser with the Christian and Socialist labor unions to support the Reichwehr in a program of nationalism and unorthodox finance. Both plots dependent on retaining the favor of Hindenburg in order to retain control of the army and of the presidential power to issue decrees. In this, Papen was more successful than Schleicher, for the aged president had no liking for any unorthodox economic schemes.

Papen's plot developed more rapidly than Schleicher's and appeared more hopeful because of his greater ability to control the president. Having persuaded his close friends, the industrialists, to stop their contributions to the Nazis, Papen called a new election for November 1932. In the balloting the Nazis were reduced from 230 to 196 seats, while the Communists were increased from 89 to 100. The tide had turned. This had three results: (1) Hitler decided to join a coalition government, which he had previously refused; (2) the Quartet decided to overthrow the republic in order to stop the swing to the Communists; and (3) the Quartet, especially the industrialists, decided that Hitler had learned a lesson and could safely be put into office as the figurehead of a Right government because he was growing weaker. The whole deal was arranged by Papen, himself a colonel and an industrialist as well as a Westphalian aristocrat, and was sealed in an agreement made at the home of the Cologne banker Baron Kurt von Schroder, on January 4, 1933.

This agreement came into effect because of Papen's ability to manage Hindenburg. On January 28, 1933, the president forced the resignation of Schleicher by refusing to grant him decree powers. Two days later Hitler came to office as chancellor in a Cabinet which contained only two other Nazis. These were Minister of Air Goring and Frick in the vital Ministry of the Interior. Of the other eight posts, two, the ministries of economics and agriculture, went to Hugenburg; the Ministry of Labor went to Franz Seldte of the Stahlhelm, the Foreign Ministry and the Reichswehr Ministry went to nonparty experts, and most of the remaining posts went to friends of Papen. It would not seem possible for Hitler, thus surrounded, ever to obtain control of Germany, yet within a year and a half he was dictator of the country.

## Chapter 28—The Nazi Regime

### Coming to Power, 1933—1934

When Adolf Hitler became chancellor of the German Reich on January 30, 1933, he was not yet forty-four years old. From his birth in Austria in 1889 to the outbreak of war in 1914, his life had been a succession of failures, the seven years 1907-1914 being passed as a social derelict in Vienna and Munich. There he had become a fanatical Pan-German anti-Semite, attributing his own failures to the "intrigues of international Jewry."

The outbreak of war in August 1914 gave Hitler the first real motivation of his life. He became a super-patriot, joined the Sixteenth Volunteer Bavarian Infantry, and served at