Chapter 5
The Nazi Seizure of Power: 1933-34

Part 1: Docs 85 - 96; 103 - 136

85

Cabinet minutes of 31st June 1933.

i) What are the major outcomes of the meeting?
ii) Why does Hitler promise not to change the composition of the Cabinet?
iii) What is Article 48 and why was it being abused?

86

Diary of Frau Solimitz. 1933. 1/33 (A Hamberg School Teacher)

i) Why is this diary useful as a political source?
ii) Why is she in favour of the Nazi takeover?
iii) Who are the Stahlhelm?
iv) Are her views the views of the middle-class and or are they not representative of the educated middle-class?

87

'Appeal to the German People' : 31st January 1933.

i) Is this merely a propaganda tool?
ii) How does it equate with the original party programme of 1920?
iii) Does it confirm or deny any real principles?
iv) Why does the appeal take the form of a National unprising?
v) Was it merely electioneering?

88

Diary of Frau Solmitz - 7 February 1933.

i) Why is she so patronising in her response to it?
ii) Has it let her class down?
Memoirs of a police official regarding the atmosphere at the time.

i) Who is Heydrich?
ii) What methods are used to convey the sinister atmosphere?

*Who were Gregor Strasser, Gustav Von Kahr, General Von Schleicher and why were they murdered in the Purge; and what had they to done to upset Hitler?*

Blomberg to Hitler, 1 July 1934 (thanking Hitler for his actions)

i) Why was this such a decisive moment for Hitler?

Telegramme from President Hindenburg, 2 July 1934 (to Hitler)

i) Why was the President so eager to congratulate Hitler?
ii) Why was this good propaganda for him?

Meeting of Reich cabinet (legalising the night of the Long Knives)

i) Why was everything about the purge given the sanction of the law?
ii) Why was it for the self-defence of the state?

Speech from Hitler to Reichstag re: ficticious plot

i) How does Hitler justify his actions?
ii) Which part of the story is fact and fiction?
iii) Why did he praise the Army so much for its role?
ii) Do you think it is a genuine appraisal of the situation?

136

Reflection of hardcore SA man on post January 1933 experience.

i) What class/intellectual decisions does he identify?
ii) Why had Rohm deluded himself?
iii) What was the social revolution?
iv) Why did he think that the SA were so strong?
v) Why were "officials, party politics and uniforms" suspect?
vi) What were events at Wiesee?
vii) Why did he frown so much on Jobs?
viii) What is meant by "Revolutionary Elan"?
ix) Why did the Real Revolutionaries get out?
TOTALITARIANISM A DEFINITION BY
IAN KERSHAW

1. The term dates back to the 1920's, used initially as an anti fascist term of abuse, in 1925 Mussolini turned the tables on his opponents and spoke of the fierce "totalitarian will of the movement". GENTILE, the chief ideologue of Italian fascism, defined it as the all embracing state which would overcome the state -society divide of democracies.

2. The German usage derived from terms such as 'Total war' 'Total mobilisation', associated with a dynamic, revolutionary implication, CARL SCHMIDT defined the term 'THE TOTAL STATE OF IDENTITY OF STATE AND SOCIETY'. Both forms (emphasis on state and action), were in common use before the Nazi's came to power.

3. CARL FRIEDRICH in his essay 'The unique character of Totalitarian society' has identified a six point programme.

1. An official IDEOLOGY
2. A SINGLE MASS PARTY
3. TERRORISTIC POLICE CONTROL
4. MONOPOLY CONTROL OVER THE MEDIA
5. A MONOPOLY OF ARMS
6. CENTRAL CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY.

This model's main weakness is that it's FAR TOO OBLIQUE.

4. KARL BRACHER in his work on totalitarianism refuses to be tied down by a static model which he feels, does nothing to explain the REVOLUTIONARY DYNAMIC which he sees as THE CORE PRINCIPLE DISTINGUISHING TOTALITARIANISM from other forms of authoritarian rule. For BRACHER the decisive character of totalitarianism lies in

1. THE TOTAL CLAIM TO RULE.

2. THE LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE.

3. THE EXCLUSIVE IDEOLOGY.

4. THE FICTION OF IDENTITY OF RULERS AND RULED.

The value of the totalitarianism concept resides in the ability to recognise the distinction between democracy and dictatorship. Students of this period have to come to terms with this complex idea as it is vitally important to know if Nazi Germany corresponds to either of the models described above in this period 1933-1934.

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the new regime in order to co-ordinate the ambitions of the SA.

Yet by the beginning of 1934, the Army were becoming increasingly worried about the SA's military ambitions. 2½ : 100,000 army soldiers. Hitler knew that he could not afford to antagonise the army, the one power that could remove him from office. In addition, a contented army was essential if he was to achieve the aims of his Foreign Policy. The SA rable was a poor substitute for a disciplined army.

By the 28th February, 1934 at a conference attended by the Army, SA and SS, Hitler rejected Röhm's idea of a militia and stated that training would be under the control of the Army. Yet the SA military activity grew unabated particularly serious given the Versailles Treaty terms. (see Doc 119)

Tension between the army and SA continued to build into the summer. By June the crisis was deepened by two developments:-

i) Hindenburg had not long to live which raised the matter of the succession.
ii) Papan expressed the fear of the Conservative and business at the prospect of a second revolution. (See Doc 121)

This system illustrated to Hitler that there was a danger that the army would combine with conservative elements to veto his succession to the Presidency unless something was done about the SA. He knew that he could counter this with the SA's help but he knew that a period of peace was needed to restore the economy, the foreign exchange and rearmament.

All this was threatened by the intention of the SA to practice a second revolution; to usurp the role of the Army abrogate Versailles and jeopardise Foreign Policy. What had been vital force in the acquisition of power was now a grave embarrassment.

It was at this stage that another element into the equation emerged, the SS. During 1933-34, Himmler, its head, had taken over the Political police departments in every state of the Reich. Nominally, the SS was part of the SA, but now it became the major obstacle to the