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The Anglo-American Press and the 'Secret' Rearmament of Hitler's Germany, 1933 to 1935

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THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PRESS AND THE “SECRET” REARMAMENT
OF HITLER’S GERMANY, 1933 TO 1935

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
Jason Adams Ranke
May 2009

Accepted by:
Donald McKale, Committee Chair
Alan Grubb
Roger Grant

ABSTRACT

This thesis will examine the Anglo-American press coverage of Germany's secret rearmament between 1933 and 1935, with the aim of pursuing three main objectives:

1. Describe the rearmament process occurring in Germany and how it related to, or influenced, the country's position in international affairs.

2. Investigate the accuracy and objectivity of Anglo-American press coverage of the German rearmament. This goal will be achieved by analyzing and comparing information from several major American and British newspapers and magazines from 1933 to 1935 with data gleaned from the principal secondary sources on Nazi rearmament and foreign policy.

3. Determine how Hitler was perceived in the Anglo-American world, whether as a peace-loving statesman, which he emphasized that he was repeatedly in public in his first years in power, or as a potential threat to Europe and world peace. An analysis of the major British and American media will provide at least an indication of whether it and its newsmen in Germany deemed Hitler a threat. The press played a significant role, on this news issue as on most others, in shaping public opinion in both the United States and Britain.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, my father and mother, Joseph and Susan, and my brother, Kyle, for all of their love and support throughout my life and academic career.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis was a laborious process, and there are many individuals to thank for their help and support throughout this project.

First, I thank my family, my parents, Joseph and Susan, and my brother, Kyle, for their love, support, and encouragement. Without them, none of this would be possible.

My close friends deserve many thanks. They have taught me there is far more to school than what occurs in the classroom. Thank you Josh, Matt, Dan, Darcy, and Evan.

The congregation and staff of the First Baptist Church of Aiken, South Carolina were instrumental in the writing of this thesis. They lifted my spirit and prayed for me when I needed it the most.

Many thanks to Dr. Don McKale, Dr. Alan Grubb, and Dr. Roger Grant for their guidance and direction of this thesis.

Finally, I wish to thank Dr. Val Lumans, professor of history at the University of South Carolina at Aiken. Dr. Lumans is the consummate teacher-scholar. It was from his interest in history that I became interested in history and found something I love to do.

Thank you, Dr. Lumans.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Great War and the Armistice

On 28 July 1914 war began between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. Lines were drawn, sides were taken, and this regional conflict expanded quickly to encompass most of Europe through various alliances. It was the Allied Powers (the Balkan area, Britain, France, Italy, Portugal, and Russia) against the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire) The United States did not enter the Great War until April 1917 on the side of the Allied Powers.¹

Fighting focused on two major fronts, the Eastern Front and the Western Front. Most of the fighting took place on the Western Front. Both sides dug into trenches, and neither side was ever able to make many gains when an offensive was launched. The war was a stalemate, even with soldiers making use of modern weaponry and war machines that included aircraft, barbed wire, flame throwers, heavy artillery, grenades, machine guns, poison gas, tanks, and U-boats. The fighting on the Eastern Front was primarily between Germany and Russia. After the Russian Revolution in the spring of 1917, the Russians withdrew from the Great War and Germany shifted its troops to the Western Front, ending fighting on the Eastern Front.

Prior to the Great War, Germany was one of the most economically and militarily powerful states in Europe. Germany had not expected to lose the war, but it was losing

¹ The term, “the Great War,” refers to the First World War. It was “great” in the fact that it was a total war and involved most of Europe, as well as the most of the world because many of the European states had colonies throughout the world. By the end of the Great War, no one would have ever realized that there would be a second Great War only twenty years later.

the war. The German people, however, had been told a different story by the government—that Germany was winning. On 9 November 1918 there was a revolution in Germany, and Kaiser Wilhelm II was overthrown. The imperial government was replaced with the democratic Weimar Republic. Two days later on 11 November 1918 Germany signed an Armistice which ended the fighting in the Great War. It came as a complete shock to the German people that they had lost the war. Many Germans refused to believe the war was lost and concocted the belief that the new Weimar government, composed of Communists, Jews, liberals, and socialists, had betrayed the military and “stabbed it in the back.”²

Altogether in the war between ten to thirteen million were killed, with total casualties estimated between twenty to forty million. The Great War was a total war, involving complete mobilization of human and material resources. It was one of the most destructive conflicts in history, affecting the lives of everyone in Europe, and naturally it was on the minds of Europeans for a long time thereafter.³

The Paris Peace Conference and the Versailles Treaty

The Armistice had only ended the fighting. A formal peace had to be concluded. In January 1919, the Paris Peace Conference was held in Paris to do just that. The leaders from the major participants of the Allied Powers, President Georges Clemenceau from France, Prime Minister David Lloyd-George of Britain, Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando, and President Woodrow Wilson from the United States, led the conference and

² The “stab in the back” myth is referred to as the *dolchstoss* myth in Germany.

³ For additional information about the Great War, see John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

would make all decisions pertaining to it. The defeated Central Powers were not allowed to attend or participate in the Paris Peace Conference.

The decisions made by Britain, France, and the United States at the Paris Peace Conference and the foreign policy of these countries in the 1920s and 1930s were influenced by the horror these countries had suffered in the Great War. Britain, for one, lost over a million men. This enormous death toll was a psychological blow to the British. The latter also experienced widespread unemployment after the war and had to borrow heavily from the United States. The London government realized that any possible future war in Europe would likely not be localized. British leaders therefore believed that they must keep local wars from starting by trying to resolve local issues peacefully by granting concessions. Additionally, the British were horrified by the slaughter of many of their young men, the memory of which produced widespread pacifism and strong anti-war sentiment.

France lost about 1.5 million men in the war. Parts of northern and eastern France were destroyed. Like Britain, France would not soon forget the conflict. The French lived in perpetual fear of Germany and of another possible German invasion. France had been invaded by Germany in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and was invaded again by Germany in the Great War. The French believed that any future war with Germany was likely to be fought on French soil. National security and defense therefore preoccupied France.

The United States, which entered the Great War in 1917, lost about 100,000 men. Many Americans came to believe that the United States' involvement in the Great War

was a tragic mistake and wanted the country to take the steps to avoid another conflict. The government in Washington moved in its foreign policy towards isolationism to avoid involvement in world affairs. As a result, the United States did not join the League of Nations, Congress passed laws committing the nation to neutrality in the event of war anywhere, and the size of the army was reduced.

The final settlement at the Paris Peace Conference consisted of five separate treaties: the Treaty of St. Germaine (Austria), the Treaty of Neuilly (Bulgaria), the Treaty of Trianon (Hungary), the Treaty of Sevres (Ottoman Empire), and the Treaty of Versailles (Germany). The most significant of these five treaties was the Treaty of Versailles, which Germany reluctantly signed.⁴

The Versailles Treaty punished Germany in several ways and was designed to prevent it from ever engaging in another war. Germany lost its overseas colonies. Land was taken from the eastern part of Germany and given to the Poles for the creation of a new Poland. Alsace and Lorraine, seized by the Germans in the Franco-Prussian War, was returned to France. The controversial Article 231, referred to as the “War Guilt Clause” by the Germans, forced Germany to pay reparations to the Allied Powers for war-time damages. According to this article, the war had been imposed on the Allies by the aggression of Germany and the Central Powers. As a result, the Germans had to accept that they had started the war.

⁴ For recent scholarship on the Paris Peace Conference, see Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001).

The disarmament of the German military and its postwar organization were dealt with specifically in Articles 159–213 in the Treaty of Versailles. Some of the major articles are highlighted in the next several paragraphs:

Articles 159–180 concerned the German army and ground forces. Article 160 stated that “the total number...in the Army...constituting Germany must not exceed one hundred thousand men, including officers and establishments of depots.”⁵ The article ordered the disbanding of the German military leadership, the German General Staff, was to be disbanded.⁶ In Article 162, the German police force was forbidden from “be[ing] assembled for military training...[and limited to increases] to an extent corresponding to the increase in population.”⁷ Hand guns, machine guns, rifles, trench mortars, and their ammunition were to be significantly reduced in number by the Germans as specified in Articles 164–167. Article 168 allowed the Germans to manufacture said armaments only in factories specified by the Allied Powers within the acceptable limits. Armaments produced in excess were to be relinquished to the Allies as laid out in Article 169. Additionally Articles 169-171 forbade Germany from the importation and exportation of armaments and ammunition and the production of armored cars, tanks, and poison gas.⁸ From these articles, army manpower and munitions were greatly limited. This was to prevent Germany from carrying out future ground warfare in Europe by severely weakening its capability to wage war.

⁵ *The Treaty of Versailles and After: Annotations of the Text of the Treaty* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947), 319.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 320.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 322.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 326-329.

Military conscription was prohibited by Article 173. Articles 176 and 177 closed military schools and ended military organizations in the public schools and universities. Article 179 prohibited Germany from active military engagement with, and occupation of, foreign countries. Listed in Article 180, the Rhineland, the area fifty kilometers west of the Rhine River in Germany, was to be demilitarized.⁹ Through these articles, the Allied Powers were attempting to diminish the active military culture and spirit in Germany, in the hopes of eliminating the will and desire to wage future war.

Naval and aerial regulations were covered in Articles 181–201 of the Versailles Treaty. Article 181 permitted the Germans to have naval ships but in very limited numbers. Of the naval vessels permitted, warships were prohibited and, in keeping with Articles 184–185, decommissioned and forfeited to the Allied Powers. Germany was not allowed to give to, or obtain from, other countries military naval vessels or construct such, including submarines, according to Articles 189–191. Article 194 imposed strictly voluntary naval service, and Article 183 limited the size of the German navy to no more than fifteen thousand men.¹⁰

Regulations on the air force were even stricter. Article 198 mandated that “the armed forces of Germany must not include any...air forces.”¹¹ In keeping with Articles 199 and 201, aerial personnel were decommissioned, and all aerial equipment and planes were demobilized and surrendered to the Allied Powers. Article 200 permitted the Allied Powers to have open air space over Germany.¹²

⁹ Ibid., 329-333.

¹⁰ Ibid., 341-348.

¹¹ Ibid., 351.

¹² Ibid., 353.

The articles on the navy and air force limited the power of these branches of the German military. Like the articles dealing with the German army, these aimed at preventing Germany from warfare in the air or on the seas throughout Europe by weakening and even preventing the country's capability for war. There was no doubting or debating that Germany was to disarm and reorganize its military forces to the degree specified by the Treaty of Versailles.

The Weimar Republic, the rise of Adolf Hitler, and the Rearmament of Germany

Despite the armament restrictions in the Versailles Treaty, during the 1920s Germany began rearming subtly and secretly. Regarding the German army, the decade saw the implementation of military training for the police force, the creation of the *Abwehr*, or the Germany military intelligence organization, and the secret reorganization of the German General Staff under the “guise of the *Truppenamt*, ostensibly charged with overseeing *Reichswehr* organizational affairs.”¹³ Germany also readied troops through the formation of paramilitary organizations. For example, the Black *Reichswehr* was disguised as a labor organization, the *Jungdeutsche Orden* (Young German Order) passed as a youth organization, and the National Socialist Party's *Sturmabteilung* (the SA)¹⁴ was billed initially as an athletic organization.¹⁵

The German air force also survived throughout the 1920s. The German government retained a “hidden reserve of trained pilots, air crews, and ground staff...[and] maintained a viable aeroindustry and kept it occupied with military research

¹³ Bart Whaley, *Covert German Rearmament, 1919-1939: Deception and Misperception* (Frederick: University Publications of America, 1984), 20.

¹⁴ The SA can also be referred to as the “Brown Shirts” or the Storm Troopers.

¹⁵ Whaley, 22-23.

and development.”¹⁶ German planes were secretly manufactured and often hidden from inspectors of the Allied Powers. In 1926 aerial restrictions were somewhat relaxed. The Germans were permitted to manufacture some airplanes but only for flying competitions.¹⁷ The German navy evaded the Versailles Treaty by producing smaller but comparable types of the ships and vessels the Treaty limited or forbade. The navy also converted “naval organizations into civilian ones...[and] created secret arsenals.”¹⁸

In addition to Germany beginning covert rearmament in the 1920s, the country’s future fascist leader, Adolf Hitler, appeared on the national political scene. After serving in the Great War, Hitler was assigned by the German army to observe covertly in Munich the numerous radical political groups and parties emerging in the city that opposed the defeat in the war and the Versailles Treaty. Hitler was impressed greatly by a meeting of the tiny German Workers Party in September 1919. Soon, he left the army, joined the party, and began a career as a politician. He spoke at meetings of the German Workers Party and drew large crowds. Eventually, he took over the party as its leader and renamed it the National Socialist German Workers’ Party.¹⁹

By 1923, Hitler began to plot the overthrow of the democratic Weimar government. The plans for the coup took shape in March during the Ruhr Crisis,²⁰ but would not be implemented until months later. In November in a beer hall in Munich, Hitler unleashed a revolt aimed at seizing the city and Bavarian governments and then

¹⁶ Ibid., 24.

¹⁷ Ibid., 25.

¹⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹⁹ The German translation is *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, abbreviated as NSDAP or Nazi.

²⁰ The Ruhr Crisis was the occupation of Germany’s industrial region by French troops in January 1923

overthrowing the Weimar regime in Berlin. He and his party intended to establish a new government free from liberals, Jews, socialists, and all who had “stabbed Germany in the back.” The police were tipped off, a number of the SA were killed, and Hitler was arrested. During his time in jail, he wrote his autobiography, the “bible” of National Socialism, *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*).

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler presented his racial and anti-Semitic worldview. He alleged that the “mingling of Aryan blood with that of lower peoples...[would] result...[in] the end of the cultured people.”²¹ The “lower peoples” of whom Hitler wrote were allegedly any persons who were not German, especially Jews and Slavs. The “cultured people” were the one master race, supposedly the German people. He argued that “all great cultures of the past perished only because the originally creative race died out from blood poisoning.”²² According to Hitler, the same would happen to the Germans if they continued to mix with the Jews and other alleged inferior peoples. The Jews, he claimed, would infiltrate the Germanic race and the latter would eventually cease to exist. He proposed that “those who want to live, let them fight, and those who do not want to fight in this world of eternal struggle do not deserve to live.”²³ Hitler suggested that

if at the beginning of the War and during the War, twelve or fifteen thousand of these [Jewish] corrupters of the people had been held under poison gas, as happened to hundreds of thousands of our very best German [soldiers] in the field, the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been in vain. On the contrary: twelve thousand [Jews] eliminated in time might have saved the lives of a million real Germans, valuable for the future.²⁴

²¹ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 286.

²² *Ibid.*, 289.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 679.

As Hitler had written in *Mein Kampf*, his associates, beginning in 1941, used poison gas to murder large numbers of Jews and other alleged inferior peoples in death camps.

This meant Hitler believed Germany would one day have to again go to war in order to destroy the Jews and other alleged racial enemies. Such a war was only part of the continuous cycle of racial conflict throughout history in which the world's races were locked in battle for survival. War was a necessity for two reasons. The first was to eliminate Germany's enemies, the "lower peoples," as rivals, namely the Jews and Slavs. The second reason was to seize the land and resources of the "lower peoples," which Hitler claimed they did not deserve, for the survival of the master race and its global domination. Only the strongest races survived.

After the onset of the world economic depression in late 1929, Hitler and the Nazi Party gained increasing power in Germany, both at the polls and through the use of open violence in the streets, carried out against the party's political and other opponents by the SA. The party went from 810,000 votes in 1928 to 6.4 million in 1930, and its numbers elected to the *Reichstag*, the national parliament, soared from 12 to 107. The economic crisis, which produced mass unemployment—some 5.6 million unemployed by 1932, nearly 30 percent of the labor force—and suffering in Germany, discredited the Weimar Republic even more in the eyes of many Germans. Bitter political divisions between German communists and socialists, on the extreme left, and the Nazis, on the right, not only prevented the democratic government from dealing effectively with the economic disaster, but also led to near civil war between the factions in Berlin and other cities. By 1932, the SA and its subordinate Nazi paramilitary organization, the SS (*Schutzstaffel*,

Protection Squads), numbered nearly a half million men. In the *Reichstag* election of 31 July 1932, the Nazis received 37.3 percent of the vote and won 230 seats in the parliament, making the party the largest in Germany.

On 30 January 1933, the Weimar president, Paul von Hindenburg, Germany's aging field marshal and military hero from the Great War, appointed Hitler chancellor. Hindenburg did so out of widespread fear among Germans of a Communist revolution in the country and from pressure by conservative allies in big business and agriculture. Such leaders, themselves traditionally anti-Semitic, revered Hitler's extreme nationalism and believed that, once he had become chancellor, they could control him and his political movement. While they thought Hitler a vulgar man, a lower middle class product several notches below them socially, they viewed him as a useful tool to fight Communism and labor unions, rebuild the military and armaments industry, break the shackles of the hated Versailles Treaty, and reassert German influence in world affairs reminiscent of the German empire before the Great War.

After his appointment as chancellor, however, Hitler revealed quickly to his conservative allies how badly they had erred in their belief that he could be controlled. They had underestimated his political abilities, ruthlessness, and fanatical racial nationalism. He and his party set forth not to restore the Old Order, but create a new one that would prepare Germany for another major war. Such a war, in Hitler's view, would destroy Germany's alleged racial inferiors and rivals and leave the country—and its supposed master race—the dominant power not only in Europe, but the world. In preparation for his unprecedented racial and global ambitions, immediately on his

appointment as German chancellor on 30 January 1933, Hitler began a covert German rearmament, seeking to conceal it from the rest of the world, especially from the Western Powers that had fashioned the Versailles Treaty. Only two years later, in March 1935, would his Nazi government announce publicly that Germany was rearming and, therefore, violating the disarmament provisions in the treaty.

The Anglo-American Press and the Nazi Government

On 14 March 1933, Joseph Goebbels was appointed Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda by German President Paul von Hindenburg. Included in the propaganda ministry under Goebbels's control was a department to deal specifically with the press.²⁵ Historian Ralf Reuth later explained that "the press had to be 'a piano...in the hands of the government,' on which the government could play."²⁶ There were many different "tunes" the Nazi government played in dealing with the foreign press to control the press's access to information or to influence what the press reported.

Historian Deborah Lipstadt later explained that the German government had "suggested that certain...correspondents in Germany be rewarded and others more severely censored or expelled."²⁷ Journalist William Shirer described several examples of journalists being rewarded in his memoirs, *The Berlin Diary*. He wrote that some foreign reporters received invitations to meet personally with Hitler for breakfast. Shirer recalled one occasion in which he was invited to Hermann Göring's wedding.²⁸ Rewards such as

²⁵ Ralf Reuth, *Goebbels* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1993), 172-173.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁷ Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 7.

²⁸ William Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934-1941* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 22, 35.

these allowed the foreign press “to maintain cordial contacts with German authorities.”²⁹ These contacts allowed the foreign press to have access to information it might not otherwise have. However, because of the sources, one would have to question the validity of such information. Additionally, personal acquaintanceship with Nazi officials would likely make the press more sympathetic toward the Nazi government. Such sympathies existed among the press. Shirer noted that the national British newspaper, *The Daily Mail*, was sympathetic toward the Nazi government. He wrote that “Lord Rothermere, its owner, and Ward Price, its roving correspondent—both pro-Nazi—has become a wonderful Nazi mouthpiece and sounding-board.”³⁰

The foreign press also faced the threat of expulsion by the German government. In November 1934, several months prior to Hitler’s March 1935 announcement of rearmament and conscription, Shirer wrote in his memoirs that there was “much talk here that Germany is secretly arming, though it is difficult to get definite dope, and if you did get it and sent it, you’d probably be expelled.”³¹ Threats of expulsion or imprisonment deterred journalists from reporting news entirely or made them censor what they reported. Lipstadt later explained that “expulsion was not a badge of honor for foreign correspondents. They were quite anxious to avoid it because they were never ‘sure [their] newspapers would understand’ or forgive them if they were forced to leave.”³²

²⁹ Lipstadt, 29-30.

³⁰ Shirer, 28.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

³² Lipstadt, 23.

In a diary entry dated 29 January 1942, Goebbels wrote that “propaganda must therefore always be essentially simple and repetitious.”³³ According to Reuth, the “chief instrument for steering the press [was the] press conference of the *Reich* government”³⁴ for the delivery of the “simple and repetitious” propaganda message of the *Reich*. Goebbels frequently attended and participated in these conferences, which were held daily at noon with journalists selected by the Nazi government. In addition to the press conference, the foreign press received “the official ‘directives’ and ‘instructions’ [from the Nazi government]. Editors also received ‘confidential information’ from the NSDAP press secretary’s office.”³⁵

Shirer attended one of these press conferences. He recalled he had received a telephone call requesting his presence only two hours prior to the beginning of the conference. He wrote that “when I got there about a hundred foreign correspondents were crowded into the conference room...none knowing why we had been convoked. Finally, Goebbels limped in....He began immediately to read in a loud voice the text.”³⁶ When the press conference concluded, Shirer noted that “two or three officials remained to answer questions, but it was plain they were afraid to say any more than was contained in the official communiqué.”³⁷ Through the press conferences and press releases, the Nazi government disseminated the information it wanted to the foreign press. However, as Shirer revealed, there was “more than was contained in the official communiqué.” The

³³ Joseph Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries: 1942-1943*, ed. and trans. Louis Lochner, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1948), 56.

³⁴ Reuth, 175.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 175-176.

³⁶ Shirer, 28-29.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

press conferences and releases were propaganda, and the foreign press seemed aware of that.

If the Nazi government was not releasing information to the press, the government withheld information it deemed detrimental to the *Reich*'s image. For example, in a 19 February 1942 diary entry, Goebbels wrote that he "preferred to hold back things like that,"³⁸ in reference to a report detailing an assassination plan on Hitler's life. He explained that "in wartime one should not speak of assassination,"³⁹ especially since this was an assassination against the *Reich* leadership. Germany or its leadership could not appear vulnerable. Controlling the information relayed to the press protected the image of Germany.

The final tactic the German government used to control the foreign press was by attempting to discredit foreign journalists. Lipstadt later explained that the Nazi government often tried "to reinforce...confusion"⁴⁰ among the press. Confusion existed because the Berlin claimed that particular events "never happened; second, [the events] will be investigated; third [the events] will never happen again."⁴¹ Confusion made accurate reporting difficult because there was uncertainty as to what exactly had happened. It was difficult to know what to report. Other attempts to discredit the press included "the Nazis repeatedly accus[ing] reporters of lying."⁴² As a result, Lipstadt explained "there was a question of the truthfulness of the reports."⁴³

³⁸ Goebbels, 93.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Lipstadt, 18.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 21.

⁴³ Ibid., 18.

On 19 May 1942, Goebbels wrote that he believed “the Americans and English fall easily for...propaganda.”⁴⁴ The Nazi government attempted to control the press’s access to information or influence what was reported in many different ways. In some cases, this worked, but, more often than not, the foreign journalists realized they were being duped, and the Anglo-American press was overall accurate in its reporting on Germany’s rearmament.

Purpose of Study/Research Objectives

How successful was Hitler in keeping Nazi Germany’s initial rearmament between January 1933 and March 1935 secret from the rest of the world? What did the world know about such activities? The Nazi government permitted numerous foreign newsmen to continue working in Germany, including those from the major American and British newspapers and magazines. What did such journalists and their papers know, and report to their audiences in the United States and Britain about the fledgling German rearmament?

This study will examine the Anglo-American press coverage of Germany’s secret rearmament between 1933 and 1935, with the aim of pursuing three main objectives:

1. Describe the rearmament process occurring in Germany and how it related to or influenced the country’s position in international affairs.
2. Investigate the accuracy and objectivity of Anglo-American press coverage of the German rearmament. This goal will be achieved by analyzing and comparing information from several major American and British newspapers and magazines from

⁴⁴ Goebbels, 220.

1933 to 1935 with data gleaned from the principal secondary sources on Nazi rearmament and foreign policy.

3. Determine how Hitler was perceived in the Anglo-American world, whether as a peace-loving statesman, which he repeatedly emphasized that he was in public in his first years in power, or as a potential threat to Europe and world peace. An analysis of the major British and American media will provide an indication of whether it and its newsmen in Germany deemed Hitler a threat. The press played a significant role, on this news issue as on most others, in shaping public opinion in both the United States and Britain.

Primary Sources and Historiography

Primary Sources—Newspapers

The newspapers used are *The New York Times*, *The Times* (London), *The Washington Post*, and *The Manchester Guardian*. Newspaper reports will provide a broad perspective on what was known and significant about Nazi covert rearmament. The amount and depth of coverage, or lack thereof, of rearmament will indicate the significance of the issue. Articles from *The New York Times*, *The Times* (London), and *The Washington Post* were selected after searches of their respective indices. *The Manchester Guardian* had no index of articles. Materials from *The Manchester Guardian* were selected by exhaustingly examining each individual edition archived on microfilm.

The New York Times was founded in September 1851 by Henry Raymond. Raymond, born in New York in 1820, was well educated and began his career as a teacher. By the late 1830s and early 1840s, Raymond became a journalist. From his

personal savings and that of investors, Raymond founded *The New York Times*.⁴⁵ With his death in 1869, ownership of the paper changed hands to George Jones. The paper continued to expand and grow under his leadership and earned the reputation of telling a “story...in [a] dignified, newsy fashion, without trimmings...[in] a consistently even way.”⁴⁶ In 1896, *The New York Times* was acquired by Adolph Ochs, a German immigrant who was a businessman and newspaper tycoon.⁴⁷ Ochs operated his newspaper on the principle of “giv[ing] straight news as fast as any other sheet or faster.”⁴⁸

By the outbreak of the Great War, “*The Times* was already firmly established as a newspaper of record.”⁴⁹ The newspaper had reporters imbedded throughout Europe to provide international coverage of the war. Despite its efforts to remain impartial in its war coverage, *The Times* received criticism because its owner was German.⁵⁰ Frederick Birchall served as *The Times*’ chief European correspondent when Hitler became the chancellor of Germany in 1933. Birchall was described as “writ[ing] so bluntly in that period...with equally forthright reporting.”⁵¹ However, most Americans were preoccupied with the Great Depression and “had little thought for the rapid spread of Hitlerism.”⁵²

⁴⁵ Meyer Berger, *The Story of The New York Times, 1851-1951* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), 9-15.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 73, 105.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 204-205, 207-208.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 396.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 394.

In 1877, journalist and businessman Stilson Hutchins published the first edition of *The Washington Post*. Hutchins sought to create a “first-rate newspaper...for intelligent comments upon the current topics of the time [for] the Washington public.”⁵³ *The Washington Post* prospered from the start because it “reported politics...across the nation,...it wrote about politics in a cynical and knowing, but entertaining way,...[and finally] it covered foreign news.”⁵⁴ Hutchins sold the newspaper in 1889 to Frank Hatton, a Civil War veteran, government official, and journalist, and Beriah Wilkins, a banker and former state senator from Ohio. Under the leadership of Hutchins and Wilkins *The Post* continued to expand and became a “newspaper of record” because of the extensive coverage of “national and international news...[that] dominated the paper’s columns.”⁵⁵

However, throughout the Great War, *The Post* came under scrutiny because it “relied largely on AP dispatches ‘for its news from the front.’”⁵⁶ John McLean, owner of *The Post* since 1905, had wanted to “keep out of the war—but profit from it.”⁵⁷ Additionally, *The Post*’s position on the Great War was inconsistent, encouraging Americans to remain neutral at times, while other times informing citizens to be prepared to take up arms.⁵⁸ For these reasons, the newspaper’s coverage of international affairs suffered. The shift in news coverage to the domestic scene continued throughout the 1930. Reporters with *The Post* focused on “the economic relief of Americans and

⁵³ Chalmers Roberts, *The Washington Post: The First 100 Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 1-2.

⁵⁴ Martin Walker, *Power of the Press*, (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), 242

⁵⁵ Roberts, 44.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 126-127.

recovery of their national fortunes.”⁵⁹ When Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933, *The Post*’s editorial board wrote it was against the “extreme nationalism” in Germany but did not favor any intervention from the United States or other European nations. However, with Hitler’s announcement of German rearmament in March 1935, the editorial board believed “the only ultimate alternative...to acceptance of German equality is another war designed completely to destroy and dismember that nation. And that would involve collapse of the remainder of European civilization.”⁶⁰

British businessman John Walter founded *The Daily Universal Register* in 1785. With the establishment of his newspaper, Walter hoped to make an “essential improvement in the conduct of the press...[from] great incorrectness, to a system...[that] will meet the public approbation and countenance.”⁶¹ On 1 January 1788, *The Daily Universal Register* became known as *The Times* (London).⁶² In the early 1800s, it expanded nationally after receiving financial support from the British government.⁶³ As circulation and finances increased, the newspaper became independent and acquired a reputation as being “identified with the middle classes, the commercial interests, the stock exchange and the manufacturers, and increasingly hostile to...government.”⁶⁴ *The Times* (London) also began devoting “urgent interest” to foreign coverage.⁶⁵

Prior to the Great War during the tumultuous summer of 1914, *The Times* (London) tried to maintain good relations with the German imperial government.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 224.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 225.

⁶¹ *The History of The Times* (London: Printing House Square, 1950), 1: 3.

⁶² Ibid., 1: 6.

⁶³ Walker, 29-31.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁵ *The History of The Times*, 1: 128.

Additionally, the newspaper believed that “Britain’s role was to mediate” any conflict.⁶⁶ Throughout the Great War, “the commentators of *The Times*...felt that their task was to sustain the morale of the nation in mortal combat: therefore, they praised victories no less highly than they deserved; in stalemates they found elements of advantage; and defeats they minimized, excused or ignored.”⁶⁷ Circulation dropped and critical British citizens claimed the newspaper was “regarded as a government organ.”⁶⁸

“The first leading article, ‘Herr Hitler in Office,’...discussed the change of chancellor as a normal event in German internal politics”⁶⁹ when it was printed in the 30 January 1933 edition of *The Times* (London). Articles about Germany appearing later in the newspaper cited “the fall in unemployment, and remarked...the enthusiasm that the Nazi leaders could evoke.”⁷⁰ *The Times* (London) began to be considered sympathetic towards Hitler and the Nazi regime.⁷¹ Most of the editorial board and reporters believed “Germany had been unjustly treated by the Versailles peace treaty, and her grievances should be resolved.”⁷² They were “impressed by Germany’s professions and promises” and encouraged “pacifism [towards Germany] and revisionism [of the Versailles Treaty].”⁷³

The Manchester Guardian, founded by businessman and journalist John Taylor, began publication as a weekly newspaper on 5 May 1821. Taylor wanted a newspaper

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 4: 173, 200.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4: 218.

⁶⁸ Walker, 42.

⁶⁹ *The History of The Times*, 4: 881.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 4: 882.

⁷¹ Walker, 44.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 45.

⁷³ *The History of The Times*, 4: 884, 887.

devoted to the politics and economy of the working-class Manchester area.⁷⁴ This was especially important to him “in the aftermath of the Peterloo Massacre and the growing campaign to repeal the Corn Laws.”⁷⁵ While *The Guardian* reported sufficiently on the Manchester area, national and international news came from other newspapers throughout the 1800s.⁷⁶ This meant that “foreign news was...often sadly delayed...[and] months old.”⁷⁷

In 1907 *Guardian* editor Charles Scott purchased the newspaper from the Taylor family. Scott expanded the newspaper from a regional newspaper to a truly national one.⁷⁸ When the Great War began in 1914, *The Guardian* began using international correspondents and reporters for covering the war on the continent. The management and editorial board had realized that “‘quality’ newspapers...had [their] own special sources...[and] staff correspondents overseas.”⁷⁹ As a result, if *The Guardian* were to compete, its international reporting staff had to expand, and by 1919 “it began to build up its own regular group of full-time men for key places.”⁸⁰

During the 1930s, *The Guardian*’s European reporters “interpreted what they saw in terms first of that country [in which they were stationed] and secondly in terms of its impact on Europe as a whole.”⁸¹ The reporting on Germany was “rather less about the

⁷⁴ David Ayerst, *The Manchester Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 24-25.

⁷⁵ “History of the Guardian.” *The Guardian Online*. 2005. The Guardian. 20 July 2008 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk>>.

⁷⁶ Ayerst, 30-31.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷⁸ “History of the Guardian.” *The Guardian Online*.

⁷⁹ Ayerst, 499-500.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 500.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

effect of Hitler's revolution on Germany's foreign policy and rather more about its effect on Germans."⁸²

Primary Sources—Magazines and Periodicals

Relevant magazine and other periodical articles were selected using *The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* and *The International Index of Periodicals*

Writing in 1975 about the history of magazines, mass media analyst Theodore Peterson observed that “the life of a magazine on the newsstands was short. Therefore, publishers were guided by the habits of the reading public.”⁸³ This meant that popular magazines primarily tried to provide what readers were interested in at the time. Articles would be special features that were of interest to readers and that complemented the regular daily news reports. Articles were more in-depth than typical news reports or had more thorough analysis of their subject.

The magazine and periodical publishing industry changed after the Great War because of the increasing complexity and fast pace of the world. Peterson believed “the new kinds of magazines that arose were the products of their times.”⁸⁴ As a result, the beginning of the news magazine and the digest magazine occurred during the post-Great War period. Its purpose was “to sift the glut of news, to put it into convenient compartments, and to tell the hurried reader what it meant.”⁸⁵ Digest magazines were meant to inform busy readers also. Peterson explained that digest magazines “tried to distill, in simple language, the vast outpourings of busy presses for the reader on the

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 102.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 295.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

run.”⁸⁶ The magazines were meant to give readers the news quickly so they could keep up with the quickening pace of society. Magazine and periodical articles typically featured that particular week’s news summary or provided supplemental in-depth material on the major news events of that week.

Since Hitler first became a political figure in the early 1920s, he was reported on substantially in American and British magazines and periodicals. Historian Michael Zalampas remarked that “Americans were well served by coverage given to Adolf Hitler, the Nazi Party, and the Third Reich in their magazines.”⁸⁷ Zalampas’s research revealed that magazines and periodicals “never embraced appeasement at any price, never allowed themselves to be subverted by Nazi ideology, and never supported Hitler.”⁸⁸

Historiography

Two excellent surveys exist on German rearmament that were used in this study. The first is *Covert German Rearmament, 1919-1939* by Bart Whaley. Whaley’s work began as an investigation for the Central Intelligence Agency and was later turned into a book. His text “examines four separate phases in this process of [armament] evasion...[and] German-Soviet military collaboration.”⁸⁹ Whaley argued that “arms evasions...proceed[ed] under the thinnest of cover stories.”⁹⁰ He concluded that German

⁸⁶ Ibid., 295-296.

⁸⁷ Michael Zalampas, *Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich in American Magazines, 1923-1939* (Bowling Green, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989), 214.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 218.

⁸⁹ Whaley, ix.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 2.

rearmament proceeded with little intervention from the Allies because “the Allied motives [were] masked by that [of] apathy.”⁹¹

The second survey is *The Pipe Dream of Peace: The Story of the Collapse of Disarmament* by John Wheeler-Bennett. Wheeler-Bennett produced “an account of the General Disarmament Conference,”⁹² covering the period from February 1932 until August 1934. Wheeler-Bennett interpreted the Disarmament Conference to be a “tragic [story]...because of its record of opportunities missed and genuinely well-meant intentions misunderstood.”⁹³ While many European politicians and statesmen believed that the Great War had ushered in a new order in Europe, Wheeler-Bennett believed “nothing had really changed” and that there was “bitterness” and a lack of “understanding” at the Disarmament Conference.⁹⁴ He claimed that “the Allies continued to treat it [Germany] as though it were composed of the most dangerous Prussian warlords.”⁹⁵ German statesmen repeatedly “assured us [the Allies] that it needed only a gesture of understanding...[to become] a new state of which Europe might be proud.” However, many political observers warned that “attempting to keep Germany permanently in subjection must inevitably end in national revolution and all that that implied.”⁹⁶ Wheeler-Bennett concluded that those “warnings fell upon deaf ears.”⁹⁷

⁹¹ Ibid, 3.

⁹² John Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace: The Story of the Collapse of Disarmament* (New York City: Howard Fertig, 1971), vii.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., viii.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., ix.

Historian Hans Gatzke described the process of German rearmament during Chancellor and Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann's time in office in the 1920s. Gatzke argued in *Stresemann and the Rearmament of Germany* that "the rearmament of the Reichswehr had to be a secret...yet it would be wrong to conclude from this emphasis on secrecy, that the violations of...Versailles...were carried on exclusively ...behind the back or against the protest of Germany's civilian authorities."⁹⁸ He went on to explain that Stresemann was instrumental in the rearmament process during the 1920s and gave the full support of the Weimar government to it.⁹⁹

Other students may want to consult *German Rearmament and the West, 1932-1933* by Edward Bennett. The scope of his text was "German military planning in the early 1930s."¹⁰⁰ His point was that if one wanted "a knowledge of German intentions...[then] it seems essential to establish the nature of German arms plans and preparations." Bennett concluded that "military leaders sought from early on to restore the nation's military strength as a means of revising the peace settlement." This would allow Germany to threaten war as a means of strengthening diplomacy. Bennett also noted that France opposed Germany's ambitions of rearmament, while the British, however, practiced a policy of appeasement.¹⁰¹ Without the support of the British, France remained virtually isolated. Finally, Bennett believed "the advocates of disarmament tended to take German demands for equality at face value, and they overlooked the basic

⁹⁸ Hans Gatzke, *Stresemann and the Rearmament of Germany* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1954), 3-4.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁰ Edward Bennett, *German Rearmament and the West, 1932-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 3.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 509.

incompatibility between the dominant German view of the way the world should be and the views of the other nations.”¹⁰² As a result, Germany was able to rearm.

In *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe, 1933-1936*, historian Gerhard Weinberg explored “the course and development of German foreign policy in the National Socialist era” and how it allowed “Germany’s determination for war [to become] the central issue in world diplomacy.”¹⁰³ Weinberg noted the Allies had imposed the Versailles Treaty to restrict and weaken Germany, but the treaty had done nothing to strengthen the Allies from their suffering in the Great War. Weinberg argued that “Germany had emerged from the World War relatively at least as powerful if not more powerful than when it entered the conflict, with its erstwhile enemies relatively weaker.”¹⁰⁴ These were two different perceptions of how things really were in Germany and in Europe.

Hitler was also significant in the development of German foreign policy. Weinberg wrote that “Hitler developed a personal style of government that was clear in its ends but entirely flexible in its means and instruments. Whatever and whoever could deliver the goods was fine with him.”¹⁰⁵ Most significant to Hitler was “the rearmament of Germany which would enable it to move forward by threat or by force.”¹⁰⁶ Weinberg concluded that Hitler “[took] advantage of the love of peace and fear of war in other countries...[and] he built up Germany’s strength to the point where others could no

¹⁰² Ibid., 511.

¹⁰³ Gerhard Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe, 1933-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), x-xi.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 358.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 359.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

longer contemplate war as an answer to German aggression except as a most dangerous undertaking.”¹⁰⁷

Several studies about the specific branches of the German military have been included. Wilhelm Deist noted in *The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament* that “the German Army had, of course, never been willing to accept the Versailles Treaty.”¹⁰⁸ His text covers the rearmament process the German army undertook throughout the 1930s with the assistance of the Nazi government prior to Hitler’s announcement of rearmament in 1935. The German navy received attention in Carl-Axel Gemzell’s *Organization, Conflict, and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning, 1888-1940*. While broad chronologically, Gemzell gave adequate coverage to the 1920s and 1930s as the navy began to rebuild. It was during this period that the German government stressed “the importance of mobile and flexible naval warfare”¹⁰⁹ for future conflicts and supported rearmament efforts. James Corum described the rearmament process of the German air force in *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War: 1918-1940*. Corum explained that “the years 1933-1936 were of foundation-building”¹¹⁰ for the rearmament of the air force, and had a “limited rearmament program.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 360.

¹⁰⁸ Wilhelm Deist, *The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), viii.

¹⁰⁹ Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Organization, Conflict, and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning, 1888-1940* (Stockholm: Esselte Studium, 1973), 253.

¹¹⁰ James Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War: 1918-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 124.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Closing Remarks

Through the use of primary and secondary sources, this study will examine the Anglo-American press coverage of Germany's "secret" rearmament under the leadership of Adolf Hitler from the time he became chancellor in January 1933 until he announced publicly in March 1935 that Germany would rearm. This program of "secret" rearmament, begun in the early 1920s, and continued under Hitler's watch, would enable Hitler to take Germany to war in 1939 with the world.

CHAPTER TWO

30 JANUARY 1933 TO 14 OCTOBER 1933

The Beginning of the Hitler Regime

On 30 January 1933, when Adolf Hitler became the chancellor of Germany, the International Disarmament Conference was in session at Geneva, Switzerland. Begun on 2 February 1932, the conference was chaired by Arthur Henderson, former British foreign secretary. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the issue of disarmament among nations, particularly in light of Germany's demands of equality of armaments. The Germans believed that they deserved to rearm to the levels of other European nations despite limitations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. Additionally, the Germans demanded that if they were not allowed to rearm, then other European nations should disarm to the levels that were imposed on Germany.¹¹² These demands of equality dominated the conference throughout 1932 and 1933.

Once Hitler became chancellor of Germany, the issue over German armaments became all the more serious.¹¹³ The Great War was a recent memory for most Europeans, and they feared another Great War. The Versailles Treaty was designed to prevent Germany from ever starting or waging another war. Now, with Hitler in power and his demand for armament equality and radical ideas of "race and space," armaments became a serious issue.

¹¹² Sally Marks, *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe, 1918-1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 136.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 136, 145.

On 31 January 1933, *The Times* (London) and *The Manchester Guardian* reported on Hitler's ascension to power. Both articles described briefly Hitler's appointment as chancellor by the president of Germany, Paul von Hindenburg. Neither one of these articles made the front page. This was surprising considering Hitler had been politically active since the early 1920s and such major international news should merit the front page. Perhaps Hitler was underestimated or his appointment unexpected, which made this just another news story. The articles listed the appointments Hitler made to fill cabinet positions, noting only the ministry of the interior and the commissioner for aviation were filled by Nazi party members Wilhelm Frick and Hermann Göring, respectively.¹¹⁴ Then *The Times* article stated that "foreign opinion is of secondary importance with the attitude...of the German people towards their new Government."¹¹⁵ The Hitler regime was "on the whole greeted with enthusiasm."¹¹⁶ *The Times*'s wait-and-see approach to the new Hitler regime contrasted with that of the *Manchester Guardian* which questioned whether Jews had a future in Germany, because of the Nazis' anti-Semitism and whether Hitler would "seek to redress crudely and sensationally the injustices of Versailles."¹¹⁷ *The Manchester Guardian*'s fears about the future of Jews in Germany and whether Hitler would "redress...the injustices of Versailles" would prove correct. Hitler met with several of his generals on 3 February 1933 and, in a speech, revealed his plans which included the

¹¹⁴ "Herr Hitler in Office," *The Times* (London), 31 January 1933, 11; "Hitler," *The Manchester Guardian*, 31 January 1933, 8.

¹¹⁵ "Herr Hitler in Office," 11.

¹¹⁶ Martin Kitchen, *A Military History of Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 281.

¹¹⁷ "Hitler," 8.

extermination of Marxism root and branch [and the] adjustment of youth and of the whole people to the idea that only a struggle can save us and that everything else must be subordinated....[Germany must] battle against Versailles....[The battle includes] the building up of the armed forces...for achieving the goal of regaining political power. National Service must be reintroduced....Living space [is] too small for [the] German people....The conquest of new living space in the east and its ruthless Germanization [must occur because it is] certain that only through political power and struggle can the present economic circumstances be changed.¹¹⁸

The American journal, *Foreign Affairs*, believed Hitler was already redressing “the injustices of Versailles.” The publication noted that the armament limitations in the Treaty of Versailles were supposed to limit the strength and effectiveness of the German army.¹¹⁹ However, Germany had a “number of machine guns; a reserve of rifles...[and] infantry and artillery munitions”¹²⁰ of “forbidden weapons.” During the mid-1920s, the Germans had begun designing, manufacturing, and testing various weapons and their accessories. Krupp, one of Germany’s largest armaments and industrial manufacturing companies, began to produce various parts for the submarine. Krupp also designed early forms of rockets. As early as 1928, tanks were being manufactured.¹²¹ Many of the newly manufactured arms underwent “artillery test firing...in 1929.”¹²² *Foreign Affairs* asserted that the Germans had a police force sufficiently maintained and trained that it could become easily a part of the *Reichswehr*, the German army.¹²³ By 1933, there were an estimated 400,000 SA troops. The report in *Foreign Affairs* concluded that “Germany at

¹¹⁸ Quoted in J. Noakes and G. Pridham, eds., *Nazism 1919-1945: Foreign Policy, War and Racial Extermination* 3 vols. (Exeter, UK: Exeter University Publications, 1988), 3:628-629.

¹¹⁹ “The Armaments and Military Power of Germany,” *Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 2 (1933): 230.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 232.

¹²¹ Bart Whaley, *Covert German Rearmament, 1919-1939: Deception and Misperception* (Frederick: University Publications of America, 1984), 41-42.

¹²² “The Armaments and Military Power,” 42.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 232-233.

this moment could put in the field an army totally unlike that provided for in the Treaty”¹²⁴ of comparable or greater strength than that of other European nations.

In February 1933, the international community learned that the Hitler regime was training reserve forces through its Volunteer Labor Corps and had begun to explore the possibility of creating an air force. *The Times* reported that German Major-General Wilhelm von Faupel spoke at a Labor Corps meeting and said the training of young men in the organization was good for “the schooling of the mind,...the interests of comradeship,...[with] the ideal of serving the Fatherland.”¹²⁵ The idea of reserve training appealed to many young men for several reasons. Most of them liked the idea of structure, order, and power that came with military training. Other young men liked “the vague idealism and its talk of ‘renewal’ and ‘rebirth’”¹²⁶ that serving the Fatherland entailed. For others, service provided an employment opportunity during hard economic times. *The Times* estimated that about 40,000 such men were trained annually. The total number of men who had been trained by 1933 was about 250,000.¹²⁷ *The Times* was rather liberal in its estimate. About 85,000 men had been recruited for reserve training.¹²⁸

Many onlookers from the international community believed that when Hitler’s loyal Nazi Party and government official Hermann Göring became the aviation

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 244.

¹²⁵ “Young Men in Uniform,” *The Times* (London), 2 February 1933, 9.

¹²⁶ Kitchen, 281-282.

¹²⁷ “Young Men in Uniform,” 9.

¹²⁸ Wilhelm Deist, *The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 29.

commissioner “a movement of militarization in the air”¹²⁹ had begun. On 2 February, Göring explained in a speech that Germany wanted peace, but such peace depended on other European nations and whether or not they allowed Germany to have armaments equality. He believed that such equality and developing an aviation ministry were necessary for German security.¹³⁰ Göring, a distinguished air force flyer in the Great War, was the perfect man for the job of developing an aviation ministry and air force. He was able to impress upon Hitler the importance of air armaments and secure substantial funding for the financing of them because of his position and close relationship with Hitler.¹³¹ *The Times* correctly reported this significant news that Germany was laying the foundation for aerial rearmament.

While the Versailles Treaty had prohibited completely German military aviation, prior to 1933 *Reichswehr* leaders had kept up with the latest technological developments in the area and obtained all desired test results. This had been achieved by transferring aircraft production abroad (most significantly, in the 1920s, to Russia), cooperating closely with civil aviation, especially the German airline *Lufthansa*, and finally by training officers as pilots and observers in friendly foreign countries. By spring 1933, however, the number of airplanes fit for military action was small.¹³²

¹²⁹ “Captain Göring on ‘the National Security,’” *The Times* (London), 3 February 1933, 9. Following Hitler’s appointment, Göring was also named Prussian Minister of the Interior and Commander-in-Chief of the Prussian Police and *Gestapo*.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ James Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 124.

¹³² Wilhelm Deist, “The Rearmament of the Wehrmacht,” in *Germany and the Second World War*, ed. By Research Institute for Military History, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, trans. by P.S. Falla, Dean S. McMurry, Ewald Osers, 9 vols. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2000), 1:407.

Hitler continued to emphasize Germany's position on armaments equality throughout February in several speeches covered in the press. He reiterated that Germany wanted peace and that other nations should disarm, but not Germany.¹³³ Hitler, as well as many Germans, made this claim because German disarmament "had originally been intended as a prelude to the general disarmament thought necessary for peace."¹³⁴ The other European powers had to disarm as well. In a speech on 12 February, Hitler became increasingly aggressive in his demands when he verbally attacked France. Wire reports to *The New York Times* revealed that Hitler claimed "Germany will increase her armaments unless France disarms."¹³⁵ Onlookers explained Hitler's "impatience," "rashness," and "frankness" were directed clearly towards the French to push the issue of German armaments equality.¹³⁶ The French were alarmed with Hitler's rhetoric as memories of the Great War were still fresh from when Germany invaded France.

Such issues were discussed at the Disarmament Conference. *The Economist*, a British political magazine, summarized the British delegation's proposal that all European nations should pursue eventually "equality of war material and for a standardization of the organization of Continental European armies."¹³⁷ The British based the success of their plan on the hope that France would disarm and thus appease the Germans so that they would not rearm. This would create a balance of power that the

¹³³ "Hitler Offers 4-Year Plans to Save Reich," *The Washington Post*, 2 February 1933, 1.

¹³⁴ Gerhard Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe, 1933-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 40.

¹³⁵ "Hitler Presents German Claims Bluntly; Says Reich Will Rearm if Paris Won't Cut," *The New York Times*, 13 February 1933, 4.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ "The British Disarmament Programme," *The Economist*, 4 February 1933, 230.

British proposed just as *The Economist* had described.¹³⁸ This publication also reported that the Treaty of Versailles and other such treaties were still binding until matters could be fully discussed.¹³⁹ The delegation's proposals were further expounded upon and discussed in *The Manchester Guardian*. It featured articles which stated that the French delegation questioned logistical issues concerning the standardization of Continental armies. The French believed that there was no way to define standardization because criteria such as training, length of service, reserves, and the use of police forces in the army had not been addressed. After debate, the French proposed that army standardization include service lengths under a year and limited effectiveness, but these were not defined.¹⁴⁰ The French conceded because they desired an alliance with Britain. The French were still haunted by the German attack in the Great War.¹⁴¹

The discussions at the conference were not limited to ground forces. The British delegation pushed for "the suppression of all war aviation"¹⁴² while the French sought "international boards of control [for aviation] and the ownership of civil aircraft under the League."¹⁴³ Even though Germany's demands for armaments equality had not been achieved, Hitler's attitude changed abruptly. A journalist with the Associated Press

¹³⁸ Edward Bennett, *German Rearmament and the West, 1932-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 91.

¹³⁹ "The British Disarmament Programme," 230.

¹⁴⁰ "Abolition of Bombing from Air," *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 February 1933, 13; "Disarmament on Land," *The Times* (London), 24 February 1933, 13; "Standardization of Armies," *The Manchester Guardian*, 18 February 1933, 10.

¹⁴¹ Bennett, 92.

¹⁴² "Britain to Seek End of Aviation in War," *The New York Times*, 16 February 1933, 13.

¹⁴³ "Air and Land Disarmament," *The Times* (London), 21 February 1933, 13.

reported Hitler was “willing to go to any lengths to further the ideal of disarmament.”¹⁴⁴

Surprisingly, this included the elimination of the German army.¹⁴⁵

German Threats and European Fears

The impression that the Germans were appeased was illusory. By the beginning of March 1933, the major Anglo-American newspapers had reported that the British and the French became alarmed when Rudolf Nadolny, chair of the German delegation to the Disarmament Conference, threatened that Germany would withdraw from the conference.¹⁴⁶ Because the German demands of armaments equality had not been met, Nadolny believed “the conference has been ineffective,”¹⁴⁷ and he made his threat. Even the British and French delegations began to doubt the effectiveness of the conference. The British delegation proposed to adjourn until a later date in an attempt to ease some of the tensions while the French delegation believed the present discussions at the conference were “a sheer waste of time.”¹⁴⁸

In an attempt to save the conference, British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald traveled to Geneva to resolve the crisis. He agreed with Nadolny’s statements because the conference had not done its job. MacDonald was attempting to take control of the situation.¹⁴⁹ Upon arrival at the conference, he sought to “determine whether any concrete arms reduction could be effected,”¹⁵⁰ yet little progress was made. Exactly as the four

¹⁴⁴ “Hitler Favors Disarmament For All World,” *The Washington Post*, 23 February 1933, 1.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ “Arms Parley Near Failure, Is Report,” *The Washington Post*, 4 March 1933, 5; “Drifting at Geneva,” *The Times* (London), 4 March 1933, 11.

¹⁴⁷ “Arms Parley Near Failure,” 5.

¹⁴⁸ “Complete Deadlock at Geneva,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 March 1933, 9.

¹⁴⁹ “Premier’s Coming Visit to Geneva,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 March 1933, 16.

¹⁵⁰ “MacDonald Studies Dark Arms Picture,” *The Washington Post*, 12 March 1933, 1.

major Anglo-American newspapers had reported, the limited progress made when MacDonald encountered the German delegation and its threat of withdrawal proved to be “discouraging” and “disappointing.”¹⁵¹

On 12 March, Göring spoke again at the conference. The already tense situation was not helped. He threatened “to use every effort to restore Germany to her place in the air.”¹⁵² In his highly emotional speech, Göring alleged that the European nations at the Disarmament Conference were enemies of Germany and attempted to suppress German power. He claimed they would be unable to restrict Germany, and Germany would return to the air even if that meant war.¹⁵³ Not long after Göring’s speech, MacDonald offered his plan for disarmament. Both *The Times* and *Washington Post* reported accurately that MacDonald proposed a reduction in armaments for the French and an increase in armaments for the Germans. The Germans were permitted to have a land army of 200,000 troops while the French were reduced to the newly proposed level of the Germans. The Germans were allowed to maintain a naval force as well as an air force. Aerial bombing as well as chemical and biological warfare were forbidden in MacDonald’s new proposal, which was to be in effect for the next five years.¹⁵⁴

In an analysis of MacDonald’s proposal, an article in *The Spectator*, a British magazine, explained “the proposals have been well received”¹⁵⁵ by the Germans, but there was still considerable work to be done. The piece described the proposals as merely

¹⁵¹ Bennett, 366-367.

¹⁵² “Aviation Equality Pledged Germany,” *The Washington Post*, 12 March 1933, 13.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ “Bold Arms Cut Plan Advanced by MacDonald,” *The Washington Post*, 17 March 1933, 1; “British Draft Convention,” *The Times* (London), 17 March 1933, 14; “British Proposals for Disarmament,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 March 1933, 11; See Bennett, 362-363.

¹⁵⁵ “The Four Powers and Europe,” *The Spectator*, 24 March 1933, 417.

a “compromise” to appease the Germans temporarily and prevent total failure of the Disarmament Conference. MacDonald even acknowledged the proposals were a compromise; however, claims that “the proposals have been well received” were false. The Germans remained anxious and skeptical of the British plan, while even British public opinion was affected in “an adverse way.”¹⁵⁶ It was likely difficult to gauge opinion as quickly as *The Spectator* had done. The politicians and the public had not had sufficient time to consider the proposals and their long-term consequences. Logistical issues about the naval armaments and how to limit continental armies had to be discussed still. The solution the magazine offered to solve the armaments crisis was for French Premier Édouard Daladier, Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini, and Hitler to take a more active role in negotiations at the Disarmament Conference as British Prime Minister MacDonald had done.¹⁵⁷ The issue over armaments was hardly resolved.

For the time being, tensions about armaments seemed to be quelled, but only until the Germans launched several naval vessels, which received some coverage in *The New York Times*. The first few days of April 1933 were marked with celebration by the Germans with the dedication of “Germany’s second ‘pocket battleship’... named *Admiral Scheer* in memory of the late commander of the German fleet.”¹⁵⁸ The *Admiral Scheer* was described as being “heavily armed” and able to outrun battleships. As early as 1927, German naval vessels were being designed to travel at greater speeds and to be armed

¹⁵⁶ Bennett, 379-380.

¹⁵⁷ “The Four Powers and Europe,” 417.

¹⁵⁸ “Germans Launch Second Big Cruiser,” *The New York Times*, 2 April 1933, 29.

more heavily.¹⁵⁹ The *Admiral Scheer*'s design was nothing new and reporters for *The New York Times* should not have been as alarmed at this allegedly "new" design when the ship was dedicated. During the dedication ceremony, Germany's minister of defense, General Werner von Blomberg, denounced the Treaty of Versailles and insisted that the Germans wanted peace and security.¹⁶⁰ Shortly after the dedication ceremony, an Associated Press report revealed that the Germans had already begun construction of a third naval cruiser in late 1932 and would begin construction on a fourth cruiser in late 1934. Additionally, the Germans planned to build "four reserve destroyers...between 1934 and 1936."¹⁶¹ While there was considerable alarm in *The New York Times* over the construction of the *Admiral Scheer* and future ships, these vessels had been planned and known about since the mid-1920s, when the German government approved construction to replace aging vessels.¹⁶² Nevertheless, the navy's 13,900 non-commissioned officers and men and its 1,100 officers did not even have the ships permitted Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. The Germans had nearly reached the limit for lighter ships, like cruisers and torpedo-boats, but replacing obsolete battleships of the pre-Great War era with modern pocket battleships, like the *Admiral Scheer*, had only just begun.¹⁶³

The major Anglo-American newspapers then reported the French delegation had begun to demand revisions to the armaments proposals that British Prime Minister MacDonald had made the previous month. The French government knew that

¹⁵⁹ Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Organization, Conflict, and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning, 1888-1940* (Stockholm: Esselte Studium, 1973), 263.

¹⁶⁰ "Germans Launch Second Big Cruiser," 29.

¹⁶¹ "Four Cruisers Are Supplanted in German Naval Program," *The New York Times*, 4 April 1933, 13.

¹⁶² Gemzell, 260-261.

¹⁶³ Deist, "Rearmament," 1:407.

MacDonald's proposals had been made to continue the Disarmament Conference and keep the Germans from withdrawing. The French believed that it was time to resume discussions and to revise the proposals to both disarm Germany and ensure that France "would be given a fair deal."¹⁶⁴ Daladier and French foreign minister Joseph Paul-Boncour both agreed that MacDonald's proposals were only the beginning but would not be the final armaments agreement.¹⁶⁵ The French parliament backed Daladier's demands with a vote of confidence "on how the peace and disarmament problems must be approached."¹⁶⁶ Towards the end of April, the Disarmament Conference resumed.

The Times reported that the British delegation remained optimistic that the reconvening Disarmament Conference would be a success, contrary to the doubtful British public, who thought the conference would lead to nothing but continued debate.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, on 24 and 25 April, the conference resumed with difficulty. Immediately, the German delegation began to make demands. The Germans wanted to possess a variety of arms for "defensive" purposes, and they thought that German forces stationed outside of Germany should not be included in the count of home army strength. *The Times* noted correctly that Nadolny tried to force the new demands at the conference. He spent over a week trying to get the conference to "move rapidly on through a first reading"¹⁶⁸ of the German amendments.

¹⁶⁴ "Modifications in Four-Power Pact Plan," *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 April 1933, 12.

¹⁶⁵ "Peace Plan Beaten by French Chamber," *The Washington Post*, 7 April 1933, 2. See Bennett, 383-384 for the French agreement to and revision of MacDonald's armament proposals.

¹⁶⁶ P. J. Philip, "Rule by 4 Powers Rejected in Paris," *The New York Times*, 7 April 1933, 8.

¹⁶⁷ "Reassembly of Conference," *The Times* (London), 25 April 1933, 14; "Work Resumed at Geneva," *The Times* (London), 26 April 1933, 15.

¹⁶⁸ Bennett, 388.

Both *The New York Times* and *The Times* reported that one of the major issues at the conference was whether or not semi-military forces, such as the SA, counted as part of Germany's military force.¹⁶⁹ This issue was significant because of the increasing prominence of, and brutality inflicted on Germans by, the SA in its terrorizing of Nazi opponents. On 20 April 1933, a feature article in *The Manchester Guardian* described how the SA was waging "a war of extermination... against the entire 'Left.'"¹⁷⁰ The SA robbed, tortured, beat, imprisoned, and even killed enemies of the Hitler regime. The SA had indeed become increasingly violent in the weeks after the 5 March vote for *Reichstag* elections, in which the Nazi Party failed to win a majority of seats in the parliament. After the elections, there were numerous reports of beatings, looting, and murders,¹⁷¹ just as *The Manchester Guardian* had discussed. The SA merited such newsworthy attention because of the danger it posed to the civil rights of Germans. The SA skirted the law and was ignored by local police forces and the judiciary. Despite the alleged "secrecy" and fear of the SA in Germany, news of this semi-military force of the Hitler regime could no longer "be kept secret, either in Germany or abroad."¹⁷² Because of the danger the SA posed in acting frequently on behalf of the German government, the French pushed for the SA to be included in "computing the size of the army of the Reich"¹⁷³ at the Disarmament Conference.

¹⁶⁹ "Computing Armed Strength," *The New York Times*, 30 April 1933, 29; "Germany and the Convention," *The Times* (London), 29 April 1933, 14.

¹⁷⁰ "Nazi Cabinet's Responsibility for Terrorism," *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 April 1933, 11.

¹⁷¹ Richard Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 339-341.

¹⁷² "Nazi Cabinet's Responsibility for Terrorism," 11.

¹⁷³ "Computing Armed Strength," 29.

In May 1933, the Disarmament Conference would decide whether or not to count the SA as part of the German military. This decision received major news coverage in the Anglo-American newspapers. Despite the French argument that the SA was militarily trained and an active force, the verdict at the conference was that the SA was not a military force and would not be counted with the German army's numbers.¹⁷⁴ While the four national Anglo-American newspapers were correct in their reporting, what was not covered was the political reason the French wanted the SA counted. The French were tired of being accused by Napoléon of not disarming and fulfilling their obligation to do so.¹⁷⁵ In an attempt to appease the angry and highly critical French, the British delegation proposed "a fixed quota of militarized police in proportion to the number of its effectives according to an agreed percentage."¹⁷⁶ The Germans agreed eventually with the British proposal on the condition of "universal acceptance" by other nations.¹⁷⁷

Despite the disarmament conference's decision not to consider the SA part of the German army, the French were correct in claiming that it should do so. Unknown to the outside world and the Anglo-American press, the integration of the paramilitary organization into Germany's national defense establishment represented already in early 1933 the most significant aspect of the fledgling Nazi remilitarization of the nation. As shown by numerous military historians, the SA became an indispensable instrument of military policy for Hitler as well as for the *Reichswehr*; the latter viewed the SA as a

¹⁷⁴ "Brown Shirts Held to be Only Police," *The Washington Post*, 2 May 1933, 3; "Nazi Troops Voted Not Part of Army," *The New York Times*, 2 May 1933, 12; "Question of German Army Strength," *The Manchester Guardian*, 2 May 1933, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Bennett, 389.

¹⁷⁶ "British Proposal for Fixing the Number Allowed," *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 May 1933, 13;

"Compromise Over Police Forces," *The Times* (London), 4 May 1933, 12.

¹⁷⁷ Clarence Streit, "Arms Conference Registers a Gain," *The New York Times*, 4 May 1933, 14.

primary reservoir of urgently needed army reservists. According to the German historian, Wilhelm Deist, for German army leaders “the SA was the accepted instrument of remilitarization....In the first months of National Socialist rule the SA assumed functions which permitted the *Reichswehr* to preserve the fiction of its own aloofness from domestic political conflicts.” However, as Deist also notes, and as will be made clear later, the SA’s use as a crucial force of army reservists “created very real dangers.” The SA and its commander Captain Ernst Röhm, had military ambitions that would eventually involve themselves in a conflict with Hitler as well as with the *Reichswehr* leadership.¹⁷⁸

The New York Times explained that the German delegation continued to push the issue of armaments equality. This time the delegation demanded that other nations eliminate military aircraft and naval vessels since Germany had to reduce such aircraft and naval vessels under the Versailles Treaty. The delegation threatened that if other nations did not disarm, then Germany was within every right to begin manufacturing air craft, submarines, and other naval vessels.¹⁷⁹ Political onlookers believed the German delegation made its demands to serve as a distraction so that Germany could begin construction on a new naval ship and secure a spot at the planed 1935 naval conference that would review the naval restrictions in the Versailles Treaty.¹⁸⁰ That new German ship referred to in *The New York Times* was likely the *Scharnhorst*, which was funded for construction in May 1933 and launched in October 1936.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Deist, “Rearmament,” 1:411-12.

¹⁷⁹ “Germans Propose Naval Work Truce,” *The Washington Post*, 6 May 1933, 3; Clarence Streit, “Reich Seeks Seat at Naval Parley,” *The New York Times*, 6 May 1933, 8.

¹⁸⁰ Clarence Streit, “Big Warship Asked in Reich Arms Note,” *The New York Times*, 8 May 1933, 5.

¹⁸¹ Weinberg, 32.

Both *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* reported that the German delegation managed to delay the resumed Geneva proceedings when it began to make demands concerning air and naval armaments. Little was accomplished during the next several days. The Germans refused to discuss the German home army and the previous proposed issue concerning the standardization of all continental armies.¹⁸² The French delegation, which was fed-up with the Germans, demanded that the British conclude talking and negotiating with the Germans and vote on military strength and effectives.¹⁸³ The impatience of the French that was reported in *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* was understandable. The British delegation wanted to continue discussions and even considered calling a five-power meeting of the United States, France, Italy, Germany, and, of course, the British.¹⁸⁴ Only a few days after the resumption of the Disarmament Conference, it had reached a deadlock and the British and French delegations were increasingly pessimistic. There was fear that the German delegation might withdraw from the conference as the Germans refused to accept the vote that counted the SA in with the army to calculate military size. Negotiations and conversations between the British and German delegations ceased.¹⁸⁵

In a speech on 15 May, Franz von Papen, the German vice chancellor, defended Germany's stance on armaments. The already tense situation over armaments between Germany and the international community became worse. He argued that Germany deserved security from the alleged threat that Germany believed Britain and France posed

¹⁸² "New Amendments by Germany," *The Times* (London), 6 May 1933, 12; "Preference for Long-Service Army," *The Times* (London), 6 May 1933, 11.

¹⁸³ "Germany's Disturbing Effect on Disarmament," *The Manchester Guardian*, 9 May 1933, 10.

¹⁸⁴ Bennett, 393.

¹⁸⁵ Clarence Streit, "Deadlock on Effectives," *The New York Times*, 12 May 1933, 12.

to it. That security could come only through Germany's rearmament or the disarmament of other nations. He hinted at possible war when he quoted an old German song whose lyrics expressed "there is no death more beautiful than to be killed by the enemy...[and] fathers must fall on the battlefield."¹⁸⁶ Almost simultaneously, Hitler himself was to speak before the *Reichstag*, the German parliament, on the issue of armaments and the Disarmament Conference. His speech was anticipated eagerly by the foreign press and other observers. Many expected Hitler to agree with von Papen.¹⁸⁷

In his speech on 17 May, which received attention in both *The New York Times* and *The Times*, Hitler surprised everyone. He agreed that the German government would respect the armament restrictions in the Treaty of Versailles. Additionally, he agreed with a recent pronouncement from United States President Franklin Roosevelt, a major proponent of world peace. Hitler claimed that the German delegation at Geneva was ready to resume talks, beginning with a discussion of MacDonald's previous proposal. He continued to push for the disarmament of other nations, but claimed that Germany would not rearm.¹⁸⁸ Hitler's more reasonable, moderate tone noted by *The New York Times* and *The Times* was attributed to his interest in carrying the support of Britain, particularly because the British delegation had been sympathetic towards Germany.¹⁸⁹

Unknown to the world, Hitler's lengthy speech marked the first time he deployed his tactic, which he pursued consistently during his early years in power, of justifying his

¹⁸⁶ "German Arms Demands Are Hotly Upheld," *The Washington Post*, 15 May 1933, 1.

¹⁸⁷ Frederick Birchall, "Hitler to be Cautious," *The New York Times*, 15 May 1933, 1; "German Arms Policy: Herr Hitler's Position," *The Times* (London), 17 May 1933, 14.

¹⁸⁸ "Herr Hitler's Policy," *The Times* (London), 18 May 1933, 14; "Nazi Approval of Peace Plan Wins Applause," *The Washington Post*, 18 May 1933, 1-2.

¹⁸⁹ Bennett, 395.

military plans for Germany by citing the injustices of the Versailles Treaty and thereby setting himself up as the apostle of peace and branding the British and French as the guilty parties who were unwilling to accept his well-meant proposals. By May 1933, he had concluded that Germany's rearmament by "normal means," i.e. through agreement in the League of Nations' Disarmament Conference, was not possible. Nearing the end of the speech, he revealed his ulterior purpose in giving it: laying the basis for Germany's future withdrawal from both the League and the conference. Observers in Britain and the United States, including journalists, seemed to ignore the German chancellor's threat: "It would be difficult for us to remain a member of the League of Nations as a Volk subjected to constant degradation."¹⁹⁰

After hearing Hitler's speech, most delegations at the Disarmament Conference were cautiously optimistic. However, they waited to see how the German delegation would react at the conference to determine "whether Chancellor Hitler's speech represents a genuine change of policy or merely a time-gaining maneuver."¹⁹¹ The American press seemed more skeptical. *Newsweek*, an American news magazine, reminded the public of "German tactics [that] have become familiar in Geneva"¹⁹² in light of the earlier deadlock and Hitler's recent speech. The article noted how the Germans had demanded both security and armaments equality, hinting that nothing would change once the Disarmament Conference continued.¹⁹³ *The Literary Digest*,

¹⁹⁰ Max Domarus, *The Essential Hitler: Speeches and Commentary*, ed. By Patric Romane, foreward by Charles W. Sydnor, Jr. (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2007), 600.

¹⁹¹ Clarence Streit, "Outlook Held Hopeful," *The New York Times*, 19 May 1933, 1.

¹⁹² "Disarmament: Germany's Stand for Semi-Military Force Deadlocks Conference," *Newsweek*, 20 May 1933, 12.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

another American news and cultural magazine, was equally dubious toward Hitler's speech and regarding the German delegation. The article questioned whether Hitler could be trusted to fulfill the pledges he made. The magazine stated that many foreign news services reported a sense of "skepticism" and "distrust" and that Hitler's speech was a "smoke-screen," meant to be "soothing to foreign ears."¹⁹⁴ Perhaps German policy had changed. The Germans were poised, along with the French and British, to sign a ten-year peace accord and pact, proposed by the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, which held these powers, in addition to Italy, responsible for maintaining peace in Europe.¹⁹⁵

Both the British and American press seemed poorly instructed on the interests of both Italy and Germany in concluding the so-called Four Power Pact. Mussolini had pressed for the pact because he, like Hitler, disliked the international security system based on the League of Nations. The Italian leader feared that the Nazi government had nationalist designs on eventually uniting with neighboring Austria and with the heavily German Tyrol region in northern Italy. Mussolini intended to use the rise of Hitler's regime to produce a new concert of major powers to lessen the seeming dangers to Austria and Italy from German nationalism. The Italians hoped to divert German nationalist claims on other German communities to the German-Polish frontier and other areas of Eastern Europe. Also, in this way Mussolini could present himself to Britain and France as a mediator in European and world affairs. As for the Germans, Hitler, Blomberg, the defense minister, and Göring, agreed to the pact because it committed

¹⁹⁴ "Hitler Proclaims Peace with Equality," *The Literary Digest*, 27 May 1933, 10-11.

¹⁹⁵ "Britain, France, Italy, and Germany for 10-Year Pact," *The Washington Post*, 22 May 1933, 1; "Four-Power Pact," *The Times* (London), 29 May 1933, 14.

Germany to nothing, but it might provide, in the words of German historian, Wilhelm Deist, writing after much research on the subject in 1990, “a breathing-space for rearmament.”¹⁹⁶

The Not So Quiet Summer

However, at the beginning of June 1933, when it came time to sign Mussolini’s Four-Power Pact, the Germans refused. The Hitler regime argued that it would not sign the pact unless France began to disarm and reduced its armaments. British, French, Italian, and German officials met to avert another potential crisis.¹⁹⁷ Finally on 7 June 1933, the Four-Power Pact was signed in Rome. The pact, at least one American paper believed, was to usher in peace and “assure disarmament of the four powers in case of partial or complete failure of the Geneva Arms Conference.”¹⁹⁸ However, the pact never entered into force because Germany withdrew three months later from the League of Nations.

For most of June, the Disarmament Conference recessed to prepare for the upcoming World Economic Conference scheduled to begin on 12 June 1933. On 27 June when the Disarmament Conference resumed meeting, Chairman Arthur Henderson proposed that the meeting adjourn until 16 October 1933. The conference did so because

¹⁹⁶ Deist, “Rearmament,” 1:586-87.

¹⁹⁷ “Four-Power Treaty Again Strikes Snag,” *The Washington Post*, 3 June 1933, 3; “French Agreed: German Decision Awaited,” *The Times* (London), 7 June 1933, 12; “A Hitch in Paris,” *The Times* (London), 5 June 1933, 10; “New Effort to Reach Agreement,” *The Times* (London), 6 June 1933, 10.

¹⁹⁸ “Four-Power Pact is Signed in Rome,” *The Washington Post*, 8 June 1933, 3.

most nations represented there were focused on the Economic Conference that was in progress and were unable to devote the necessary time for discussions on disarmament.¹⁹⁹

The adjournment of the Disarmament Conference did not stop the Germans from continuing to push issues concerning armaments and military force. On 17 June, Hitler named Baldur von Schirach, a Nazi Party member and youth leader, to lead German youth organizations. *The New York Times* reported that the appointment of Schirach was “the Nazis’ latest step in securing undisputed dominance over the minds of German youth.”²⁰⁰ The article implied that German youth organizations were a new creation of the Nazis. Such organizations, however, were not new. Hitler youth groups had existed since 1926.²⁰¹ On the 19 and 20 June, *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* reported that the SA and German secret police raided the offices of the “Green Shirts,” the “army” of the German National Party, and arrested its members. The Nazi regime ordered that the “Green Shirts” be dissolved and prohibited. Although the Nationalist Party had been a political ally of the Nazi Party, Hitler and his regime argued that the Nationalists had become infiltrated with Communists.²⁰² As the newspapers reported correctly, the SA believed that “the ‘National Socialist revolution’ had not yet achieved its ends,”²⁰³ because the threat of Communism to Nazism still remained. As a result, the SA continued

¹⁹⁹ “Adjournment Proposed,” *The Times* (London), 28 June 1933, 14; “Arms Parley Quits Until Next Autumn,” *The Washington Post*, 30 June 1933, 5; “Bureau Decides for Adjournment Until October 16,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 27 June 1933, 6; “U.S. Only Morally Backing Arms Plan,” *The Washington Post*, 2 June 1933, 3.

²⁰⁰ “Nazi Heads All Youth Groups,” *The New York Times*, 18 June 1933, 23.

²⁰¹ Evans, 213-215.

²⁰² “Nazis Strike at Their Allies,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 22 June 1933, 9; “New Coup in Germany: Herr Hitler and Nationalists,” *The Times* (London), 22 June 1933, 14.

²⁰³ Deist, *Wehrmacht*, 27.

its violent assault on German Communists, supported in its attack by Hitler and aiming at eliminating the so-called danger to his regime.

Near the end of June and beginning of July, there was a more immediate menace to Germany than Communism. The four major Anglo-American newspapers reported there was a supposed air raid over Germany. The German government claimed that on 25 June two foreign aircraft were identified flying over the capital, Berlin, at a low altitude. The planes supposedly dropped Communist leaflets and literature that the Nazi regime viewed as threatening. The government claimed also that foreign aircraft were spotted over the cities of Kottbus, Weimar, and Mannheim. The alleged air raid prompted Nazi officials to demand aerial armaments and the establishment of an aerial police force for the defense of Germany.²⁰⁴

The French government, in response, opposed strongly the German government's demands. The French pointed out that the demands were in violation of restrictions in the Treaty of Versailles.²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the German government began to shop around for military aircraft. Reports in London claimed that the Germans had contracted a British aircraft manufacturer for the construction of at least sixty military planes. The British government investigated the matter, which revealed that the Germans had contacted the Hawker Engineering Company, a British firm, and other companies, about purchasing

²⁰⁴ "Air-Raids Over Berlin," *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 June 1933, 9; "Berlin Air-Raid," *The Times* (London), 26 June 1933, 14; "Reich Public Irate on Berlin Air Raid," *The Washington Post*, 25 June 1933, 3.

²⁰⁵ "Aerial Police for Germany," *The Times* (London), 4 July 1933, 14.

aircraft. Immediately, the British government intervened, prohibiting the British companies from selling the planes to Germany.²⁰⁶

In reality, the “air raid” over Germany, which received substantial press coverage, was manufactured by the Germans themselves, solely for their own purposes. The “raid” has been described by at least one recent military historian as “an aerial equivalent of Hitler’s political Reichstag Fire hoax.”²⁰⁷ The Germans justified their demand for aerial armaments by claiming that had the Germans been able to defend themselves, then the “air raid” would not have happened.²⁰⁸ The timing of this event was no coincidence. It was only in May 1933 that the Germans had fully developed “plans for the implementation of an immediate program to produce 1,000 aircraft.”²⁰⁹

In the meantime, during July, the major Anglo-American newspapers reported that while the Disarmament Conference was adjourned, the British chairman Henderson traveled to France and Germany to speak with leaders of both countries. Henderson thought that by meeting individually with the leaders in private, instead of negotiating on a world stage at the Disarmament Conference, that more could be achieved. He met first with French Premier Daladier to discuss methods of armaments controls and inspections. Then Henderson traveled to Germany and discussed with Hitler the fears that the French

²⁰⁶ “Germany Refused Planes by British,” *The Washington Post*, 27 July 1933, 4; “Germany Reported Buying War Planes,” *The New York Times*, 5 July 1933, 1; “Military Aircraft for Germany,” *The Times* (London), 26 July 1933, 12.

²⁰⁷ Whaley, 45. The *Reichstag* fire occurred on 27 February 1933. Police arrested a Communist suspected of starting the fire. Headlines in the next morning’s newspapers read that Germany was on the verge of a Communist takeover. Germans feared Communists and Hitler did not like the Communists. Hitler used the *Reichstag* fire and the Germans’ fears of Communism to take emergency measures to prevent an alleged Communist takeover. Hitler was given emergency powers. In *Reichstag* elections held on 5 March, the Nazis were able to take control of the *Reichstag*. The *Reichstag* passed the Enabling Act which suspended civil rights and gave Hitler ultimate power.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Corum, 162.

had about German rearmament. Both Daladier and Hitler were receptive to Henderson. He suggested that the two men should meet to discuss such matters and attempt to resolve them.²¹⁰ However, the impression from the newspaper accounts that Henderson's disarmament tour was a success was false. There was no compromise or even the hope of a "real advance towards a compromise."²¹¹

Moreover, for the remainder of the summer, what dominated the headlines in the four major British and American papers was the increasing militarization of the SA. Hitler decreed a reorganization of the SA into regional groups. *The Manchester Guardian* reported that Hitler ordered such a reorganization so the SA could be transformed into a military force by integrating it into the German army. The paper said it was only a matter of time until this happened.²¹² The reports were partially correct. About 250,000 SA troops were to be trained as reserve soldiers for the German army,²¹³ but the SA itself was not going to be transformed into a military force. Later it was revealed that the SA troops received the same training as regular army soldiers. In addition to training, the SA troops were provided the same or similar arms and uniforms as regular German army soldiers. According to the provisions of the Versailles Treaty, this was prohibited.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ "A Disarmament Pilgrimage," *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 July 1933, 9; "Henderson Urges Paris-Berlin Talk," *The New York Times*, 19 July 1933, 1; "Mr. Henderson in Berlin," *The Times* (London), 19 July 1933, 11.

²¹¹ John Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace: The Story of the Collapse of Disarmament* (New York: Howard Fertig Press, 1971), 175.

²¹² "Militarization of the Brown Shirts," *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 July 1933, 9.

²¹³ Deist, *Wehrmacht*, 27; Whaley, 45.

²¹⁴ "Turning Nazi Storm Troops into Soldiers," *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 August 1933, 14.

The Beginning of the End of the Disarmament Conference?

When September 1933 began, European delegations from the Disarmament Conference started to prepare for the meeting's eventual reconvening scheduled for 16 October. On 3 September, Hitler attended a Nuremberg rally of Nazi supporters and troops. Even though this was a massive demonstration of force and support for him, he continued to pledge that Germany sought only peace and that war was unnecessary.²¹⁵ Prospects of peace were doubtful. There were new accounts in *The Manchester Guardian* about the continued militarization of the SA. The SA was being trained "in the use of light and heavy machine-guns, mine-throwers, and artillery."²¹⁶ The British and French governments alleged that Germany was rearming secretly. They agreed that strong diplomacy was the best solution to Germany's current rearmament. Both Paris and London had gathered evidence of Germany's secret rearmament and discussed it in preparation for a meeting in the French capital with the British, French, and American delegations to the Disarmament Conference.²¹⁷ The Germans were alerted to the evidence gathering expeditions of the British and the French. The Soviet Union, which had not been invited to participate in the Disarmament Conference, tipped the Germans off after Moscow was approached to provide information on German armament activities.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ "Hitler Exhorts Nazis to Teach Gospel of Unity," *The Washington Post*, 4 September 1933, 3; "Nazi Display at Nuremberg," *The Times* (London), 4 September 1933, 10.

²¹⁶ "Detailed Evidence of the Training of Nazi Contingents," *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 September 1933, 10.

²¹⁷ "Coming Talks in Paris," *The Times* (London), 6 September 1933, 10; "German Secret Arming Fought by War Allies," *The Washington Post*, 10 September 1933, 2; "Next Week's Discussion on Disarmament," *The Manchester Guardian*, 14 September 1933, 14.

²¹⁸ Bennett, 452.

The major Anglo-American newspapers reported correctly that British, French, and American officials met in Paris during the middle of September and were able to agree on several items they would present at the Disarmament Conference. Both Britain and France had clear evidence of Germany's rearmament and agreed that it would also take the backing of the United States and Italy to force Germany's hand. Officials in Paris also agreed that some revisions to the Treaty of Versailles could be made, but only after the Disarmament Conference reconvened and the matter had been discussed further. The French insisted that Germany would have to permit inspectors to ensure it was abiding by armament restrictions.²¹⁹

Britain and France insisted that Germany should only be allowed to start rearming after a trial period and to a limited extent. A French demand that Britain should take part in sanctions against Germany should the latter violate the Versailles Treaty or evade arms controls remained unsuccessful. The British formulated cautiously proposals for Britain's action if Germany violated its disarmament obligations, and virtually ruled out any occupation of German territory. According to historian Deist, "Britain did not wish to be responsible for any guarantees that might involve her in continental commitments." The United States, too, opposed sanctions. Despite their differences on the proper way to treat Germany, British and French leaders "did not differ fundamentally in their estimate of the danger from Germany."²²⁰

²¹⁹ "Arms Accord by 'Big Four' Reported Near," *The Washington Post*, 23 September 1933, 2; "German Rearming Alleged in London," *The New York Times*, 17 September 1933, 10; "Mr. Eden's Visit to Paris," 16 September 1933, *The Times* (London), 10; "New Arms Negotiations Promise Political Row," *The New York Times*, 17 September 1933, E1.

²²⁰ Deist, "Rearmament," 1:587-88.

As the Disarmament Conference was about to meet at the beginning of October, the German government became more aggressive in tone and demands. Both *The New York Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* followed the increasingly strident German attitude. While the Germans were able to agree to rearm gradually for themselves and to approve a standardization of European armies, they were indifferent to the possibilities of supervision by the French or another European nation over arms control. Berlin also wanted fewer restrictions on armaments than what the British, French, and Americans had agreed on at Paris. The Germans pressed for experimental weapons and additional tanks and military aircraft.²²¹ The most serious of the German demands was that other nations must disarm because Germany had fulfilled all her obligations and requirements in the Versailles Treaty.²²²

Such demands reported on by *The New York Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* were described long after World War II by the British historian, John Wheeler-Bennett, as going “further than the previous demands of Germany.”²²³ Soon the German government escalated the crisis when it threatened “to rearm immediately unless the Geneva arms conference produces a satisfactory new arms accord in place of the Versailles treaty.”²²⁴ The German demands were too great for the British and French, who had evidence that the Germans were rearming already. Both London and Paris refused to agree to what the Germans wanted.

²²¹ “The German Claim to Rearmament,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 September 1933, 9; “Reich is Insistent Upon Rearmament,” *The New York Times*, 30 September 1933, 6.

²²² “Germany Sees Herself as Arms Creditor; Holds Other Powers Must Fulfill Pledges,” *The New York Times*, 2 October 1933, 10.

²²³ Wheeler-Bennett, 184.

²²⁴ “New German Arms Threat Alarms U.S.,” *The Washington Post*, 8 October 1933, 1.

In a sudden and stunning response, the Germans removed their delegation from the Disarmament Conference, and Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations. Both withdrawals occurred on 14 October. *The Washington Post* reported that Germany claimed it had been “dishonored,” while *The Manchester Guardian* said that Germany had been “humiliated” over the way the Disarmament Conference had treated the country.²²⁵ *The New Statesman and Nation*, a British magazine, believed the Disarmament Conference was already a failure. It claimed that too much negotiation had occurred and that the “conference is no longer a Disarmament Conference.”²²⁶ The American magazine, *The Living Age*, published an article alleging the Disarmament Conference had been a failure because “Germany has become an army of barracks, a single vast concentration camp for the coming of war.”²²⁷ The writer, Ernst Henri, alleged that Germany was rearming and leading Europe on a path to war because of the failures of the conference.²²⁸ An article in *The Spectator* suggested that war was not imminent because Germany had not fully rearmed. It emphasized that Germany was politically isolated and opposed strongly by the British and the French.²²⁹

The future of the Disarmament Conference and peace of Europe were now in question with the German delegation’s withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the pessimistic attitude held by many in the Anglo-American world toward the success of such diplomatic discussions.

²²⁵ “Withdrawal from League and Arms Conference,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 October 1933, 9;

“Withdrawal Stuns Leaders at Geneva,” *The Washington Post*, 15 October 1933, 1.

²²⁶ “The German Challenge,” *The New Statesman and Nation*, 14 October 1933, 436.

²²⁷ Ernst Henri, “Germany Moves toward War,” *The Living Age*, October, 123.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

²²⁹ “If Germany Rearms,” *The Spectator*, 13 October 1933, 468.

CHAPTER THREE

15 OCTOBER 1933 TO 30 JUNE 1934

Germany's Self Isolation

When the German delegation withdrew from the Disarmament Conference and Germany left the League of Nations on 14 October 1933, the resulting diplomatic crisis received considerable press coverage over the course of the next several weeks. The press was attempting to explain why the withdrawal had occurred and what the other nations were to do next.

According to *The Washington Post*, the tensions between Germany and Europe were nothing new and had begun with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The newspaper's timeline pointed out concerns over armaments began to be voiced in December 1930 when German General Wilhelm Groener announced that he believed "Germany stands alone unarmed in a Europe armed to the teeth."²³⁰ At the time Groener, Germany's defense minister since January 1928, had reacted with anger to a recent decision by a League of Nations preparatory disarmament commission in Geneva, to which Germany had sent representatives, that all existing treaty provisions on arms limitations (i.e. the Treaty of Versailles among others) would remain in force.²³¹ Once Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933, he took General Groener's statements further and began to demand armament equality among all nations. When Germany was not allowed to

²³⁰ "German Army Cut to 100,000 in 1919 by Treaty of Versailles," *The Washington Post*, 15 October 1933, 3.

²³¹ Wilhelm Deist, "The Rearmament of the Wehrmacht," in *Germany and the Second World War*, ed. by Research Institute for Military History, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, trans. by P.S. Falla, Dean S. McMurry, Ewald Osers, 7 vols. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 2000), 1:385.

rearm or when the other European nations did not disarm to the levels of Germany, the German delegation was withdrawn from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference.²³²

A report in *The Times* revealed “the break-up of the Disarmament Conference was predicted at different times...but no one could have foreseen the headstrong abruptness of the action.”²³³ Unlike *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *The Times* (London) placed blame solely on Hitler for the crisis because of the demands he had made.²³⁴

Historian Sally Marks described the reaction to Germany’s withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference similar to the reports in the newspapers. She wrote that when “Hitler withdrew Germany...[it was] dismaying but not astounding.”²³⁵ She explained that Hitler continued to make overtures of peace because of “the West’s fear of war and love of peace...[and because peace was] the language of Geneva.”²³⁶

Many Europeans began to fear the possibility of war. *The New York Times* featured a story on Europeans who lived through the Great War. The story presented parallels between the causes of war in 1914 and the current diplomatic crisis. Such similarities included aggressive nationalism as the driving force behind Germany and

²³² Ibid.

²³³ “The Break-Up,” *The Times*, 16 October 1933, 13.

²³⁴ “Hull Holds Reich Balks Arms Cuts,” *The New York Times*, 15 October 1933, 1; “The Break-Up,” *The Times*, 16 October 1933, 13.

²³⁵ Sally Marks, *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe, 1918-1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 146.

²³⁶ Ibid., 146-147.

Germany's claims that it was surrounded by enemies which sought to destroy it.²³⁷ Much later, historian John Wheeler-Bennett explained that this new period would be filled with "fear and horror...[and] tremendous happenings."²³⁸ The press reported accurately the thoughts that many Europeans now had.

European political leaders moved quickly to attempt to resolve the diplomatic crisis and to quash fears of war among their citizens. *The Manchester Guardian* reported that the British delegation proposed there be a temporary adjournment of the Disarmament Conference for a period of ten days to allow tensions to ease and give the remaining participants a chance to reorganize and plan.²³⁹ Along with *The Manchester Guardian*, *The New York Times* and *The Times* (London) reported that the delegation reiterated that peace was possible, but would require a spirit of cooperation, mutual trust, and disarmament among all nations. The threat of war was downplayed.²⁴⁰ Illustrative of this point, British Attorney General Thomas Inskip said in an article in *The New York Times* that "'war is a good way off yet'."²⁴¹

The Anglo-American newspapers seemed to imply that there was a clear direction for the Disarmament Conference and peace after the withdrawal of Germany from the Conference. This was perhaps to prevent panic and fear among European citizens.

However, historian Edward Bennett has interpreted the events quite differently. Bennett

²³⁷ "In the Light of Germany's Attitude, the Possibility of a New War Is Balanced," *The New York Times*, 15 October 1933, XX3.

²³⁸ John Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace: The Story of the Collapse of Disarmament* (New York: Howard Fertig Press, 1971), 181.

²³⁹ "Geneva's Reply to Germany," *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 October 1933, 9; "Arms Conference Adjourns for Ten Days," *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 October 1933, 9.

²⁴⁰ Ferdinand Kuhn, "Britain Sees Peace Safer than Before," *The New York Times*, 15 October 1933, 27; "Britain and Rearmament," *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 October 1933, 13; "The New Outlook at Geneva," *The Times*, 17 October 1933, 9.

²⁴¹ Kuhn, "Britain Sees Peace Safer than Before," 27.

claimed that “the delegates in Geneva showed confusion,...began to confer, and they continued to do so.”²⁴² The remaining participants at the Conference proposed numerous ideas which included continuing armaments discussions without Germany, convincing Germany to return to the Disarmament Conference by allowing the country to rearm, and adjourning the conference for a period of ten days.²⁴³ The newspapers were correct that the Disarmament Conference had been adjourned.

According to *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New York Times*, Hitler and the German government had plans other than peace. Hitler requested that German President Hindenburg call for new parliamentary elections and a plebiscite to be held on 12 November 1933, which would serve as a vote of confidence for Hitler and the National Socialist government. Both newspapers believed Hitler would use the affirmative vote to demonstrate to the other European powers that he was merely fulfilling the wishes of the electorate by withdrawing Germany from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference.²⁴⁴ Historian Richard Evans explained that Hitler was utilizing the plebiscite for the same reasons *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New York Times* had reported. It was a demonstration of the desires of the German people—desires that Hitler was fulfilling.²⁴⁵

Hitler and the National Socialist government solidified further their intentions when German Foreign Minister Constantin Freiherr von Neurath announced publicly that

²⁴² Edward Bennett, *German Rearmament and the West, 1932-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 486.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Edwin James, “Germany Quits League; Hitler Asks ‘Plebiscite,’” *The New York Times*, 15 October 1933, E1; “The German ‘Plebiscite,’” *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 October 1933, 13.

²⁴⁵ Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 618.

Germany would not disarm. He declared the issue was a matter of equality, such that Germany deserved armaments as much as any other nation did.²⁴⁶

The Germans wasted little time in their quest for armament equality for their defense against alleged European enemies. Vague reports appeared in the British press that the Germans were planning defenses against aerial attacks. The German government encouraged industries through tax breaks to construct air defenses such as bunkers, alarms, and anti-aircraft munitions.²⁴⁷ However, in a speech at the end of October 1933, reported by *The Washington Post*, Göring denied that Germany had military aircraft. He stated that Germany had destroyed its military aircraft according to the terms of the Versailles Treaty and orders from the Disarmament Conference.²⁴⁸

Historian James Corum has shown that aerial rearmament was far more advanced than what the newspapers and Göring had stated. According to Corum, this time period was “fruitful” for aerial rearmament and strategy.²⁴⁹ The Germans had been training at bases in the Soviet Union for “reconnaissance, fighter, and bombing” campaigns.²⁵⁰ It was also during October 1933 that “the first combat air units of the Luftwaffe came into

²⁴⁶ “Reich Keeps Arms, Says Von Neurath,” *The Washington Post*, 17 October 1933, 3.

²⁴⁷ “Air Defenses of Germany,” *The Times*, 20 October 1933, 11; “Air Defenses of Germany: Helping Private Citizens,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 October 1933, 12. “League Is Told Officially Reich Has Withdrawn,” *The Washington Post*, 20 October 1933, 4.

²⁴⁸ “Germany Hides No War Planes, Says Goering,” *The Washington Post*, 30 October 1933, 15.

²⁴⁹ James Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 119.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 115. In April 1922, Germany and the Soviet Union had signed the Treaty of Rapallo. The treaty appeared to be a mutual cooperation pact between the two countries for providing industrial resources and raw materials. However, the Rapallo Treaty was one of military cooperation. Germany worked with the Soviet Union to rebuild the Red Army, which had been decimated in the Great War. Inside the Soviet Union, German men were trained for military service, and aerial manufacturers constructed military aircraft. The Soviet Union was outside the reach of international inspectors, and, therefore, a perfect location for Germany’s covert rearmament.

being...when a seaplane squadron for naval operations, a bomber wing, and a dive bomber squadron were officially established.”²⁵¹

On 26 October 1933 when the Disarmament Conference reconvened, the chairman, Arthur Henderson, announced that the conference would adjourn again until early December 1933. The adjournment was to give the remaining participants additional time to plan negotiations with Germany in the hope that the latter would voluntarily return to the conference.²⁵² According to historian Edward Bennett, the pattern of postponing the Disarmament Conference would continue through the remainder of 1933 and into 1934. He noted that the conference would ultimately remain adjourned until 29 May 1934.²⁵³

Developments in Germany: the SA, Aerial Armaments, and a Vote of Confidence

As the conference adjourned, other military developments took shape in Germany. *The Manchester Guardian* published an article on the SA troops, in which the newspaper described persecution of some SA men by the Nazi government for being alleged traitors and threats to the Nazi regime. The Nazi government learned of the supposed liberal or Communist sympathizers in the SA ranks from spies and from other SA troops who had reported their comrades. The accused troops were then placed in concentration camps for “making jokes,...harmless anecdotes,...[and] harmless witticisms.”²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Ibid., 156.

²⁵² “Arms Parley Urged to Quit Until Dec. 4,” *The Washington Post*, 26 October 1933, 2; “Disarmament Conference to Continue,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 October 1933, 9; “Arms Parley Takes Recess Until Dec. 4,” *The Washington Post*, 27 October 1933, 7.

²⁵³ Bennett, 486.

²⁵⁴ “Many Brown Shirts Sent to Concentration Camps,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 27 October 1933, 12.

The American historian Gordon Craig has written that Germany's withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations was the "beginning of a new and promising era for the [German] army"²⁵⁵ because many soldiers believed "the action at Geneva seemed to give substance to promises which Hitler had been making to them since January [1933]."²⁵⁶ Germany was no longer bound by the conference and the League, which had attempted to restrict Germany's militarization. Historian Matthew Cooper explained that "Hitler unhesitatingly supported the *Reichswehr* in its claim to be the rightful, and sole bearer of arms in the defense of the *Reich*...[because of] his belief in maintaining the Army's traditional role."²⁵⁷ With the withdrawal of Germany from the conference and the League and the SA persecutions, the Nazi government demonstrated its support of the army as the "sole bearer of arms"—not the possibly untrustworthy, traitorous SA which supposedly supported liberals and Communists. Persecution served as a way of demoralizing the SA and instilling fear into SA troops.

In early November 1933, the issue of aerial defense was raised again by Berlin. *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New York Times* reported the Nazi government was attempting to implement courses on aerial defense in the public education curriculum. The Nazis claimed to have thousands of instructors ready to teach the defense courses²⁵⁸ "to promote an interest in aerial defense and attack and in war generally, as well as

²⁵⁵ Gordon Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 471.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Matthew Cooper, *The German Army: 1933-1945, Its Political and Military Failure* (New York: Stein and Day, 1978), 18.

²⁵⁸ "Nazis Teach Air Defense," *The New York Times*, 1 November 1933, 14; "Nazi Ideas on 'Air Defense,'" *The Manchester Guardian*, 2 November 1933, 14.

practical preparedness.”²⁵⁹ These allegations made by the newspapers were actually several months old. Historian James Corum wrote that “civilian” flight and aviation schools were established in early spring 1933 for training pilots and other officers for the future air force.²⁶⁰

On 12 November 1933, the plebiscite was held that Hitler had called for at the end of October. The German government and the Anglo-American press expected a large voter turnout. *The New York Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* noted that the German government predicted an affirmative vote from the German people on its decision to withdraw from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference. Of the over 43 million votes cast, 93% of the electorate favored the decision to withdraw.²⁶¹ Much later, historian Richard Evans added that the plebiscite “delivered the predictably overwhelming majority in favor of Hitler’s decision, thanks not least to massive intimidation and electoral manipulation.”²⁶²

The results of the plebiscite concerned other European nations. The French were reluctant to do anything. *The Manchester Guardian* showed that Paris thought there was nothing that could be done diplomatically. Additionally, France preferred to wait and see how Britain would react to Germany’s defiance and the recent plebiscite.²⁶³

The Anglo-American press reported that the British were taking the initiative to revive the Disarmament Conference. British Secretary of State John Simon and his

²⁵⁹ “Nazi Ideas on ‘Air Defense,’” 14.

²⁶⁰ Corum, 155-156.

²⁶¹ “All Germans Rounded Up to Vote,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 November 1933, 9; Enderis, Guido, “40,000,000 to Vote on Nazi Mandate,” *The New York Times*, 12 November 1933.

²⁶² Evans, 618.

²⁶³ “French Anxiety Over German Armaments,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 November 1933, 15.

under-Secretary Anthony Eden traveled to Geneva to resume discussions. There was a looming sense of pessimism. *The Times* reported that many politicians in the British and French camps believed that discussions would be difficult to continue because there had been little progress made on which to build.²⁶⁴ The Italians hesitated about resuming discussions and the Disarmament Conference.²⁶⁵ The British, however, were determined to bring Germany back into the conference, even if that meant “meet[ing] them at Rome or elsewhere.”²⁶⁶

As soon as the British attempted to resume the Disarmament Conference, the latter adjourned again. Citing difficulty working with the Italians and the absence of the Germans, the British delegation at the Disarmament Conference recessed the conference until 15 January 1934.²⁶⁷ *The Manchester Guardian* printed reports that informal talks would continue among the British, French, Americans, and possibly the Russians. These countries hoped to continue the dialogue on disarmament as well as address problems with the Disarmament Conference in an effort to resolve those before resuming in January.²⁶⁸

The lack of confidence in diplomacy and the Disarmament Conference came as no surprise. Gerhard Weinberg has explained that most of Western Europe “had no confidence that the Germans would...observe any disarmament agreement.”²⁶⁹ He added

²⁶⁴ “Return to Geneva,” *The Times*, 18 November 1933, 12.

²⁶⁵ P.J. Philip, “Arms Compromise at Geneva Likely,” *The New York Times*, 18 November 1933, 11.

²⁶⁶ “British to Revive Armament Talks,” *The New York Times*, 17 November 1933, 12.

²⁶⁷ “Today’s Decision at Geneva,” *The Times*, 22 November 1933, 14; “Adjournment at Geneva,” *The Times*, 23 November 1933, 14.

²⁶⁸ “Disarmament Conference to Adjourn,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 November 1933, 11.

²⁶⁹ Gerhard Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler’s Germany, Diplomatic Revolution in Europe, 1933-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 167.

that “since no one had taken any action against Germany at this point it was unlikely that anyone would do so.”²⁷⁰ This meant that any diplomacy would likely fail, as would the Disarmament Conference. As previously discussed, historian Edward Bennett noted that the Disarmament Conference would continue to experience difficulties and would remain adjourned until 29 May 1934. All this pointed to the failure of diplomacy and efforts at disarmament.

The End of 1933 and the Beginning of 1934

In December 1933, Shepard Stone, a scholar on Germany, wrote in *Current History* that it was obvious that Germany had been rearming despite restrictions in the Treaty of Versailles. He noted that the German military budget, which was about 678,000,000 marks, was high considering the size to which the military was supposed to be restricted. He also noted that the German military budget was larger than the British military budget.²⁷¹ In historian Martin Kitchen’s *A Military History of Germany*, which appeared years later, he confirmed such increases in military expenditures and budgeting that the Anglo-American press had reported in late 1933. By Kitchen’s calculations, Germany’s military budget had increased over 2,000 percent from Hitler’s ascension to power in 1933 to the beginning of the Second World War in 1939.²⁷² He also noted that “from 1933 to 1936 industrial profits rose by 433 percent.”²⁷³ The manufacture of

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Shepard Stone, “The Rearming of Germany,” *Current History*, December 1933, 296.

²⁷² Martin Kitchen, *A Military History of Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 305.

²⁷³ Ibid.

armaments contributed to over half of Germany's industry.²⁷⁴ The statistics indicated that Germany was rearming substantially.

The initial response of Britain and France to this revelation was to press for the expansion of their own military forces. A report in *The Washington Post* revealed that the French were trying to build additional battle cruisers for their navy and "convert commercial planes into bombers."²⁷⁵ According to *The Literary Digest*, the British government urged an expansion of its military forces, particularly the air force. London believed that Germany was building a massive air force, and that Britain was most vulnerable from an aerial attack. London proposed that the air force must be strengthened immediately to combat the perceived German menace.²⁷⁶

Britain and France would have to expand their militaries against the threat of war because, since the Great War, the two countries "had disarmed to a very considerable extent."²⁷⁷ Weinberg wrote that Britain and France, as well as other countries, had "participated in a number of international naval disarmament arrangements...[and] had drastically reduced their land forces as well."²⁷⁸ The British and French armies had been reduced to levels prior to that of the Great War. France, in particular, had shortened "the term of service [for troops]...[and] neglected...its equipment."²⁷⁹

The French attempted diplomatic talks with Berlin, but those failed. Germany continued to demand armaments equality and the right to rearm legally. The German

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ "French Rush Navy to Meet Reich Threat," *The Washington Post*, 3 December 1933, M12.

²⁷⁶ "German Arming Alarms British Parliament," *The Literary Digest*, 8 December 1933, 13.

²⁷⁷ Weinberg, 41.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

government also wanted the return to Germany of the Saar region, an industrial rich area east of the Rhine River placed in 1919 by the Versailles Treaty under League of Nations and French control for fifteen years.²⁸⁰ The British intervened and attempted diplomatic negotiations with Germany.²⁸¹ Similar to reports in the newspapers, Wheeler-Bennett described the end of 1933 as being filled with more questions than answers for the future. Germany had demanded the Saar region without the plebiscite the French had desired. Optimism was slim as Germany's "demands constituted a great degree of rearmament and that any real hope of disarmament...was out of the question."²⁸² 1933 ended with stalled diplomacy and an unclear future as to whether peace would be possible.

The year 1934 began with *The Washington Post* covering a German New Year's celebration attended by Chancellor Hitler and President von Hindenburg. At the festivities, Hindenburg praised Hitler's leadership and described it as "a turning point in German history."²⁸³ Hindenburg believed that Germany was positioned for political and economic greatness under Hitler's leadership. Hitler also spoke at the celebration. His speech was a simple reiteration that Germany wanted nothing but peace.²⁸⁴

To begin the new year, there were several reports about Germany's military strength and preparations. *The New York Times* asserted that Germany was developing advanced military aircraft and was capable of producing significantly more planes than in the Great War. According to the article, Germany had about twenty aircraft munitions

²⁸⁰ Frederick Birchall, "French Turn Down 2 Reich Proposals," *The New York Times*, 8 December 1933, 12; "France and the Disarmament Deadlock," *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 December 1933, 11.

²⁸¹ Guido Enderis, "Germany Rejects Even a New League," *The New York Times*, 20 December 1933, 14; P.J. Philip, "France and Allies Firm for League," *The New York Times*, 17 December 1933, 33.

²⁸² Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 195.

²⁸³ "Hitler Repeats Peace His Aim in Greeting '34," *The Washington Post*, 2 January 1934, 7.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

factories in operation, such as Heinkel, which were manufacturing heavily-armed and fast bombers.²⁸⁵ What *The New York Times* failed to mention was that Heinkel had been developing air munitions since the 1920s and into the early 1930s, not just beginning in 1933 or early 1934. Heinkel, along with other aircraft munitions factories, were implementing the German government's plan for "an air force of over 1,000 aircraft [which developed] during 1931-1932."²⁸⁶ For example, in 1932, Heinkel manufactured the He 51, which according to military historian James Corum, "carried two machine guns, and had a maximum speed of 205 miles per hour."²⁸⁷ By early 1933, Heinkel was ready to mass produce the He 59, a bomber plane capable of carrying a bomb load of over a ton. Heinkel had also produced the He 45 and 46 that served as reconnaissance aircraft.²⁸⁸

Almost simultaneously, *The Washington Post* claimed that German naval tonnage had increased significantly since the end of the Great War. *The Post* stated that naval tonnage was about 320,000 tons at the end of the Great War and had increased to over four million by 1931. The paper observed that naval tonnage continued to increase despite restrictions in the Treaty of Versailles.²⁸⁹ The analysis in 1973 of historian Carl-Axel Gemzell reflected the findings of *The Washington Post*. He wrote that "the

²⁸⁵ "Says Hitler Wants 21 Divisions," *The New York Times*, 4 January 1934, 11; "Paris Warned Germany Lays Plans for War," *The New York Times*, 14 January 1934, R10.

²⁸⁶ Corum, 122.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ "German Ship Tonnage Nears Prewar Level," *The Washington Post*, 6 January 1934, 20.

[German] navy was drastically reduced after the defeat in World War I. Only a handful of ships were left, . . . but gradually a new fleet was built up again.”²⁹⁰

Moreover, several Anglo-American newspapers reported that the French, with the start of the new year, tried negotiations with Germany. France had proposed a 10-year non-aggression pact with Germany. In exchange for the pact, Germany would be allowed to assemble an army of 300,000 troops. At the time, the German rearmament program called for that number of troops. The French had the support of the British, but the press expected that the French would reject Germany’s plans for rearmament.²⁹¹ However, there was more to the news stories than what the Anglo-American papers had printed. Wheeler-Bennett observed later that despite France’s proposal, the French faced “a prospect of a very terrifying nature.”²⁹² If the negotiations were accepted by both parties, Germany would be legally allowed a larger army, while the French would have the non-aggression pact, which French officials “regarded as less binding than Germany’s [other] obligations.”²⁹³ Even Britain’s support for France was questionable because of “the Prime Minister’s [Ramsay MacDonald, Labour Party leader and head of a coalition or “National Government” with Conservatives] emotional sympathy for Germany.”²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ Carl-Axel Gemzell, *Organization, Conflict, and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning, 1888-1940* (Stockholm: Esselte Stadium, 1973), 46.

²⁹¹ “French Reply to Germany,” *The Times* (London), 3 January 1934, 10; “French Arms Proposal to Germany,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 January 1934, 9; “Berlin Delays Reply to Paris’ Arms Rebuff,” *The Washington Post*, 3 January 1934, 22; Charles Selden, “Britain Approves French Arms Note,” *The New York Times*, 6 January 1934, 4.

²⁹² Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 195.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

The New York Times and *The Times* (London) reported that the negotiations finally came to an impasse when the Germans refused to compromise.²⁹⁵ According to Wheeler-Bennett, France had agreed to allow Germany to increase its army to 300,000 troops “on the condition that the para-military organizations were disbanded.”²⁹⁶ However, Germany believed it had a right “to maintain the SA and SS as well as the 300,000 men of the reorganized *Reichswehr*.”²⁹⁷ In an effort to save the negotiations, according to *Foreign Affairs*, the French were willing to consider reducing their armaments and military forces. Considering Germany’s secret rearmament and aggressiveness, the French were hesitant to reduce their own armaments because of the threat Germany posed.²⁹⁸ France and Germany finally came to “a complete deadlock...[and the realization] the French and German points of view were as widely separated as ever.”²⁹⁹

Despite the stalemated armaments negotiations with the French, Hitler and German military leaders feared France’s superior military power and sought to treat the French with special care. In Hitler’s long-term foreign policy goal of one day expanding German living space (*Lebensraum*) to the East, principally by going to war against, and seizing the vast lands of, the Soviet Union, France represented a major potential factor inhibiting such plans. During 1934 and after, Hitler offered numerous statements, both in public and private, seeking to reassure the Paris government of Germany’s desire for

²⁹⁵ “German Reply to France,” *The Times* (London), 20 January 1934, 10; “Reich Asks France to Disarm at Once,” *The New York Times*, 20 January 1934, 8.

²⁹⁶ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 196.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 197.

²⁹⁸ Allen Dulles, “Germany and the Crisis in Disarmament,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 1934, 261-262.

²⁹⁹ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 197.

peace. Also he avoided challenging France in ways that might have raised its suspicions even more toward the Germans; consequently, he forbade the development of a Nazi movement in neighboring Alsace. Simultaneously, he pursued a policy of isolating France, especially by cultivating relations with Britain, Italy, and Poland.³⁰⁰

It was hardly surprising, therefore, that on 27 January, *The Manchester Guardian* broke the news that diplomats from Germany and Poland had signed a ten-year non-aggression pact, which was described as “reinforc[ing] Herr Hitler’s repeated promises of the Nazis’ peaceful intentions towards Poland.”³⁰¹ However, the article revealed either party could renounce the pact with six months notice.³⁰² As for the Nazi government, it concluded the agreement with Poland primarily to attempt to loosen the latter from its alliance with France, first concluded in 1921. British historian R. A. Parker believed “it was impossible to be certain what...the Polish government thought they were doing.”³⁰³ Parker claimed that one camp in the Polish government thought Hitler could actually be trusted and posed no legitimate threat to Poland. The other camp in the Polish government believed the pact would secure Poland while Western Europe remained in a diplomatic deadlock with Germany.³⁰⁴

Britain’s Plan

On 1 February, the Anglo-American press reported that the British had published their armaments restrictions plan in an official government White Paper. The British wanted the cooperation and participation in the plan of Germany, France, Poland, and

³⁰⁰ Deist, “Rearmament,” 1:593-94.

³⁰¹ “German-Polish Pact of Non-Aggression,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 27 January 1934, 15.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ R. A. Parker, *Europe 1919-45* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1969), 268.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

Italy. According to the press, the British plan called for the restriction of certain armaments and the gradual disarmament of heavily armed nations or the promise that these nations would not increase the number of their armaments. Proposals in the White Paper included banning anti-aircraft guns, reducing tank units, and limiting each nation's military forces to 200,000 troops.³⁰⁵

What the press termed a White Paper was in fact a British government memorandum of 25 January 1934, supported by Mussolini, which London communicated to the other states, including Germany, on the 29th. According to the memo, Germany was to be allowed an army of 200,000 to 300,000 troops and also light tanks. The British even agreed to the creation of a German military air force if the disarmament commission, established by the Versailles Treaty, failed to reach a decision for the abolition of such forces within two years. In the numbers of German troops, the British did not count the Nazi paramilitary groups, the SA and SS. However, the memo stipulated, apparently with French security in mind, that Germany should not attain equality of rights in armaments for another ten years.³⁰⁶

Apparently unknown to the press, the British plan was, in fact, a counter-proposal to suggestions that Hitler had made previously to the British ambassador in Berlin, Sir Eric Phipps. In a meeting with Phipps on 24 October 1933, ten days after Germany had left the League of Nations and Disarmament Conference, Hitler "offered" to the British a German army of 300,000—which the Germans, in reality, had included in their planned

³⁰⁵ "British Arms Plan," *The New York Times*, 1 February 1934, 5; "The British Compromise Arms Plan," *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 February 1934, 9; "British Policy Defined," *The Times* (London), 1 February 1934, 14.

³⁰⁶ Deist, "Rearmament," 1:597.

rearmament program—equipped with defensive weapons only. Further, the Nazi leader had urged the British to rearm at sea and in the air. With bilateral negotiations with French going nowhere, Hitler turned increasingly toward attempting to isolate France by turning more firmly toward Britain and seeking to establish a triangular relationship between London, Berlin, and Rome.

At the beginning of 1934, Hitler viewed Britain, not France, as the primary obstacle to German hegemony in Europe. The British, he believed, would not remain forever allied with France. The latter's enhanced power in Europe, supposedly created by the Paris peace settlement in 1919, had strengthened France in world competition for trade and empire, thus placing France against the key interests of London. With his proposals to Phipps, Hitler hoped to divide Britain from its post-Great War alliance with the French.

In February 1934, the German government tried to persuade the British to agree to the early creation of a German air force, by pointing out to British officials France's air strength and arguing for a greater balance of power in the air in western Europe. Soon afterwards, in April, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's Nazi party sycophant and wine merchant friend, was appointed German commissioner for disarmament. Hitler's main objective in the talks was to evade the British proposal of January, which would have delayed German air armament by at least two years. Also the Germans offered to disarm the SA and SS and place them under supervision, a proposal that impressed some British officials. However, according to Wilhelm Deist, it appeared evident to London "that the German offer—supplemented by an undertaking, if German's army was fixed at 300,000

men, to reduce the police force by 50,000—was to attempt to prise Britain away from France, to undermine the European security system, and to bring about a German-British-Italian combination.”³⁰⁷

In Weinberg’s words, Hitler’s attitude toward Britain “was a mixture of admiration and hate.” On the one hand, the Nazi leader “recognized in the British upper classes the product of a process of selective breeding not entirely unlike what he hoped to accomplish in Germany.” On the other hand, “Jews were allowed to play a part in British society [and] Britain had a democratic form of government.” The Nazis imagined that the Jews had “all sorts of great influence” in Britain and, by definition, “democracy destroyed responsibility and leadership in a society.”³⁰⁸ Hitler hoped for a German partnership with London, in which the latter, in return for Germany’s toleration of Britain’s overseas empire, would permit Germany a future free hand in Europe and a rearmament that favored its land-based expansionist aims in the East, especially in Russia. Consequently, he would temporarily downplay German world trade and global ambitions. He believed, moreover, that both Germany and Britain had a mutual interest in combating the Soviet Union, i.e. the “worldwide Jewish-Bolshevik enemy.”

The so-called British White Paper of January 1934 did little to encourage Hitler in such wishes, and the British plan received its share of criticism from other sources. British and American newspapers emphasized that the Italian government wanted to push the issue of rearmament and armament equality, not the disarmament of Germany,

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 599.

³⁰⁸ Weinberg, 15.

because, according to Wheeler-Bennett, the Italians believed that any “degree of disarmament was for the moment impossible.”³⁰⁹

Unlike the Italians, and despite Hitler’s continued, profuse statements professing publicly his desire for peace, the French believed that Germany posed a serious threat. France argued that it had already disarmed sufficiently and should not have to continue doing so under the terms of the British White Paper. France wanted to maintain its current levels of armaments and even increase them to guarantee its security.³¹⁰

Historians note that Britain’s plan was not well received in France because the French government was displeased that the terms of the White Paper favored Germany. The French thought that the White Paper catered to Germany and its remilitarization instead of guaranteeing the security of Europe. France was adamant that Germany should not be allowed to rearm, while other countries had to reduce their armaments leaving them vulnerable.³¹¹

Berlin was not satisfied with the White Paper because the German government still wanted full rearmament. While the British plan went a long way to meet the German desire, it did not do so in the air.³¹² Wheeler-Bennett believed that “it [the White Paper] was...impossible for Germany to accept.”³¹³ At the time, in February 1934, an explanation for Germany’s dissatisfaction was found in an analysis piece in *The Literary Digest*. Supposedly, the German government claimed that France and other European

³⁰⁹ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 201.

³¹⁰ “New Arms Plans Opposed in France,” *The New York Times*, 2 February 1934, 11.

³¹¹ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 205-206.

³¹² “German View of New Plans,” *The Times* (London), 2 February 1934, 12; “Rearmament Plans Deplored in Geneva,” *The New York Times*, 2 February 1934, 11; “German Suspicions of British Arms Proposals,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 February 1934, 15.

³¹³ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 207.

nations were a threat to it. These nations sought to destroy Germany with the huge military forces they possessed. The article concluded that Germany would only be content if “the equality...by a certain adaptation of its armaments to the level of other nations”³¹⁴ was allowed. Germany rejected the proposal, but there was not much else the European powers could do.³¹⁵

On 14 February, *The New York Times* reported the Disarmament Conference was delayed again. The conference, which had been scheduled to resume at an unspecified time in February, was now postponed to 10 April 1934. *The New York Times* reported that conference chairman Arthur Henderson hoped that the nations could continue diplomatic talks without the meeting’s formality and come to a mutual agreement regarding armaments. However, some expert observers at the time believed that the criticisms and disagreements over the White Paper produced the delaying of the conference.³¹⁶

Along with the announcement of the conference’s delay, as news that the conference was postponed went to publication, the Anglo-American press ran several stories of new military developments inside Germany. *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New York Times* reported that the Nazi government had ordered all university students to serve in the SA for purposes of national defense. According to military historian Robert O’Neill, the service in the SA was to provide “pre-military training of youths aged from 18 to 21, it was to train those from 21 to 26 who were not serving in the *Reichswehr*,...and it was

³¹⁴ “Germany’s Demand for Security,” *The Literary Digest*, 17 February 1934, 17.

³¹⁵ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 208.

³¹⁶ “Arms Meeting Deferred,” *The New York Times*, 14 February 1934, 3; “Geneva is Disappointed,” *The New York Times*, 14 February 1934, 3.

to maintain the military skills of those who were discharged from the *Reichswehr*.”³¹⁷ National Socialism was nothing new to Germany’s university campuses. In the 1920s, it began its infiltration of such schools. The press articles explained that students were receptive of Nazism primarily because there were not many other extracurricular opportunities for them in which to participate.³¹⁸

By the end of February, British and American papers observed that the British government was trying to find a way to resume negotiations with Germany. Anthony Eden, British politician and member of Parliament, met in Berlin with Hitler and German Foreign Minister Neurath. The purpose of the meeting, which the press described as a “useful discussion,” was to convince Germany to return to the Disarmament Conference. Instead of a list of demands for the Germans to fulfill, Eden listened to their concerns and wishes. He hoped the Germans would be more receptive to returning to the conference under newer, friendlier terms and discussions.³¹⁹

Long after the fact, Weinberg had a different interpretation of Eden’s meeting with Hitler and Neurath. Instead of the meeting being “useful discussion,” as described in the newspapers, Weinberg believed there was still a “deadlock” because British diplomacy failed to act forcefully with the Germans. Nothing had been accomplished.³²⁰

The Road to the Return of the Disarmament Conference

³¹⁷ Robert O’Neill, *The German Army and the Nazi Party, 1933-1939* (New York: James H. Heineman, 1966), 42.

³¹⁸ “Nazi ‘Charter’ for German Universities,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 February 1934, 12; “Students Must Aid Nazis,” *The New York Times*, 8 February 1934, 4; Shepard Stone, “Brown Shirts Rule the German Campus,” *The New York Times*, 11 February 1934, SM9.

³¹⁹ “Powers Discussion Parley to End Arms Wrangle,” *The Washington Post*, 14 February 1934, 2; “Eden Begins Talks on Arms in Berlin,” *The New York Times*, 21 February 1934, 13; Guido Enderis, “Germans Consider Return to Geneva,” *The New York Times*, 22 February 1934, 15; “Mr. Eden’s Visit Prolonged,” *The Times* (London), 22 February 1934, 14.

³²⁰ Weinberg, 174.

Spring 1934 brought continuing debates about armaments and the purpose of the Disarmament Conference, scheduled to resume in April. *The New York Times* reported that Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Germany's minister of propaganda, stated in a public speech that Germany would not return to the League of Nations or the Disarmament Conference. He believed Germany had not been given the equality in armaments that it felt it deserved. In light of Goebbels' revelation, according to the press reports, France explored the possibility of reviving its Great War alliance with the British. The French were not pleased with Germany's continued refusal to return to the Disarmament Conference and League of Nations.³²¹ Much later, historian John Wheeler-Bennett confirmed the press reports, noting that France's relationship with Britain became increasingly strained as the Paris government believed French security was being eroded by haphazard British diplomacy with Germany. With France exploring the possibility of strengthening its alliance with Britain, the British were faced with "the problem of whether or not they were prepared to increase the political and military obligations...beyond those already incurred."³²² The Disarmament Conference could not resume soon enough.

Press articles also highlighted what they viewed were Germany's increasing militarism. *The Manchester Guardian* featured a report that SA troops were being trained at a rapid pace to become a ready supply of *Reichswehr* troops. A five-week course provided training with rifles, machine-guns, anti-aircraft guns, and troops participated in

³²¹ "Goebbels Denies Return to League," *The New York Times*, 7 March 1934, 4; "France's Conditions of Disarmament," *The Manchester Guardian*, 24 March 1934, 13; "France Would Revive Entente Cordiale Pact," *The Washington Post*, 24 March 1934, 5.

³²² Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 214-215.

large-scale field operations on a weekly basis.³²³ Several reports in *The New York Times* revealed that German military strength had risen to between 2 million and 2.5 million troops, with sufficient armaments to supply those troops.³²⁴

Historian Deist confirmed the general accuracy of the press reports; he noted that there was a German training program implemented in the spring of 1934 for equipping new *Reichswehr* soldiers. However, Deist's research revealed a major factual error in *The New York Times*. According to Deist, it was only later in the spring that Hitler "called for the final setting up of the planned 300,000 strong army."³²⁵ By 1935, the Germany army numbered only 280,000 soldiers.³²⁶ *The New York Times* could not accurately claim there were millions of soldiers when plans for the 300,000 member force exist only in the planning stage. Nor could there be millions of soldiers when the number was just under 300,000 in early 1935. Perhaps *The New York Times* included reserves and men who had received military training. Whether or not the paper intended it, the exaggerated number would also heighten fear of the Germans and make the threat of war more immediate.

What was not discussed in the Anglo-American press was that on 4 April 1934, the Nazi government formed the Central Bureau for German Rearmament, to coordinate the German rearmament effort.³²⁷ One can speculate that the press was perhaps more focused on covering the Disarmament Conference that was scheduled to resume in a few

³²³ "Brownshirts to Regulars," *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 March 1934, 12.

³²⁴ "German Arms Seen Far Beyond Limits," *The New York Times*, 2 April 1934, 8.

³²⁵ William Deist, *The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 36.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Bart Whaley, *Covert German Rearmament, 1919-1939: Deception and Misperception* (Frederick: University Publications of America, 1984), 47.

days. The other possibility was that the press simply did not know and therefore could not report it.

By 10 April when the Disarmament Conference formally resumed, *The New York Times* believed that there was a new spirit of optimism among the European officials attending. British and French representatives met “to decide whether to take responsibility for giving the great powers more time to continue the negotiations...or to convoke the conference’s general commission.”³²⁸ *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Washington Post* expected that Britain and France would “convoke the conference’s general commission.” This meant that all participants of the Disarmament Conference, including Germany, would meet to continue the conference. The British and French leadership set 29 May for the first meeting of all participants.³²⁹

The Manchester Guardian and *The Washington Post* reported that British Foreign Secretary John Simon, with the concurrence of the House of Commons, began an inquiry into the German military. According to the press articles, German military expenditures had increased by about 350,000,000 marks since 1933. Simon expected an explanation from Germany within a week.³³⁰

The German government replied quickly. It justified the expenditures and claimed that “added equipment will be needed for Germany’s new, larger short-term army..., obsolete ships must be replaced..., [and the] re-equipment [of] her civil aviation

³²⁸ “Clarence Streit, “Geneva Sees Turn in the Arms Talks,” *The New York Times*, 8 April 1934, E3.

³²⁹ Streit, “Geneva Sees Turn”; Kendall Foss, “Disarmament Hope Renewed in Meet Today,” *The Washington Post*, 10 April 1934, 3; “Today’s Disarmament Meeting in Geneva,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 10 April 1934, 13.

³³⁰ “Germany’s Increased Armaments Expenditure,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 10 April 1934, 9; “Britain Asks Germany About Arms Increase,” *The Washington Post*, 10 April 1934, 23; Charles Selden, “Britain Asks Reich About Rearming,” *The New York Times*, 10 April 1934, 13.

forces.”³³¹ Germany alleged it was doing nothing wrong. The Nazi government pointed out that there were no restrictions in the Treaty of Versailles on military expenditures and that such expenditures were for defense purposes only.³³² An essay in the magazine *The New Republic*, however, argued that such budgeting was illegal because the “disbursements...contravene the provisions of the Versailles covenant.”³³³ The essay concluded that it was unknown what, if anything, the European powers would or could do to prevent future German rearmament.³³⁴

John Wheeler-Bennett’s later findings confirmed what the Anglo-American press reported on Germany’s military expenditures. He wrote that “Berlin point[ed] out that the Treaty of Versailles placed no restriction on military expenditures, and explain[ed] the increase in the Army estimates as being due to the reorganization of the *Reichswehr* on a short-term basis.”³³⁵ The only discrepancy in the newspaper articles was the amount of the expenditures. The latter had increased by some 230,000,000 *Reichsmarks*.³³⁶

At the end of April 1934, reports surfaced that German men at least twenty years of age were being drafted for military service. *The New York Times* revealed that members of the SA and other Nazi organizations had received secret orders to report to military training camps. Germany, however, denied the charges.³³⁷ However, National Socialism had long gained a considerable following among German youth. This meant

³³¹ Charles Selden, “Germany Defends Rise in Arms Costs,” *The New York Times*, 13 April 1934, 10.

³³² Selden, “Germany Defends Rise”; Edwin James, “Reich Calls Army Costs Strictly German Affair,” *The New York Times*, 15 April 1934, E1.

³³³ “Exit, Versailles,” *The New Republic*, 2 May 1934, 325.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 220.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ “Reich Conscripts Youths for Army,” *The New York Times*, 22 April 1934, 20.

that many young adults already believed in Nazi ideology and were likely willing to serve it in military units. An article in *The Nation* explained that German youth were “hopeless and helpless in the face of unemployment, yielding to vice or dissipation, or starving in the streets.”³³⁸ Military service was now an option for direction and a future for German youth who were uncertain of both.

The findings of the Anglo-American press about military conscription in Germany were partially accurate. According to historians, Hitler and his advisers had begun working on a new conscription law to be enacted later in the year. Almost simultaneously, the Nazis created the Reich (national) Labor Force, providing required military training for all eighteen-year old men. However, military service was not required at the time. Furthermore, the Nazis gradually added reserve forces to the German military.³³⁹ Military service was not mandatory yet, but the steps to make the service obligatory were in the making.

Continued Diplomatic Tension and the Night of the Long Knives

On 29 May, the Disarmament Conference resumed, but it was immediately on shaky ground, according to *The New York Times* and *The Times* (London). Wheeler-Bennett described the meeting as having “an atmosphere of gloom and fatalistic pessimism.”³⁴⁰ The principal sources of discouragement was Germany’s absence from the gathering. The newspapers reported on uncertainty that existed about what direction the conference would take. Delegates had to decide whether or not to keep the conference

³³⁸ O.G. Villard, “Issues and Men: Hitler and the Youth of Germany,” *The Nation*, 7 March 1934, 265.

³³⁹ Deist, 30-31; Weinberg, 178; Whaley, 44-45.

³⁴⁰ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 230.

alive as it was or simply form a special council to debate armaments issues in the League of Nations. The delegates decided to continue.³⁴¹

The Manchester Guardian and *The New York Times* explained that there were three directions the conference could take. The first was to reduce British and French armaments to the number of armaments Germany was supposed to have. The second was for Britain and France to form an alliance to guarantee their own security. A third option was to allow rearmament for Germany, thus opening the way for a European armaments race.³⁴²

The French delegation was not pleased with any of the options. French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou wanted to negotiate a bilateral arms treaty with the Germans. He argued that France should not “compromise on the German rearmament issue or her security demands.”³⁴³ Wheeler-Bennett reiterated the articles in the press, noting, “the French Government... would not consent to any system involving an immediate measure of German rearmament... [and] they would not accept [any of the three options].”³⁴⁴ Barthou rhetorically posed the question to the Germans and the international community as to what threat France and Britain posed to Germany that necessitated more German

³⁴¹ “The Disarmament Deadlock,” *The Times* (London), 28 May 1934, 14; Clarence Streit, “Arms Talk Today May Close Parley,” *The New York Times*, 28 May 1934, 8.

³⁴² “Disarmament Conference Resumes Today,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 May 1934, 11; Shepard Stone, “The Background of Tuesday’s Disarmament Conference,” *The New York Times*, 27 May 1934, XXI.

³⁴³ “France Attacks Reich, England at Arms Parley,” *The Washington Post*, 31 May 1934, 4.

³⁴⁴ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 231.

armaments. As the British listened to the French plea, British Foreign Minister John Simon began to question whether the Disarmament Conference should even continue.³⁴⁵

The resumption of the Disarmament Conference, and extensive coverage of it by the British and American press, likely helped to obscure for the press a rapidly escalating power struggle inside Nazi Germany. Only on 16 May 1934 did an article in *The New York Times*, buried deeply in the paper, note such a conflict and that it concerned “the persistent effort of the Nazis to get complete control of the army and the equally persistent...effort of the army to retain its independence.”³⁴⁶ However, the struggle, cited in the *Times*’s article, had been brewing inside Germany for months, but apparently without reaching the attention of the foreign media.

Since July 1933, the SA, the nearly million member Nazi party paramilitary organization, had provided at Hitler’s order, as part of his clandestine expansion of the German military, some 250,000 troops as reservists for the army. At the time, the army viewed the SA as the principal instrument in the initial stages of German rearmament and militarization. Consequently, the *Reichswehr* had sent special teams of instructors to SA camps to train the reservists.³⁴⁷ Also the SA had served the Nazi regime as a major police auxiliary, consolidating Hitler’s dictatorship by terrorizing its opponents—especially Communists, socialists, and Jews—and brutalizing them in concentration camps. Repeatedly, the SA had joined other party radicals in spontaneous violent attacks on German Jews, even after Hitler had declared in July 1933 an end to the “Nazi revolution”

³⁴⁵ “French Policy Restated” *The Times* (London), 29 May 1934, 14; “British Foreign Secretary’s Appeal,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 31 May 1934, 13; “France Attacks Reich,” *The Washington Post*.

³⁴⁶ Otto Tolischus, “Reich Army Balks at Nazi Control,” *The New York Times*, 16 May 1934, 10.

³⁴⁷ Deist, “Rearmament,” 1:412-13.

at home and, because of concern for rising foreign criticism of his regime, that wild, unplanned assaults on Jews cease.

However, the SA and its commander, Röhm, felt differently. They demanded further attacks on alleged Nazi enemies, like the Jews, and insisted on better economic and political treatment for the SA from the government. But equally or more significant, Röhm demanded a purge of the German army's officer corps and the formation by the SA of a revolutionary or national militia to replace the regular army.³⁴⁸ For these reasons, the SA presented an increasingly dangerous threat to Hitler as well as the army. Until May 1934, this brewing crisis had eluded the notice of the foreign, including Anglo-American press.

Instead, into June 1934, Anglo-American newspapers printed stories on the continued deadlock at the Disarmament Conference. The usually optimistic chairman, Arthur Henderson, was at a loss as to what direction the conference should take. The newspapers reported that Henderson believed there were some options still available. The first called for the disarmament of smaller European states such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, so the Disarmament Conference would not be seen as a complete failure. The French pushed for a second option, that of a possible aerial armaments parley that would discuss Germany's aerial rearmament. However, with an impending meeting on naval matters and the obvious failures of the Disarmament Conference, such an option on aerial issues was believed to be unlikely. A third option, which was unanimously agreed on, was Henderson's call for European nations to

³⁴⁸ John Wheeler-Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics, 1918-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954), 315.

reconcile their differences with Germany in the hope that the latter would return to the Disarmament Conference.³⁴⁹

The Manchester Guardian, *The New York Times*, and *The Times* (London) reported that the German delegation declared it would return to the conference only if Germany was allowed to have armaments equality with other European powers. As a result, the Disarmament Conference was adjourned indefinitely.³⁵⁰ Later Wheeler-Bennett echoed the newspaper reports, observing that “the meeting adjourned, the deadlock remained unbroken, [and] the gloom deepened.”³⁵¹

But by the end of June, the crisis inside Germany involving the power struggle between the SA and the German army and Hitler had nearly reached the breaking point. On 1 July 1934, an article in *The Washington Post* explained that “the radicals—brown-shirted Storm Troopers, laborers and many Nazis officials wanted to tighten Nazi control over every phase of German life.”³⁵² Later research by historians would show that Röhm, in a meeting with Hitler, had denied “any accusation that he was planning a putsch.”³⁵³ However, in a letter between Röhm and one of his subordinate SA commanders, the army was described as “the main enemy of the SA.”³⁵⁴ At the end of June, German vice

³⁴⁹ “Deadlock at Geneva,” *The Times* (London), 1 June 1934, 16; “Geneva Is Gloomy on Arms Outlook,” *The New York Times*, 1 June 1934, 3; “Arms Delegates Still at Odds on Parley Plans,” *The Washington Post*, 5 June 1934, 4; “Possible French Support for an Air Convention,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 5 June 1934, 14.

³⁵⁰ “Reich Pushes Move for Arms Equality,” *The New York Times*, 8 June 1934, 13; “Adjournment of Disarmament Conference,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 June 1934, 6; “Clouds over Europe,” *The Times* (London), 15 June 1934, 18.

³⁵¹ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Pipe Dream of Peace*, 234.

³⁵² “How Hitler’s Troubles Started,” *The Washington Post*, 1 July 1934, 2.

³⁵³ O’Neill, 45.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

chancellor Franz von Papen had given a speech critical of Hitler and other Nazis in the government.³⁵⁵

Several British newspapers reported that Nazi government officials were speaking increasingly against “reactionaries” and “radicals” in the Nazi party—which, in fact, meant primarily the SA—and German military. The consequences of being a “radical” were obvious. The Nazi propaganda minister, Goebbels, warned in a speech that “we will show them what we are going to do with them” and that they will “have disappeared within 24 hours.”³⁵⁶ Hitler’s party deputy, Rudolf Hess, called on “genuine and responsible Nazis... [to] prevent revolution.”³⁵⁷

As subsequent research by historians has revealed, by then, Hitler had long realized the growing dissatisfaction of the army command over his failure to discipline Röhm and the other SA “radicals.” Hitler dared not ignore such feelings, especially because he wished to take over the office and duties of the aged and ill German president, von Hindenburg, and its military powers, once the president died.

Hitler now acted quickly. On 30 June 1934, in the so-called “Night of the Long Knives,” at Hitler’s order and personal direction, the other Nazi paramilitary organization, the SS, using trucks, weapons, and barracks provided it by the army, murdered without trial Röhm and dozens of his SA lieutenants and other diverse opponents of the National Socialists. In the aftermath of the bloody purge, both the army and German president von Hindenburg heaped fulsome praise on Hitler for protecting the

³⁵⁵ Kitchen, 291.

³⁵⁶ “Rivalries in Germany,” *The Times*, 26 June 1934, 14.

³⁵⁷ “Nazi Leader’s Warning,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 June 1934, 6.

army's independence. As countless historians have shown since, the German military elite had cast its lot with National Socialism. As for the *SS*, Hitler rewarded its loyalty to him in carrying out the purge by making the organization autonomous of the *SA*, placing it directly under his personal command and allowing it to expand by adding a division of heavily armed forces and taking over the state political police (*Gestapo*).

A week after the purge, the American magazine, *Newsweek*, described what it believed had happened in a lengthy article that used phrases such as “heads rolling” and “bleeding bodies.”³⁵⁸ Early on the morning of 30 June, Hitler and Goebbels had traveled to the office of the Minister of Interior and ordered that “allegedly traitorous Storm Troop officers” be shot. According to the account, two officers were shot on the spot.³⁵⁹

The *Newsweek* account continued. Later in the morning, several of Hitler's loyal officers and troops arrived at Röhm's home. Röhm was arrested, and by evening, executed. During the day, Göring organized the “general clean-up of Storm Troop leaders and supposed accomplices” throughout Germany.³⁶⁰ General Kurt von Schleicher, who had served as Germany's chancellor immediately before Hitler, was killed for allegedly plotting to remove Hitler and return to power the exiled emperor, Wilhelm II. Heinrich Klausener, leader of a so-called Catholic Action Party, was also killed, as were “Karl Ernst, former Storm Troop commander at Berlin, and Gregor Strasser, former organizer of the Nazi Party.”³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ “Hitler Crushes All Opposition,” *Newsweek*, 7 July 1934, 3.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

While true in a general sense, the *Newsweek* story was inaccurate in numerous details. One of the first carefully researched historical accounts of the purge by Gordon Craig confirmed that “Röhm and dozens of other SA leaders were snatched from their beds and shot without trial.”³⁶² Craig also included others executed, including a number “who had no connection with the SA at all: Gustav Kahr,...Gregor Strasser,...Edgar Jung and Erich Klausener,...Kurt von Schleicher,...[and] General von Bredow.”³⁶³

Whereas *Newsweek* reported that, by the evening of 30 June, Papen had been arrested and held at his home and that more than sixty Storm Troopers and their leaders and sympathizers had been killed,³⁶⁴ in reality the number of dead totaled substantially more. Nor did *Newsweek* or other Anglo-American media discuss the major role played in the purge by both the German army and SS. Few in the foreign press anywhere, perhaps because of tight controls on information in Germany implemented by the Nazi government, realized the full implications of the “Night of the Long Knives” for increasing the power of the SS inside Germany, for consolidating the army’s position, and for enhancing the prospects of greater German rearmament and militarization.

³⁶² Craig, 588.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 589.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER FOUR

1 JULY 1934 TO 16 MARCH 1935

The Aftermath in Germany

Following the “Night of the Long Knives,” *The New York Times* described German citizens as full of “ever-growing anxiety.”³⁶⁵ The population was “stunned and dismayed by the suddenness and brutality of...[the] killings”³⁶⁶ The *Times* reported that there had been a few additional executions and arrests after the SA purge contributed to the widespread fear and uncertainty. Later, historian John Wheeler-Bennett revealed that the “slaughter [had] continued throughout the week-end.”³⁶⁷ According to Robert O’Neill, most Germans were not certain what had occurred. News and information was tightly regulated by the Nazi government.³⁶⁸

Other historians, including Holger Herwig, have viewed the German response to the purge differently. He termed the upheaval “a milestone as the first state-planned and legalized mass slaughter of the Third Reich.”³⁶⁹ Few Germans, Herwig and other scholars have maintained, seemed alarmed either by the killings or by Hitler’s proclamation shortly after that he was the “supreme judge” in Germany. Nor did many Germans view the purge as a revelation of the murderous potential of National Socialism. Following the

³⁶⁵ Walter Duranty, “Germans Fearful of Reign of Terror,” *The New York Times*, 3 July 1934, 3.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ John Wheeler-Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics, 1918-1945* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1954), 323.

³⁶⁸ Robert O’Neill, *The German Army and the Nazi Party, 1933-1939* (New York: James H. Heineman, 1966), 50.

³⁶⁹ Holger H. Herwig, *Hammer or Anvil? Modern Germany 1648-Present* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1994), 286.

purge, reports smuggled abroad by socialist informants in Germany observed that “Hitler undoubtedly still had as much support among the majority of the people as he did before.”³⁷⁰

Herwig explained that “Hitler emerged as the real winner of the Night of the Long Knives...[because] he had removed the threat from the Left (SA) and the Right (army).”³⁷¹ As a result, Hitler consolidated his power quickly. No one stood in his way any longer because “potential opponents of the regime could now be certain of their fate.”³⁷²

According to *The Washington Post*, Hitler had made plans for a national radio address scheduled for 11 July to defend the “Night of the Long Knives.” In the speech, Hitler blasted the foreign press for “slander” in how it had presented the SA purge and claimed that Germany was not in a crisis. He announced that he had also convened a meeting of the *Reichstag* for its support of the purge.³⁷³ Historian Richard Evans interpreted the speech as explaining that the purge was necessary for a “clean-up of dangerous and degenerate elements in the Nazi movement.”³⁷⁴ Röhm and several other leading SA commanders were known homosexuals. However, the allusion by Hitler to such matters was merely to reassure the fearful German public. The destruction of much of the SA leadership involved nothing but a power struggle within the Nazi government

³⁷⁰ Cited in Detlev J.K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 71-72.

³⁷¹ Herwig, 286.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ “Hitler Calls Reichstag to Defend Purge,” *The Washington Post*, 11 July 1934, 1; “Nation Urged to Hear Hitler Defend Purge,” *The Washington Post*, 12 July 1934, 1.

³⁷⁴ Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 37.

and armed forces. The only “dangerous and degenerate elements” were those that posed a threat to Hitler—not Germany.

On 13 July, *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New York Times* covered the *Reichstag* meeting. The parliament, now merely a rubber stamp for Hitler, met to listen to Hitler’s speech on the purge and how it had foiled a mutiny by Röhm.³⁷⁵ Richard Evans, in his 2005 book, *The Third Reich in Power*, observed how the speech included “an elaborate and fantastic web of claims and assertions about the supposed conspiracy to overthrow the Reich.”³⁷⁶ According to Hitler, the alleged coup included “Communist street fighters, . . . political leaders who had never reconciled themselves to the finality of 30 January 1933, rootless elements who believed in permanent revolution, and upper-class ‘drones.’”³⁷⁷ Hitler explained that the purge had been a method of last resort to save Germany. Upon hearing the speech, the *Reichstag* enthusiastically approved Hitler’s actions.³⁷⁸ Hitler’s speech restated the supposed threat the Nazi regime had faced and how the matter was handled, and serving also to reassure the German public and to continue building support for Hitler and his government.

In the days following the *Reichstag* speech, the British and American press reported on the post-purge fate of the SA. The SA was restructured. Many officers were reassigned or demoted in an effort to weaken SA morale and the organization itself. There were also reports that the SA rank and file would be reduced drastically to weaken the SA

³⁷⁵ “Hitler’s Address to the Reichstag,” *The New York Times*, 14 July 1934, 4; “Hitler Defends the Shooting of Storm Troopers,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 14 July 1934, 13.

³⁷⁶ Evans, 37.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

further.³⁷⁹ Historians have noted that “the SA ceased to have any important function within the state apart from tasks of local administration, propaganda, and administration of ex-servicemen.”³⁸⁰ In an 18 July speech, as recorded in *The New York Times*, Hitler told the army that he knew he could “depend upon [it] as the sole arms-bearer of the State; [and he could] promise that it can always depend upon [him].”³⁸¹ The German army was still the nation’s official military force and faced no more competition or threat from the SA as the latter’s power and influence had been destroyed.

The Expansion of Hitler’s Power

July 1934 ended with the execution of Engelbert Dollfuss, chancellor of Austria, by Austrian Nazis. On 25 July, Anglo-American newspapers reported that Austrian Nazis had taken control of the Austrian chancellery and shot Dollfuss. The executioners then demanded asylum to Germany, which the German government granted only to rescind shortly thereafter.³⁸² Although Dollfuss was executed, historians agreed the attempted coup failed because the Austrian government remained in tact and continued to function, and the Austrian military did not revolt.³⁸³

The press reports revealed that there were two major concerns of European political leaders about Dollfuss’s assassination. First, there was the possibility that the German government could seize control of Austria and attempt an *Anschluss*, or a union

³⁷⁹ Frederick Birchall, “Nazi Brown Shirts Begin to Reappear,” *The New York Times*, 18, July 1934, 11; “Removing Storm Troop Influence,” *The Times* (London), 23 July 1934, 11; “Storm Troop Cut to 200,000 Likely,” *The New York Times*, 25 July 1934, 7.

³⁸⁰ O’Neill, 51.

³⁸¹ “Hitler Reassures Army,” *The New York Times*, 19 July 1934, 11.

³⁸² “Nazi Rising in Vienna,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 25 July 1934, 12; “Nazis Kill Chancellor,” *The Washington Post*, 26 July 1934, 1.

³⁸³ Gerhard Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler’s Germany, Diplomatic Revolution in Europe, 1933-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 104.

with the neighboring German country.³⁸⁴ Such a uniting of the two states had been expressly prohibited by the Versailles Treaty. Other European leaders believed that Dollfuss's assassination would eventually lead to war over the fear of a possible *Anschluss*. The British and French governments worried that such a union would result in a stronger and more powerful Germany. Propaganda supporting an *Anschluss* had intensified in Austria.³⁸⁵ Historian Gordon Craig noted that such anxiety about a possible *Anschluss* prompted Hitler's quick attempts to calm the European leadership. In a meeting with Mussolini, Hitler tried to convince the Italian leader "that the anschluss question was not acute."³⁸⁶ The Italian leader feared that an *Anschluss* could lead to Nazi demands that the predominantly German South Tyrol, in northern Italy, be placed under German rule. Craig also noted that many European leaders were suspicious of "Hitler's complicity in these events [the Dollfuss assassination and the *Anschluss*], despite his elaborate disclaimers." European officials remained concerned about an Austro-German union, despite its prohibition in the Versailles Treaty and Hitler's promises. With instability in the Austrian government and Hitler's untrustworthiness and mounting power, it was only a matter of time until the *Anschluss* actually occurred.

At the beginning of August 1934, news that German President Paul von Hindenburg was gravely ill and dying made international headlines. There was speculation as to who would become his successor. *The Washington Post* noted Hitler was the likely successor to von Hindenburg because of Hitler's support among the

³⁸⁴ "Poles Remain Aloof on Austrian Events," *The New York Times*, 31 July 1934, 3.

³⁸⁵ Anien Angelo, "Dollfuss's Death Brings Europe to War Brink," *The Washington Post*, 28 July 1934, 9.

³⁸⁶ Gordon Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 682.

German people and his backing by an almost wholly Nazi cabinet.³⁸⁷ *The Manchester Guardian* suggested two possibilities for successors for the German presidency. The first was Erwin Bamke, chief justice of the German supreme court. The *Guardian* article speculated that Bamke might serve temporarily until elections could be held. The other possibility was Germany's foreign minister, Konstantin von Neurath. There were many German citizens and government officials who believed von Neurath would be "awarded" the presidency because of his longtime loyalty to President von Hindenburg.³⁸⁸

Wheeler-Bennett has explained that German government officials had known for months von Hindenburg had been ill and dying, and yet there was no plan of succession. As the newspapers had reported, much speculation existed about who would become the new president of Germany.³⁸⁹ Several names, in fact, emerged as replacements for the deceased president, but "all were agreed in not wishing Hitler to succeed as Head of the State, ... [s]ome favored the immediate restoration of the Monarchy, others favored an intermediary stage in which von Blomberg [the German defense minister] should be appointed."³⁹⁰ The uncertainty about von Hindenburg's successor hardly illustrated irresolution in the direction of the German state. While the foreign press speculated about the succession, Hitler had, in reality, no serious competition.

On the morning of 2 August 1934, von Hindenburg died. *The Manchester Guardian* reported that "within an hour [of von Hindenburg's death] the Government

³⁸⁷ "Hindenburg Dying; Hitler Will Take Full Power in Germany," *The Washington Post*, 2 August 1934, 1.

³⁸⁸ "Possibilities for the Presidency," *The Manchester Guardian*, 2 August 1934, 9.

³⁸⁹ Wheeler-Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power*, 331.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

announced a new law uniting the offices of President and Chancellor and appointing Hitler to the joint post for an unlimited term.”³⁹¹ Hitler was the successor.

Later, Gordon Craig explained how Hitler “abolished the title *Reichspräsident* and designated himself *Führer und Reichskanzler*...to lay the basis for a claim that Hitler’s authority had greater legitimacy than that of any of his predecessors.”³⁹² *The Manchester Guardian* noted further that a plebiscite would be held on 19 August for the German electorate to approve officially Hitler’s appointment.³⁹³ The plebiscite demonstrated that the German people had given their near unanimous consent and approval of Hitler as Germany’s all powerful dictator.

Hitler’s succession to the German presidency exacerbated the fear of war already widespread in many European nations. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* reported that the British government had viewed von Hindenburg as a means of stability in Germany and check on Hitler’s power. The French government had agreed and believed that war was now likely. That direction was especially clear to London and Paris after Hitler required the German army and navy to take an oath of allegiance to him. This was a further solidification of his power in the state and his control over the military. President von Hindenburg, it was noted, did not require such an oath of allegiance to him from the German military.³⁹⁴ To the French, Hitler was now “the personification of the menacing German war machine.”³⁹⁵

³⁹¹ “Death of Field Marshall Hindenburg,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 August 1934, 9.

³⁹² Craig, 590.

³⁹³ “Death of Field Marshall Hindenburg,” 9.

³⁹⁴ “Hindenburg’s Death Raises British Fears,” *The Washington Post*, 3 August 1934, 2; Ferdinand Kuhn, “British See Hitler Ruled by His Army,” *The New York Times*, 3 August 1934, 2; “Navy Also Takes Oath

London and Paris were rightfully fearful. The new oath of allegiance was a “pledge to unconditional obedience to Hitler, whether or not his commands might have been considered legal.”³⁹⁶ Historians believe most of the soldiers did not fully comprehend the meaning of this new oath. However, the soldiers were willing to give their “unconditional obedience” because of Hitler’s support and regard for the army.³⁹⁷ Hitler now controlled the military. The military was no longer an instrument of the state, but that of Hitler. It was for Hitler to use as he wished and saw fit, not for the defense of and at the service of the state.

The Continued Struggle for Peace

Speaking at President von Hindenburg’s funeral on 6 August, Hitler declared again that his policies were to be a continuation of von Hindenburg’s—peace.³⁹⁸ Despite these assurances, Germany’s neighbors and the foreign media continued to doubt that peace could exist. *The New York Times* reported that the French were particularly doubtful of Hitler’s persistent claims that Germany wanted peace. The French did not believe “Hitler has been consistent in the peaceful overtures he has made since coming to power.”³⁹⁹ The Paris government was also concerned over many of Hitler’s assertions written in his book, *Mein Kampf*, or *My Struggle*. The paper noted that France believed Germany would one day unleash war against France and others as described and outlined

of Loyalty,” *The Washington Post*, 3 August 1934, 1; “War Feared Unless Hitler Curbs Tactics,” *The Washington Post*, 3 August 1934, 2.

³⁹⁵ “War Feared,” 2.

³⁹⁶ Evans, 43.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ “Hitler Shuns Politics,” *The Washington Post*, 7 August 1934, 1.

³⁹⁹ “French Mistrust Hitler Peace Plea,” *The New York Times*, 7 August 1934, 3.

in the book.⁴⁰⁰ Historian Gerhard Weinberg would observe much later that peace was doubtful from this point onward. He described the steps needed for completing rearmament and reinstating conscription that came with Hindenburg's death and Hitler becoming the supreme leader of Germany.⁴⁰¹ Nothing stood in Hitler's way to transform Germany into the ultimate police and military state. The military was at Hitler's disposal for the implementation of his ideology brought about through war and violence.

Yes and No

Soon the Nazis began to prepare the domestic front for the plebiscite on 19 August. *The Manchester Guardian* noted that "every known device of propaganda will be used...[including] leaflets, ...posters,...[and] meetings."⁴⁰² The article also stated that the Nazis planned to set up thousands of loud-speakers throughout Germany to broadcast propaganda speeches and programs. This would enable the broadcasts to be heard by all Germans and portray Hitler favorably. The Nazis had additional schemes to use the Storm Troopers and Hitler Youth to round up Germans who refused to vote. The Nazi groups would force unwilling Germans to go to the polls and cast ballots.⁴⁰³

On 19 August, the British press reported just over 43 million of the 45 million in the German electorate had gone to the polls. About 38 million German citizens voted to affirm Hitler as president and chancellor of Germany, while over 4 million voted against the measure. Almost 600,000 votes were invalid due to the failure to mark the ballots, despite that the German public had been instructed on voting procedures. The invalid

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Weinberg, 178-179.

⁴⁰² "Organizing Plebiscite Campaign in Germany," *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 August 1934, 11.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

votes were “regarded as adverse votes”⁴⁰⁴ for Hitler. With the overwhelmingly favorable results of the election, Richard Evans explained that “with this act, Hitler became Head of State in every sense of the term.”⁴⁰⁵

According to analysts in the American press, Britain and France realized that “the object of the plebiscite is too obvious...[and] too clumsy to impress any one outside of Germany.”⁴⁰⁶ Additionally, the London and Paris governments focused almost exclusively on the four million votes cast against Hitler. London was pleased that “so many voters would have the courage to withstand the terrific propaganda...[and] the possible consequences of voting ‘No’.”⁴⁰⁷ For the French government, the 4 million “no” votes were interpreted as “indicating a stronger undercurrent of discontent”⁴⁰⁸ than previously thought.

While most of Europe viewed the plebiscite in terms of the number of votes against Hitler or dismissed the validity of the referendum, Hitler received nearly eighty percent of the vote. Regardless of how one interpreted the results of the plebiscite, Hitler’s leadership was affirmed by it. The plebiscite had done its job in showcasing Hitler’s support within Germany and legitimizing his newly held office.

Investigations into German Military Strength

At the beginning of September 1934, articles about tension existing in the Saar region dominated the Anglo-American newspapers. The latter reported that many Saar

⁴⁰⁴ “Germany at the Polls,” *The Times*, 20 August 1934, 10; “Over Four Million Germans Vote ‘No’,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 August 1934, 9.

⁴⁰⁵ Evans, 42.

⁴⁰⁶ “German ‘No’ Vote Cheered in Britain,” *The New York Times*, 20 August 1934, 4.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ “Hitler Setback Seen by Paris in Reich Vote,” *The Washington Post*, 21 August 1934, 3.

residents were becoming increasingly uneasy and tense when the German army began “providing military training for 16,000 German residents...in preparation for the plebiscite”⁴⁰⁹ scheduled for January 1935. Under supervision of the League of Nations, Saarlanders would vote on whether they wished to return to German rule. *The Manchester Guardian* explained that the military service and training were voluntary and would last until the plebiscite.⁴¹⁰ Even with such reassurances, fear of a German military presence was not easily deterred.

Historians have explained that the military presence in the Saar region was a part of German preparations for the January 1935 plebiscite.⁴¹¹ Saarlanders believed “rumors put about by the ‘yes’ campaign...to believe that the ballot would not be secret...[and] those known to vote ‘no’ would be carted off to concentration camps.”⁴¹² Fear was a means of influencing the plebiscite. The military was there to remind Saarlanders of the supposed consequences for not voting “yes” in the plebiscite.

In mid-September 1934, the annual Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg showcased large German military celebrations and marches. *The Manchester Guardian* estimated over 100,000 troops participated in a parade at the Luitpold Arena, followed by an inspection and short speech by Hitler, the first of several Hitler would deliver in the six-day event.⁴¹³ In his address, Hitler briefly reiterated the significance of the SA purge on 30 June. The rally was also attended by officers from all of the branches of the German

⁴⁰⁹ “Germans Train 16,000 in Saar for Plebiscite,” *The Washington Post*, 2 September 1934, M3.

⁴¹⁰ “Nazi Plans in the Saar,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 September 1934, 13.

⁴¹¹ Craig, 683.

⁴¹² Evans, 625.

⁴¹³ “Hitler Reviews 100,000 Storm Troopers,” *The Manchester Guardian* 10 September 1934, 13.

military as well as over 50,000 civilian spectators.⁴¹⁴ One historian described the Nuremberg rally as “restoring pageantry and color and mysticism to the drab lives of twentieth-century Germans.”⁴¹⁵ The final day featured “an effective display” of arms and cavalry marches by the *Reichswehr*.⁴¹⁶ These exhibitions consisted of “large displays of equipment and tactical procedure, marching and drill displays and...spectacular demonstrations of pyrotechnics and searchlight.”⁴¹⁷ This party rally was best known for its stunning visual propaganda, captured in Leni Riefenstahl’s film *Triumph of the Will*. Upon the suggestion of the young architect friend of Hitler, Albert Speer, Hitler had approved the use at the rally of 130 anti-aircraft searchlights, which during the night sent their beams skyward, thus producing the first—in Speer’s words much later, in his postwar memoirs—“cathedral of light...not only my most beautiful architectural concept, but...the only one which has survived the passage of time.”⁴¹⁸ After the rally had ended, *The New York Times* observed that the “streets were loud with laughter, song and cries of ‘Heil Hitler.’”⁴¹⁹

The Nuremberg rally was a display of German power and military might. It was a “pep rally” to build support and garner enthusiasm among the German population for Hitler and the Nazi government. It was a demonstration of German military power for those watching around the world.

⁴¹⁴ “Brown Army: Herr Hitler’s Assurance,” *The Times*, 10 September 1934, 12.

⁴¹⁵ Evans, 124.

⁴¹⁶ “Reichswehr Day at Nuremberg,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 September 1934, 13.

⁴¹⁷ O’Neill, 59.

⁴¹⁸ Quoted in Milan Hauner, *Hitler: A Chronology of His Life and Time* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983), 104.

⁴¹⁹ “Reichswehr Show Ends Nazi Parley,” *The New York Times*, 11 September 1934, 12.

Press coverage shifted quickly back to foreign concerns about German rearmament, and especially about Germany's alleged possession of military aircraft. *The New York Times* ran a story that US Congressional reports and hearings revealed "Germany had assembled a sizable mystery fleet of war planes."⁴²⁰ Parts for the aircraft were allegedly smuggled in through sea ports and then assembled into functioning military aircraft. Speculation existed that parts came from the United States and Great Britain, but no facts were presented to substantiate the claim.⁴²¹

Days later, United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) officials testified before Congress that their company had provided Germany with plane engines and other minor parts. *The Washington Post* reported that UAC officials claimed they believed the "equipment sold to Germany was delivered in belief it would be used for commercial purposes."⁴²² Other UAC officials testified that "approval of United States Government officials was in every case obtained"⁴²³ prior to the shipments to Germany. They believed that the shipments were not in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.⁴²⁴

The German government responded to the investigation and hearings. The Nazi authorities claimed that all purchases were for commercial purposes and were made with the approval of the United States government. Because the parts purchases were

⁴²⁰ "Reich Planes to Be Topic," *The New York Times*, 16 September 1934, 31.

⁴²¹ "Charges Reich Has Air Fleet Engage Inquiry," *The Washington Post*, 17 September 1934, 1; "Reich Planes," 31.

⁴²² "Reich Builds Big Air Force with U.S. Aid, Inquiry Hears," *The Washington Post*, 18 September 1934, 1.

⁴²³ "American Inquiry Disclosures," *The Times*, 18 September 1934, 12.

⁴²⁴ "Reich Buys Planes here for Air Force," *The New York Times*, 18 September 1934, 12.

supposedly for commercial activities, Berlin stressed the Treaty of Versailles did not prohibit such use—only military use.⁴²⁵

Germany did have ties to aerial armament manufacturers and military technology in the United States. Throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, German military officers and other officials had paid repeated visits to air corps flight schools and aerial engineering schools and industries in the United States. Such officials had opportunities to fly aircraft and study manuals on military aircraft.⁴²⁶ Wilhelm Deist has noted that between January 1934 and July 1935 German military aircraft “output [increased] four-fold in a relatively short time.”⁴²⁷ Germany’s connections to foreign military industries and armament manufacturers contributed to the increase. The nature of such foreign visits indicated, despite Germany’s claims, that they were for the purpose of creating and building an air force. If all the purchases had been for “commercial use,” German officials would not have visited military flight schools and industries.

Following the uproar over the German purchase of aircraft parts, according to *The New York Times*, Hitler sent a letter to a London newspaper reiterating again that “the sincere desire of Germany [is] for peaceful relations with all its neighbors.”⁴²⁸ The article concluded that Hitler’s letter did nothing to combat Britain’s anti-German sentiments and

⁴²⁵ “Germans Defend Plane Purchases,” *The New York Times*, 21 September 1934, 9.

⁴²⁶ James Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918-1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 100.

⁴²⁷ William Deist, *The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 62.

⁴²⁸ “London Is Critical of Hitler Letter,” *The New York Times*, 19 September 1934, E3.

fear. Most British citizens believed their country was preparing for war against Germany.⁴²⁹

The Spread of Nazism

In early October 1934, *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New York Times* noted that the Nazi government had extended its influence in Austria by sending there Franz von Papen as Germany's minister to the Vienna government. While the Germans claimed to want peaceful diplomatic relations, some Austrians were skeptical and saw this as the beginning of the *Anschluss*. The Austrian government agreed to keep the lines of diplomatic communication open and allow "moderate" German Nazis to serve in political organizations in Austria. Meanwhile, the Austrian government secured from Berlin the promise of an "independent Austria"—meaning no *Anschluss*.⁴³⁰

Historians agree the appointment of von Papen as a diplomat to Austria by Hitler was to "pour oil on the troubled waters of Austro-German relations."⁴³¹ Yet von Papen had been a friend of Engelbert Dollfuss.⁴³² The aristocratic, conservative, and Catholic von Papen, well-known in Europe and a former German chancellor, had collaborated in 1933 in helping Hitler into power. He had served as vice chancellor in the Nazi government, but was removed from his post after the Röhm purge because he had called publicly for greater freedom for Germany and possibly a return of the monarchy. By fall 1934, von Papen collaborated again with the Nazis, this time by agreeing to be German

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ G. E. R. Gedy, "See Hitler Holding to Goal in Austria," *The New York Times*, 7 October 1934, E1; "Italo-German Negotiations on Austria?," *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 October 1934, 12; "Nazis Seek Place in Vienna Regime," *The New York Times*, 28 October 1934, 12.

⁴³¹ Evans, 623.

⁴³² Ibid.

minister to Austria. His appointment was designed to help allay suspicions that Hitler had been involved in the assassination of Dollfuss and to improve diplomatic relations between Austria and Germany. However, at least some Austrians were rightfully skeptical because von Papen's appointment would eventually, four years later, "see that the *Anschluss* was brought about peacefully."⁴³³ The *Anschluss* had been in Hitler's plans. The heavily Catholic and conservative Austria would likely be more receptive to it because of widespread Austrian fondness for von Papen.

Beginning in November 1934, the Anglo-American newspapers began to reflect Europeans' renewed fears of German rearmament and possible war over the Saar region. *The New York Times* noted rumors that the Nazi government planned a coup in the Saar.⁴³⁴ According to *The Washington Post* with the January 1935 Saar plebiscite still months away, France became increasingly concerned about an armed Nazi takeover of the region.⁴³⁵ If the Saar region voted to become a part of Germany again, the latter would then become an even closer neighbor to France and pose a greater threat.

According to *The New York Times*, French Foreign Minister Pierre Laval met with Germany's ambassador to Paris, Roland Koester, following Germany's reassurance that "there would be no invasion of the Saar territory from Germany."⁴³⁶ Laval explained that France was merely fulfilling its "international obligations connected with the League of Nations,"⁴³⁷ and Koester "expressed his government's sentiments...[and] did not

⁴³³ Weinberg, 107.

⁴³⁴ Edwin James, "Europeans Now Calling Saar Real War Danger," *The New York Times*, 4 November 1934, E1.

⁴³⁵ "France Fears Saar Vote Holds Menace of War," *The Washington Post*, 2 November 1934, 6.

⁴³⁶ "Reich Gives Pledge Not to Invade Saar," *The New York Times*, 6 November 1934, 28.

⁴³⁷ "France Reassures Germany on Saar," *The New York Times*, 7 November 1934, 28.

intend in any manner to disregard the conditions fixed by treaty to assure a free Saar vote.”⁴³⁸ There seemed to be mutual understanding between the two diplomats and was Laval’s goal. He was “interested in improving German-French relations.”⁴³⁹ Bettering relations between the two countries would become even more important as tension over the Saar region mounted until the plebiscite. An improved relationship between the two nations hopefully meant that the international tension and fear of war would be resolved.

The amicable understanding, however, was short lived. *The New York Times* revealed that after Laval and Koester met, the German government announced “an official German protest against the use of French troops to safeguard law and order...in the Saar Basin territory.”⁴⁴⁰ Laval defended France’s position and believed the French had the right to maintain troops in the Saar region under the League of Nations’ mandate. Laval further claimed that officials in the Saar region had requested additional forces to safeguard against the Germans.⁴⁴¹

There were merits to Laval’s claims, based on reports in *The Washington Post* that the Germans had “armed forces working secretly in the Saar Basin for the territory’s annexation to Germany.”⁴⁴² According to the *Post*, there were an estimated 10,000 secret German police officers stationed in the Saar who were “terrorizing Saarlanders believed to be opposed to joining Germany...[by] using extreme methods to promote the German cause.”⁴⁴³ These methods included “trying to kidnap anti-Nazis,...provoking frequent

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Weinberg, 199.

⁴⁴⁰ “Reich Fights Use of French Troops,” *The New York Times*, 8 November 1934, 12.

⁴⁴¹ “French Are Firm to Reich on Saar,” *The New York Times*, 10 November 1934, 7.

⁴⁴² “Hitler’s Police Terrify Saar, League Hears,” *The Washington Post*, 10 November 1934, 3.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

disturbances, [and the threat of] reprisals after the plebiscite.”⁴⁴⁴ Later, historians agreed with the newspaper reports, one noting that “in many parts of the Saarland, the local Nazi Party exerted massive intimidation and violence behind the scenes to deter the opposition from voting against reunification with Germany.”⁴⁴⁵ French troops were present in the Saar region to maintain order and give some legitimacy to the forthcoming plebiscite. Security provided by the French troops would act as a counterbalance to the violence and intimidation of Nazi forces.

By 18 November, however, tension between France and Germany subsided when Hitler announced that Germany would “accept the result of the plebiscite, whatever it may be.”⁴⁴⁶ *The Manchester Guardian* revealed that Hitler encouraged both France and Germany to come to a mutual understanding. He repeated that Germany had no intentions of forcibly taking the Saar region or overthrowing its government.⁴⁴⁷ For now, the threat of war over the Saar region appeared ended.

More on Armaments

By the end of November 1934, the issue of German rearmament emerged again as a worry of the international community. *The Times* and *The Washington Post* discovered that there was a deal that would allow Germany to rejoin the Disarmament Conference and return to the negotiating table. The stipulation was that the German government had to admit it had been rearming, but the deal fell through. The only things the German

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Evans, 625.

⁴⁴⁶ “Hitler Promises to Accept Result of Saar Plebiscite,” *The New York Times*, 18 November 1934, 7.

⁴⁴⁷ “Appeal for Peace with France,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 19 November 1934, 9.

government claimed it was doing were seeking peace and arms for defense.⁴⁴⁸ Gerhard Weinberg explained “the efforts to revive disarmament negotiations [would have been] a failure”⁴⁴⁹ regardless. Germany was already heavily rearmed, and military conscription was planned to begin again.⁴⁵⁰

The press also reported that the French found themselves in a panic over the strength of the Nazi military forces. The Anglo-American newspapers reported that France claimed Germany had an “army” of about 5.5 million troops. Paris asserted that German troop strength consisted of both standing forces, such as the *Reichwehr*, the police, and auxiliary forces, and of massive reserve cadres, that included veterans, paramilitary organizations, young adults in pro-Nazi or pro-Hitler organizations, and traditional military and police reserves.⁴⁵¹ Reports of French intelligence, however, were not entirely accurate. Plans were implemented in the autumn of 1934 for the expansion of the German army. This would include reserve forces, like those published in the press. However, troop strength was hardly 5.5 million in November 1934. By February 1935, troop levels in the army stood at just under 300,000. Only by 1939, when war began between Germany and Poland, were there about 4 million German army troops.⁴⁵²

Moreover, during the autumn and winter of 1934, on direct orders from both Hitler and the German foreign ministry, great caution was pursued by the Germans in

⁴⁴⁸ “London Hears Reich May Admit Rearming,” *The Washington Post*, 13 November 1934, 4; “Rearmament in Germany,” *The Times*, 14 November 1934, 14.

⁴⁴⁹ Weinberg, 198.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵¹ “France Fears Early Invasion by Nazi Army,” *The Washington Post*, 20 November 1934, 3; “French Estimate of Germany’s Fighting Strength,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 November 1934, 12; Herbert Matthews, “Reich Seen Raising ‘Army’ of 5,500,000,” *The New York Times*, 20 November 1934, 15.

⁴⁵² Matthew Cooper, *The German Army: 1933-1945, Its Political and Military Failure* (New York: Stein and Day, 1978), 130-131; Deist, 30, 36-37; O’Neill, 86, 91-92.

regard to a number of their armament plans, so as to avoid endangering the political outcome of the imminent Saar plebiscite. Consequently, continued French fears about German military forces were not without basis. According to Deist, “it was now to be expected that the success in the Saar would cause the political leadership, i.e. Hitler, to re-emphasize the rearmament plans of the services and thus again start the acceleration process driven by political, military-organizational, and operational considerations.”⁴⁵³

The New York Times, *The Times* (London), and *The Washington Post* all reported that France was concerned about German rearmament in other military branches. The French government projected that Germany had between 1,000 to 1,100 military aircraft at its disposal.⁴⁵⁴ France was also alarmed because such German aircraft were “swifter and more modern” than France’s “less swift and less modern” fleet.⁴⁵⁵

In the case of such numbers of planes, the French and the press underestimated Germany. The latter already had numerous flight training schools and was in the process of training officers for different positions such as pilots, bombers, and navigation. These newly trained officers would need planes to fly. By May 1934, Germany had at least a thousand military aircraft. There were also plans to produce another four thousand planes by late 1934 and early 1935. Throughout 1934, the Germans produced several types of reconnaissance aircraft, such as those by Heinkel, the He 45 and He 46. Fighter aircraft,

⁴⁵³ Deist, “Rearmament,” 421.

⁴⁵⁴ “France Called to Excel Reich with Air Fleet,” *The Washington Post*, 22 November 1934, 5; “German Air Strength,” *The Times*, 24 November 1934, 12.

⁴⁵⁵ “France Called to Excel,” 5.

including the Arado 65 and the He 51, were being manufactured, as were the bombers, the He 50, the Junkers 52, and the Dornier 11.⁴⁵⁶

Furthermore, by the end of 1933, the German army and navy had begun contributing to the personnel build-up of the air force (*Luftwaffe*). Over two hundred officers up to the rank of colonel had been transferred to the air force, and, in January 1934, an additional seventy had followed. In addition, some 1,600 non-commissioned officers had been transferred. At the beginning of 1934, a large number of young civilian pilots also joined the *Luftwaffe*. After 1934, the air force took over its own recruiting, but its personnel were still trained in units and schools of the army and navy.⁴⁵⁷ Historian James Corum stated that the “*Luftwaffe* [had] succeeded in [its] objective of rapidly expanding.”⁴⁵⁸ Consequently, by the end of 1934, Germany had already expanded its air force on a large scale and, unknown to—but occasionally suspected by—the outside world, posed a credible threat to Europe.

According to *The New York Times* Berlin had grown tired of Paris’s claims. The Nazi government accused France of “attempt[ing] to poison the wells of public opinion in Germany’s disfavor...[and]...creating a war-panicky atmosphere in Europe.”⁴⁵⁹ The German government restated that war was not its ambition, nor could it wage war because of the supposed “inadequacy of [its] national defense.”⁴⁶⁰ France had reason not to trust Germany. The latter’s response only hastened the passage of France’s military budget for 1935. It included “increased aviation development... [and] stronger, light

⁴⁵⁶ Corum, 156, 162.

⁴⁵⁷ Deist, “Rearmament,” 485-86.

⁴⁵⁸ Corum, 156, 162.

⁴⁵⁹ “Reich Sees France Causing War Panic,” *The New York Times*, 26 November 1934, 4.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

warships,”⁴⁶¹ in addition to funding the restructuring and reorganization of the armaments industry and manufacturers. The increases in France’s military budget were illustrative of the threat of war Germany appeared to the French to pose to them and the rest of Europe.

The Prospects of Peace?

At the beginning of December, in a speech before the Chamber of Deputies, French foreign minister Pierre Laval made clear France’s position on Germany. In his address, which was reported on by the Anglo-American press, Laval stated that France must remain strong militarily to insure peace in Europe and the world. France’s immediate goals were to preserve and defend the sovereignty of other European states and to refuse to accept Germany’s desire to rearm. Laval also challenged Germany to demonstrate through its actions, and not merely its words, that it meant peace.⁴⁶² German diplomats met with Laval. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* indicated that the envoys tried to explain to Laval that Germany was merely misunderstood in the international community. Germany’s goals were peace and equality. The diplomats sought, the papers reported, to reassure Laval that Germany was not capable of waging war against France or anyone else.⁴⁶³

With the Saar plebiscite approaching quickly, old fears regarding it continued to exist especially that Germany might influence the vote, attempt a coup, or take the Saar by force. There had been much debate throughout 1934 in the international community

⁴⁶¹ “France Rushes Its War Budget to Enactment,” *The Washington Post*, 28 November 1934, 3.

⁴⁶² “France Wants Proof Hitler’s Aim Is Peace,” *The Washington Post*, 1 December 1934, 1; “French Policy Defined,” *The Times*, 1 December 1934, 12; “M. Laval’s Policy Statement,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 December 1934, 11.

⁴⁶³ “Hitler Envoy Seeks to Quiet French Fears,” *The Washington Post*, 3 December 1934, 3; P.J. Philip, “Laval Receives Envoy of Hitler,” *The New York Times*, 3 December 1934, 8.

about what to do with the Saar. First reported in early December 1934 in *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New York Times*, Germany had finally agreed to accept League of Nations troops stationed in the Saar. However, Berlin responded that the troops were unnecessary because Germany had claimed it would respect the sovereignty of the Saar and the results of the plebiscite.⁴⁶⁴ Germany's willingness to accept the League of Nations troops as monitors of the referendum eased tensions and sent a wave of optimism across Europe. By the end of December, a force of about 4,000 League of Nations soldiers was stationed in the Saar. The troops were from Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Even with such forces in the Saar, tension remained high in anticipation of the plebiscite.⁴⁶⁵ However, the troops were necessary, according to one French diplomat quoted in *The New York Times*, obviously expressing the serious French concern over German rearmament, or else "there might easily have been a war."⁴⁶⁶

Laval was doing his job by acting in the best interest of France's national security and for peace throughout Europe. He forced Germany to act and accept League troops stationed in the Saar region.⁴⁶⁷ For the time being, diplomacy worked; at least momentarily, tensions and fears were quieted.

Whether it was the Christmas spirit, or looking toward the easing of tension after the upcoming Saar plebiscite, or the hope for future, peaceful international relations, the

⁴⁶⁴ "Germany and Troops in the Saar," *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 December 1934, 14; Clarence Streit, "Germany Accepts League Saar Army," *The New York Times*, 7 December 1934, 18.

⁴⁶⁵ Franklyn Waltman, "French and Germans Ready for Plebiscite," *The Washington Post*, 9 December 1934, B1; P.J. Philip, "Saar is Occupied by Foreign Army," *The New York Times*, 23 December 1934, 10.

⁴⁶⁶ Philip, "Saar is Occupied," 10.

⁴⁶⁷ R. A. Parker, *Europe 1919-45* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1969), 276.

outlook of some in the British and American press for 1935 was optimistic. An article in *The New York Times* testified to the fact that peace

remains somewhat of a mystery....The fear has left us. The fear inspired by the menace of German armaments is no longer...As if by magic, for the time being at least, it has disappeared. It may return of course.⁴⁶⁸

1935

With the arrival of the new year, there were renewed efforts to bring Germany back into the international community. In February 1935, the British government had planned to resume the Geneva Disarmament Conference. According to *The Manchester Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*, Britain had hoped that France and Italy could convince Germany to return to the conference. The plan was for France to settle whatever differences it had with Germany, to allow Germany some degree of rearmament, and for Germany to reenter the League of Nations.⁴⁶⁹ February, it was thought, would be a prime month to attempt to resume negotiations and the Disarmament Conference. The Saar region had been a point of contention among Britain, France, and Germany, but once the plebiscite had occurred, the issue would be off the table, and these countries could engage in other discussions. Historian Gerhard Weinberg's conclusions pointed to the fact that Britain and France both had "hopes for a relaxation of tension after the Saar plebiscite."⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁸ "Fear of Germany Fading in Europe," *The New York Times* 25 December 1934, 21.

⁴⁶⁹ Charles Selden, "Britain Will Seek Paris-Berlin Unity," *The New York Times*, 9 January 1935, 8; "Terms of Franco-Italian Agreement," *The Manchester Guardian*, 9 January 1935, 9; "Italy, France May Ask Reich to Arms Talk," *The Washington Post*, 10 January 1935, 1.

⁴⁷⁰ Weinberg, 200.

The grand plans of the Anglo-French were short-lived. With the Saar plebiscite only days away, *The New York Times* reported that an anxious German government refused London's proposals. The British government thought the rejection reflected Germans' concern about their future influence on the Saar region, regardless of the outcome of the plebiscite. The British alleged that the German government believed if it rejoined the League of Nations, German power and influence in Europe, including in the Saar, would be curtailed. As it had always believed, Berlin thought any rearmament would be conditional and assumed that Britain and France would demand something from Germany in exchange for allowing it to rearm.⁴⁷¹

The Saar Plebiscite

Emotions ran high throughout Europe prior to the Saar plebiscite. *The Washington Post* believed that the best outcome would be for the region to return to Germany. If the Saar returned to Germany, "tension between France and Germany can be lessened...[since] the tension which has kept Europe jittery...would be greatly relieved."⁴⁷² France was prepared for the Saar to pass again under German rule. *The Times* reported that Paris was ready militarily should a crisis or situation warrant military intervention. The French also anticipated a large number of refugees from the Saar region to arrive in France if the Saar became part of Germany.⁴⁷³ *The New York Times* revealed that the Germans were certain that "after fifteen years of foreign slavery, the Saar will

⁴⁷¹ Guido Enderis, "Germany Rejects British League Bid," *The New York Times*, 11 January 1935, 12; "Germany and the Saar," *The Times*, 11 January 1935, 12; "Official German Opinion of the Saar," *The Manchester Guardian*, 11 January 1935, 4.

⁴⁷² Franklyn Waltman, "Return to Germany Would Ease Tension," *The Washington Post*, 13 January 1935, 10.

⁴⁷³ "French Precautions on Frontier," *The Times*, 12 January 1935, 12.

return to the open arms of Mother Germany.”⁴⁷⁴ Apparently *The New York Times* was right. The Saarlanders were Germans and did not like being under French control. The newspaper observed that the Saarlanders had been “discriminated heavily against...[and had their] language and culture [suppressed].”⁴⁷⁵ As a result, Germans were “preparing to celebrate a great victory in...[the] plebiscite.”⁴⁷⁶

The plebiscite, held on 13 January 1935, produced much celebrating in Germany. According to the Anglo-American newspapers, Saarlanders voted overwhelmingly for reunification with Germany. About 476,000 voted to reunify with Germany; about 2,000 voted to unify with France; and about 46,000 voted to remain under the League of Nations.⁴⁷⁷ That was not to say there were no allegations of German propaganda influencing the Saarlanders, of intimidation of voters by Nazi officials, and of the attempted swaying of votes with money.⁴⁷⁸ Despite the outcome of the plebiscite, the Anglo-American press reported that the League of Nations remained optimistic about future European relations. Its results were accepted unanimously. The League also set 1 March 1935 as the official date of transfer of the Saar from control of the League to Germany.⁴⁷⁹

True Intentions

⁴⁷⁴ Otto Tolischus, “Saar Celebration Prepared in Reich,” *The New York Times*, 13 January 1935, 31.

⁴⁷⁵ Evans, 623.

⁴⁷⁶ Tolischus, “Saar Celebration,” 31.

⁴⁷⁷ “The Saar Votes by Districts,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 January 1935, 12; “A Vote for Germany,” *The Times*, 15 January 1935, 12.

⁴⁷⁸ “The Saar Landslide: Factors in the Total Collapse of the Status Quo Campaign,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 16 January 1935, 12.

⁴⁷⁹ “Agreement on the Saar,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 18 January 1935, 11; “Handing Over to Germany,” *The Times* (London), 18 January 1935, 12; “League Votes Return of Saar to Germany,” *The Washington Post*, 18 January 1935, 3; “League Will Speed Transfer of Saar,” *The New York Times*, 16 January 1935, 12.

With the fate of the Saar safely determined, it seemed that finally peace was at hand. By the end of January, however, news reports gave a different impression. Around 25 January, Hermann Göring traveled to Warsaw, Poland, supposedly for a hunting expedition. *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* indicated that the real purpose of the trip was to discuss German rearmament with Polish officials. Göring, the papers claimed, was attempting to convince Poland to allow Germany to rearm.⁴⁸⁰

What were Germany's true intentions? Prior to Göring's visit to Poland, according to historian Weinberg, "Hitler indicated that...Germany would take an important step in the field of armaments..., either the announcement of air rearmament or the reintroduction of conscription, or both."⁴⁸¹ Germany had already been rearming and there was no stopping it. Berlin did not believe it needed permission from any nation to rearm. Therefore, Göring's visit to Poland was likely to inform the Poles that the German government was about to announce its rearmament and to reassure the Poles they had nothing to fear.

On 29 and 30 January, *The Manchester Guardian* and *The New York Times* published a series of articles on military conscription in Germany. The press indicated that universal conscription would soon occur in Germany. The newspapers claimed Germany had reached a point politically and militarily where conscription was possible. One German military officer was quoted as saying that conscription was necessary for a large, strong military, unlike that of Wilhelm II's regime and the Weimar Republic. The

⁴⁸⁰ "General Goering in Warsaw," *The Times*, 28 January 1935, 11; "General Goering's Secret Visit to Warsaw," *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 January 1935, 13; "General Goering to Visit Poland," *The Manchester Guardian*, 25 January 1935, 6.

⁴⁸¹ Weinberg, 204.

new, stronger military would secure Germany's existence as a nation. With compulsory enlistment, the military would include more capable and competent men in its ranks than the few select men that had voluntarily joined under previous regimes and governments.⁴⁸²

Rearmament

As February 1935 began, British and French governments remained worried about January's reports of German military conscription. To further the anxiety, new claims appeared in the press that Hitler was contemplating whether to reveal the full extent of Germany's "secret" rearmament. Hitler believed the timing to be right because the "Reich's foreign political position...[was] sufficiently fortified to risk a formal public admission of German rearmament."⁴⁸³

The Manchester Guardian, *The New York Times*, and *The Times* (London) all reported that British and French statesmen were in a scramble to figure out how to deal with Germany. The British and French prime ministers, MacDonald and Pierre-Etienne Flandin, and foreign ministers, Simon and Laval, held an emergency meeting in London. There they discussed what the real plans of Germany might be, the possibility of war, and negotiating a possible peace agreement.⁴⁸⁴ On 4 February, after the three day meeting, the major Anglo-American newspapers indicated that the British and French ministers had decided to allow Germany to rearm, effectively ending the armament restriction clauses

⁴⁸² "Conscription in Germany," *The Manchester Guardian*, 29 January 1935, 6; "Universal Service Forecast for Reich," *The New York Times*, 30 January 1935, 6.

⁴⁸³ "Germany Planning to Bare Rearming," *The New York Times*, 3 February 1935, 29.

⁴⁸⁴ "Anglo-French Talks," *The Times* (London), 1 February 1935, 14; "French Hopes from London Discussion," *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 February 1935, 12; "London and Paris Anxious on Parley," *The New York Times*, 1 February 1935, 6.

of the Versailles Treaty. There were certain terms to which Germany had to agree, however. If it wanted permission to rearm, Berlin had to return to the Disarmament Conference and League of Nations, and participate in a mutual aerial defense pact with Belgium, Britain, France, and Italy.⁴⁸⁵ Additional conditions, not published in the newspapers, included “controlling air warfare and certain types of weapons, [and] co-operation in new mutual assistance plans to give security to Eastern and Central Europe.”⁴⁸⁶

For a couple of reasons, Britain and France made concessions to Germany. First, allowing the Germans to rearm conditionally removed the international tension the armaments issue had caused among the nations. Placing conditions on the armaments made certain Britain and France were still able to exercise some control over what armaments Germany could or could not have. Second, Britain and France knew Germany had already been secretly rearming. There was nothing they could do to stop the rearmament, short of going to war. The latter was not an option Britain or France wanted. If they could not stop what the Germans were already doing, they had might as well permit it.

The Times described Germany’s initial reaction to the British and French proposal as having “aroused interest...[and creating] a basis of discussion.”⁴⁸⁷ On 5 February, *The Washington Post* revealed that “Hitler...told the British Ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps,

⁴⁸⁵ “Anglo-French Plan,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1935, 9; “Complete Anglo-French Agreement,” *The Times*, 4 February 1935, 12; “Proffer to Germany Is Conditioned Upon League Entry,” *The Washington Post*, 4 February 1935, 1.

⁴⁸⁶ Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945*, 684.

⁴⁸⁷ “The German Reaction,” *The Times*, 5 February 1935, 14.

that Germany will discuss armaments and her return to Geneva.”⁴⁸⁸ The British saw Germany’s willingness to discuss the proposal as an opportunity to push Berlin to accept it. London threatened several reprisals if Germany did not accept the proposal, including that Germany would face political and military isolation in Europe and the world.⁴⁸⁹

The Times reported that Hitler had retreated to his Bavarian mountain home for several days with advisers to analyze the proposal.⁴⁹⁰ Britain and France remained optimistic and believed Germany’s reply would be “in friendly and conciliatory terms and imply a substantial measure of acceptance.”⁴⁹¹

Germany replied on 15 February, but it was not what Britain had hoped for. *The Manchester Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post* reported that Germany agreed to the mutual aerial defense pact, but showed little interest in a return to the Disarmament Conference or the League of Nations. Apparently in keeping with Hitler’s effort to divide Britain from France in diplomatic relations, Berlin also demanded direct talks and negotiations with London, not Paris.⁴⁹² The British government was angry—angry because Germany wanted its rearmament recognized by the European powers without accepting the proposal⁴⁹³ and angry that Germany sought to, in the words

⁴⁸⁸ “Hitler Agrees to Negotiate Security Pact,” *The Washington Post*, 5 February 1935, 1.

⁴⁸⁹ “Isolation in Air Faces Reich, London Warns,” *The Washington Post*, 6 February 1935, 1; “France, Britain to Act if Reich Balks Air Pact,” *The Washington Post*, 8 February 1935, 18.

⁴⁹⁰ “Germany and Air Security,” *The Times*, 9 February 1935, 12.

⁴⁹¹ “Germany and the London Plan,” *The Times*, 13 February 1935, 12.

⁴⁹² “Hitler Agrees to Discussion of Air Treaty,” *The Washington Post*, 15 February 1935, 1; “German Reply to France and Britain,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 15 February 1935, 9; “Berlin Requests Anglo-Reich Talks,” *The New York Times*, 16 February 1935, 4.

⁴⁹³ “British Demand Reich Accept Air Pact Fully,” *The Washington Post*, 21 February 1935, 7

of *The New York Times*, “attempt to drive a wedge between them [Britain and France].”⁴⁹⁴

Germany was willing to engage in talks with British and French diplomats, but was not willing to accept any “limiting the extent of German armaments or imposing international controls or inspection.”⁴⁹⁵ In what should not have been a surprise, the Nazi government had been leading the British and the French along the whole time. This demonstrated Germany had never been interested in any of the Western Powers’ proposals unless it got everything it wanted, which was full rearmament.

On 1 March 1935, the Saar region returned officially to Germany. While France and the League of Nations had hoped for a quiet transfer ceremony of the Saar, there was much celebrating in Germany and the Saar according to *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Washington Post*. Schools were closed throughout both regions. Saarlanders flew German flags and parades were held for the “Liberation Day.”⁴⁹⁶ With the Saar returned to Germany, this brought “to [a] close one of the most hotly contested chapters of the Versailles Treaty.”⁴⁹⁷

The transfer had occurred peacefully. The historian Richard Evans interpreted the return of the Saar region as “a great day for Germany [because] it showed the power and popularity of the Third Reich and its ideas for all Germans.”⁴⁹⁸ Germans and Saarlanders certainly believed it was a significant day, evident from all of the celebrations. Britain,

⁴⁹⁴ “Reich’s Tone Irks London and Paris,” *The New York Times*, 17 February 1935, 7.

⁴⁹⁵ Weinberg, 204.

⁴⁹⁶ “Celebrations in All Towns in Germany,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 2 March 1935, 17; “Return of the Saar to Germany,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 March 1935, 9; “Reich Takes Over Saar Today,” *The Washington Post*, 1 March 1935, 6.

⁴⁹⁷ “Reich Takes Over,” 6.

⁴⁹⁸ Evans, 626.

France, and the remainder of Europe, however, could only look on; there was nothing they could do. The plebiscite favored the Germans. The transfer occurred. The Nazi regime had more support than what most other nations in Europe wanted or expected.

The New York Times reported on 2 and 4 March that Hitler had once again asserted that Germany was a peaceful nation. He believed that all the European nations wanted peace and that this common ground they shared would further diplomacy and friendly relations. According to the newspaper, these peaceful overtures could not have come at a more convenient time, with the impending visit to Berlin of British Foreign Minister John Simon. The Nazi government remained optimistic that the diplomatic meeting would further German ambitions of rearmament. As the date of the meeting neared, the French expressed anger that Germany still did not want to meet with any of their leaders. However, it was the Germans that arranged the meeting with the British in mid-February. France's anger over the issue was now the wedge that the British had been afraid of when this meeting was initially formalized.⁴⁹⁹

On 7 March, Hitler and Simon were to confer, but Hitler suddenly canceled the meeting. According to *The Washington Post*, Hitler refused to meet with Simon after learning the British government had publicly "defended...[its] armament increases and criticized German rearmament as endangering the continent's peace."⁵⁰⁰ This gave the Germans a reason to bring up the issue of armaments equality again—either the European nations disarm or allow Germany to rearm. An article in *The New York Times* described

⁴⁹⁹ "Hitler Moves for Peace with France," *The New York Times*, 2 March 1935, 1; "German Hopes High over Simon's Visit," *The New York Times*, 4 March 1935, 8; "French See a Snub to Simon by Reich," *The New York Times*, 6 March 1935, 8.

⁵⁰⁰ "Britain Wipes Hands of Reich Action on Pact," *The Washington Post*, 8 March 1935, 1.

that Germany was “fed up with the practice of being held up to the world as a perennial offender, and she was determined to put an end to that practice.”⁵⁰¹

Germany did “put an end to that practice.” On 11 March, Berlin alerted Britain and Italy that it once again had an air force. It was on this date that “Germany’s civilian ‘air sports’ association was placed under direct order of the Reichswehr... becoming part ...of the Reich’s defensive forces.”⁵⁰² *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Washington Post* revealed that Hermann Göring would serve as the commanding officer of the *Luftwaffe*. The new air force was estimated to have up to a hundred thousand trained men and would be divided into five regional command centers.⁵⁰³

The media reported that French citizens were concerned over the “grave” situation and panicked at the thought of “German revenge.”⁵⁰⁴ The French government assessed its options. France had planned to “notify Germany...that her proposed ‘official’ air force constituted a clear violation of the Versailles Treaty.”⁵⁰⁵ This notification would then allow France to prevent Germany “from giving her air force official status.”⁵⁰⁶ However, the French had a problem. Before Germany’s public admission of the establishment of the *Luftwaffe*, the French government had known that Germany had been secretly rearming and creating its air force. Yet the French government had not acted then to oppose it and would not get another chance to do so now.

⁵⁰¹ “Reich Sees Denial of Equality Again,” *The New York Times*, 10 March 1935, E4.

⁵⁰² “Germans Add Air Defenses, Defying Pact,” *The Washington Post*, 12 March 1935, 1.

⁵⁰³ “Germans Add Air Defenses,” 1; “Germany’s Air Force,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 March 1935, 9.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ “France Weighs Plan to Protest Reich Air Corp,” *The Washington Post*, 14 March 1935, 4.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

On 16 March 1935, the Anglo-American press reported that Germany had shocked Europe and the world with two formal announcements: that Germany would introduce general military conscription and that it was repudiating the armaments clauses of the Versailles Treaty. The new German army force would have about thirty-six divisions. Military experts throughout Europe estimated the strength of the German force to be anywhere from 300,000 to 500,000 men. Within ten years time, experts believed, Germany could have an army of over three million men.⁵⁰⁷

According to *The New York Times*, Hitler considered his actions justified. He claimed that Germany had disarmed previously, with the expectation that the other European states would do likewise. He alleged that Britain and France had not disarmed, but instead had increased their armaments. This left Germany vulnerable to attack. Hitler maintained that Germany had done all that had been asked of it and all that it could do to pursue peace, but that Britain and France had not done the same. The only option left was to rearm, as he said, “not...for warlike attack, but exclusively for defense and thereby for the maintenance of peace.”⁵⁰⁸

The surprise announcements from Germany resonated throughout Europe. But there was little or nothing Europe could do now. On 17 March, Britain, France, Italy, and the Soviet Union held an emergency meeting to discuss the German situation. The only solutions the European powers were able to produce were economic and security pacts, retaking the Rhineland from Germany, and “protesting” at Geneva. The viability of any

⁵⁰⁷ “German Conscription Alters Military Map,” *The New York Times*, 17 March 1935, E3; “Hitler Army Plan to Put Germany in Fourth Place,” *The New York Times*, 17 March 1935, 31; “Hitler Scraps Versailles Pact,” *The Washington Post*, 17 March 1935, 1.

⁵⁰⁸ “Hitler’s Most Pointed Words,” *The New York Times*, 17 March 1935, 31.

of these offerings was slim because “France believed [them] unthinkable...[and] Britain desired to avoid entanglement”⁵⁰⁹ out of fear of becoming involved militarily.

According to *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, the Soviet Union seemed to be the only country that understood the true gravity of the situation. It believed that Germany was eventually preparing to wage war, not maintain peaceful defense. The Russians, who had been ignored by the Western Powers in the past in negotiations on German rearmament, thought that the German war machine would expand toward Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.⁵¹⁰ The latter urged Britain and France to respond forcefully and resolutely to Germany if they were “interested in the preservation of peace.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ “Britain, France, Italy, Russia, and Little Entente Meet,” *The Washington Post*, 18 March 1935, 3.

⁵¹⁰ “Soviet Fears War is Plan of Berlin,” *The New York Times*, 17 March 1935, E4.

⁵¹¹ “Soviet Warns Powers to Act,” *The Washington Post*, 18 March 1935, 1.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

During the first months of 1935, Hitler had achieved his initial significant victories in foreign affairs. In January, the plebiscite in the Saar region had delivered Germany an overwhelming triumph and reunited the area with the *Reich*. Then in March Germany repudiated the arms clauses of the Versailles treaty and, in doing so, alarmed the outside world. On 16 March Hitler announced to the world that Germany would introduce general military conscription and raise an army over five times the size allowed by the treaty. A week earlier he had informed foreign governments that Germany once again had an air force.

When Germany's most important European rivals and authors of the treaty, Britain, France, and Italy, failed to respond to the *Reich's* violation of international law, except to denounce it verbally, the Berlin government decreed on 21 May 1935, a new military service law. The measure made "Aryan"—in Nazi jargon "Germanic" racial—descent a nearly absolute prerequisite for entry into German military service. Already on 2 February 1934, the military had discharged all Jewish officers and soldiers. Although the May 1935 law affected directly only those Jews who wished to enter military service, it also formally banned Jews from the military.

Thus, by the spring of 1935, largely unknown at the time to anyone, including the foreign world and press, Hitler and a few of his closest Nazi associates like Hermann Göring, had taken the first successful steps toward Hitler's ultimate goal as Germany's leader. Since his emergence in German politics in the 1920s, he had long envisioned that

one day he would lead the nation in a series of wars, culminating in a massive racial war in the East against the Slavs, primarily the Russians and their “Jewish-Bolshevik” leadership, to seize their land for more living space. In *Mein Kampf*, published in 1925, he had discussed a first war with an extremely anti-German France, a war that would offer “the rear cover for an enlargement of our people’s living space in Europe,” acquired by a second war against Russia.⁵¹²

In 1928, in an unpublished book that discussed mainly foreign policy, Hitler had revised his sequence of wars with the objective of gaining world domination. The first war would be against Czechoslovakia, Germany’s closest minor enemy, which had intimate ties to France; the second against France; the third against Russia; and a fourth against the United States. Once in power, by 1935, Hitler gave up his illusion that a war with Britain could be delayed until after the one with the Soviet Union.

In promising war, before he and the Nazis had seized power in Germany, Hitler always expressed himself in explicit terms. In May 1928, he told an audience: “I believe that I have enough energy to lead our people whither it must shed its blood, not for an adjustment of its boundaries, but to save it into the most distant future by securing so much land and space that the future will receive back many times the blood shed.”⁵¹³

Despite the clarity of Hitler’s memoir and speeches before 1933 on his demands for future war, few observers—whether inside or outside Germany—appeared to take the Nazi leader’s views seriously. Few Europeans bothered to read *Mein Kampf* or take its

⁵¹² Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 2:653.

⁵¹³ Quoted in Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler & World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 51.

author's political career seriously, and many others, especially Britons, remembered all too vividly the recent Great War and had met its terrible destruction of humanity with widespread pacifism. Moreover, as Hitler and the Nazis took over the German government in 1933, much of the world found itself mired in, and preoccupied with the Great Depression. Most foreign observers found little time to concern themselves with the rise to power in Germany of a leader who had never held an appointed or elected office outside his own political party.

Nevertheless, as this study has shown, during 1933 and 1934 the Anglo-American press reported extensively on Hitler's "secret" rearmament of his nation that culminated in the spring of 1935 with the public announcements of German rearmament. What were Americans and Britons told in the press coverage? How accurate was the press's information? How well informed were Britons and Americans about the danger to peace that the early Nazi regime posed to the world—at least by the newspaper and other print media? What can be said in answer to such questions?

To a significant degree, the major Anglo-American newspapers—*The Manchester Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Times* (London), and *The Washington Post*—and selected American and British magazines reported extensively, accurately, and thoroughly on the major issues and themes of Germany's "secret" rearmament from the time Hitler and the Nazis assumed power in January 1933 until he announced publicly in March 1935 that Germany had begun rearming. However, did the relatively large number of such Anglo-American press reports mean that most serious readers of the

press could hardly have missed the reports and missed learning about the Nazis' clandestine remilitarization of their country?

Most likely not. Overwhelmingly, as shown in the documentation of this study, often the press printed—or buried—the articles on the suspected German rearmament, and the resulting frequent concern about it among French and British leaders, deep inside the newspapers and magazines.⁵¹⁴ The placement of such articles illustrated that the press believed—perhaps because of the ongoing Geneva Disarmament Conference, which Germany attended—that German rearmament posed little direct danger to Britain, France, or the United States. Even Hitler's appointment in late January 1933 as chancellor of Germany found little coverage in the Anglo-American press. Reporting on the event, *The Times* (London) published a brief story on page 11, and *The Manchester Guardian* on page 8. When the Nazi aviation commissioner, Göring, spoke repeatedly in the following weeks about the creation of a German air force, *The Times* (London) noted his initial claims in an article on page 9. Later, during the spring, *The Washington Post* placed on page 13 an account of Göring's speech to the Geneva Disarmament Conference. In April 1933, stories appearing on pages 13 and 29 of *The New York Times* reported urgently—ironic, given the placement of the articles—that Germany had launched a pocket battleship, the *Admiral Scheer*, and was producing additional cruisers for later in the year.

The American press thought that one of Hitler's well-known predecessors as German chancellor, Franz von Papen, who served in the Nazi regime as vice chancellor,

⁵¹⁴ For the articles and press reports noted in the following paragraphs, there are no footnotes; such citations are found, and fairly easily located by date, in chapters 2-4 in the thesis.

deserved as much or more attention than did Hitler. In May 1933, *The Washington Post* reported on its front page a public speech of Papen's that demanded Germany be allowed to rearm or else other European nations must disarm. A few days later, Hitler claimed in a public address that Germany would respect the armaments and other major clauses of the Versailles treaty. In an analysis of what Hitler said, the American magazines, *Newsweek* on page 12, and *The Literary Digest* on pages 10 and 11, expressed distrust and skepticism toward the speech, maintaining that it was nothing more than a "smoke-screen" to be "soothing to foreign ears."

By October 1933, such observations in the press had gained greater relevance, as both the Disarmament Conference and world peace appeared in jeopardy. Hitler withdrew Germany from not only the conference, but also from the League of Nations. The German actions seemed not to surprise the British and American press. *The Washington Post* noted in an article placed on page 3 that Germany had isolated itself from the world community long before both the conference and League had existed. In a page 13 story, *The Times* (London) stated that "the break-up of the Disarmament Conference was predicted."

Also in late 1933, the Anglo-American press reported—but again, deeply inside most newspapers—on several German military demands made on primarily Britain, France, and Italy. On page 12 of *The Manchester Guardian*, page 11 of *The Times* (London), and page 4 of *The Washington Post*, articles discussed Germany's continued pursuit of armaments equality with the other powers, especially in aerial defenses. In January 1934, *The Manchester Guardian* told readers in a story on page 15 that Germany

and Poland had concluded a ten-year non-aggression pact. The newspaper interpreted the signing of the agreement as “reinforcing Herr Hitler’s repeated promises of the Nazis’ peaceful intentions towards Poland.” However, a reading of *Mein Kampf* or a careful observation of Hitler’s actions in contrast to his public proclamations indicated that he could not be trusted and did pose a threat to Poland. Both the *Guardian’s* interpretation of the pact, and the newspaper’s location of the story about it, gave the impression to most of the paper’s readers that Hitler was not a danger to Poland or the world.

The planning for, and resumption of, the Disarmament Conference in May and June 1934, and extensive coverage of the story by the British and American press, likely helped to obscure for the press the rapidly escalating power struggle inside Nazi Germany, between the SA, on the one hand, and Hitler and the regular German army, on the other hand. Only on 16 May did an article in *The New York Times*, buried inside the paper, note such a conflict; *The Times* (London) on page 14 reported that Nazi government officials were speaking increasingly against “reactionaries” and “radicals” in the Nazi Party—which, in fact, meant primarily the SA—and German military. Nor did the British and American press appear much interested in the massive executions of SA leaders during the night of 30 June 1934, carried out at Hitler’s direction by the SS with the German army’s assistance. *Newsweek* then published an extensive article on the purge, but almost two weeks after it had happened.

The death on 2 August 1934 of the German president, Paul von Hindenburg, and Hitler’s immediate uniting in himself the offices of both president and chancellor, offered a first instance in which the American press viewed events in Germany sufficiently

important to place accounts of them at or near the front of papers and magazines. Such examples included both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, that seemed alarmed at Hitler's takeover of greater power in Germany. In contrast, the British press, most notably *The Manchester Guardian*, covered such events on its back pages. Although Hitler had increased even more his political position and dictatorship in Germany, both the American and British press continued to bury deep inside its publications the articles on subsequent issues like the suspected growing German military strength (armaments and numbers of troops), the spread of Nazism to Austria (July 1934), and the return of the Saar region to Germany (January 1935).

It is difficult to estimate the Anglo-American press's influence in such matters on its readership. On the one hand, the large number of articles on the suspected German rearmament and issues or events related to it—the Disarmament Conference; the response of Britain and France to Hitler's demands for armaments equality for Germany and to the rumors of Nazi rearmament; and the Night of the Long Knives—provided extensive information to the public. On the other hand, a reader had to dig deeply into the back pages of the newspapers and magazines to find the stories, many of which had small headlines or were of short length.

Most likely, readers in both the United States and Britain believed, from what they saw in the major news media, that rearmament in Nazi Germany, and the latter's dictator, posed little danger to world peace. Nor did any reports in the press, even amid Hitler's public announcement of Germany's rearmament in the spring of 1935, predict the situation would change in the future. Most Americans and Britons, embroiled deeply

in the troubles caused in their countries by the Great Depression, received little signal from their major media outlets that German rearmament should command their greater attention. In a couple of instances, the American press gave greater prominence to rearmament than did its British counterpart. The latter's lesser attention, especially that of *The Times* (London), appeared to reflect the views of the London government and numerous Englishmen that the Versailles treaty had been too harsh on Germany and that the latter deserved some revision of the treaty's clauses, including those ordering substantial German disarmament.

Despite the general accuracy of the Anglo-American press reports, some of them, as noted, contained minor factual errors, omitted or exaggerated information, and showed some type of bias. On several occasions, newspapers and magazines erred in estimates of numbers of German troops under arms and the number of German battleships and military planes built and ready for use. Press reports of the rivalry between the SA and German army, especially the extensive account in *Newsweek* following the purge of the SA leadership on the night of 30 June 1934, lacked several important details or were inaccurate in others. An article in *The New York Times* on the aftermath of the murder of SA officials described erroneously the German population as full of "ever-growing anxiety" about the purge and "stunned and dismayed by the suddenness and brutality" of the killings. But recent historical scholarship has demonstrated that few Germans were stunned or surprised by the executions of SA leaders.

Did the press leave its readers with a sense of biased reporting? Overall, publications in both the United States and Britain reflected a marked pessimism among

the British and French toward Germany and its actions during 1933 and 1934 in rearmament and foreign policy. One could understand how Hitler's demands for armaments equality with Germany's European neighbors, the use by the Germans of Nazi and other paramilitary troops to increase the number of German men under arms, and reports of German naval and military aviation expansion could leave even the most optimistic person with concern for the future prospects of peace. Perhaps this explains why the Anglo-American press tended to approve, already at the beginning of the Nazi regime, of a kind of appeasement on the part of Britain and France toward Germany. When Germany made a demand, press articles and editorial pieces tended to side with the *Reich*. Perhaps the press viewed Germany as no threat to the world; or possibly press reporters believed that if Britain, France, and the United States gave in to German demands on rearmament and other revisions of the Versailles treaty, then international tensions would subside and even more serious conflict could be avoided.

As shown in the introduction, the Nazi government controlled to a significant extent the access the foreign press had in Germany to information. This held especially true for highly sensitive political issues like the SA-army rivalry—and SA purge—and any German rearmament made illegal by the Versailles treaty. Clearly, American and British press correspondents were severely limited in the information they could gather. They received carefully controlled daily news briefings from the Nazi propaganda ministry and from wire reports of the major news services (Associated Press, Reuters), and beyond that such reporters had to exercise great caution in gathering further

information from German informants or other personal acquaintances. Furthermore, the Nazis placed restrictions on the travel of foreign correspondents in Germany.

Readers were unaware of the censorship and restrictions placed on journalists by the Nazi regime. Journalists were likely unable to reveal that they were being censored and restricted just because of the nature of the censorship and restrictions. One could even attribute some of the inaccuracies and bias to the oppressive nature of the Nazi regime. That in itself was news because of what it revealed about Germany. While some inaccuracies and bias existed, the newspapers and periodicals provided a picture of what was occurring in the world at the time. These were the major sources of news and information if people wanted to be informed.

Given the nature of Anglo-American press reporting during 1933 and 1934, one can speculate that American and British readers did not believe Germany and its new leader to be a serious menace to peace, then or in the future. Nevertheless, as the future would reveal, Germany was a threat. The program of “secret” rearmament, begun by the Germans as early as the 1920s, and continued and even accelerated during Hitler’s first years in power in Germany, would represent the first stage in the Nazi dictator’s determination to one day lead his country into a major war, or series of wars, against Europe and beyond. These, he envisioned, would enable Germany to seize vast new living space for its alleged master race, eliminate its most dangerous racial and political rivals, the Jews and Slavs, and dominate the world. In 1939, barely four years after Hitler’s public announcement of Germany’s rearmament, and following Germany’s

takeover of Austria and Czechoslovakia, he would invade Poland and lead his country into another bloody world war.

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