The rise of Hitler as interpreted by selected American newspapers, 1930-1936

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THE RISE OF HITLER AS INTERPRETED BY SELECTED
AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS, 1930 - 1936

BY

EDWARD WALTON TRICE

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THE RISE OF HITLER AS INTERPRETED BY SELECTED
AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS, 1930 - 1936

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PREFACE

'No man can sit down to write about the history of his own times- or perhaps of any time- without bringing to the task the preconceptions which spring out of his own character.... This is the inescapable condition of the historians work, and the present study is no more exempt from these limitations than any other account of the events of the past.'

The following thesis offers an impression of American opinion toward specific events relating to the rise of Nazi Germany through an analysis of selected newspaper editorials and articles. While the direct influence of public opinion upon foreign policy can rarely be documented, there seems to be a general agreement that an "intimate" relationship does exist between the two. This interdependence ultimately generates a form of symbiosis, which permits an examination of one of these areas to lend insight into the other.

Fundamentally, the relationship between our political leaders, the press, and the general public has always been one of interaction. "Each is a significant force in its own right,

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but all are part of a cycle in which the leadership continuously seeks support (from) the press and public so that effective policy decisions can be made." In fact, government officials and newsmen are so mutually dependent upon one another that it is virtually impossible for either to function effectively for any length of time without the other's cooperation.

Though it is beyond the scope of this particular research, studies have been done which discuss the government's attempt to influence the press. This manipulation assumes a variety of forms, including the controlled release of information through White House briefings as well as deliberate 'leaks'. These actions are often intended to sway public opinion in a certain direction, usually in conformity with the policy which the government has already adopted. This further emphasizes the interdependence between public opinion and foreign policy, and the symbiotic bond mentioned earlier.


4 Ibid., p. 16.

Turning specifically to the role played by public opinion, it normally involves the public defining a broad strategy for the government to pursue, and the President in conjunction with his administrators seeking to devise the measures needed for these goals to be obtained. The State Department has openly admitted the influence which public opinion has on foreign policy decisions, if not in actually initiating the programs themselves, then at least in limiting the options available for consideration. 6

Editorial opinions are only one of the conduits whereby this flow of principles and ideas between the government and public can be exchanged. Yet it serves as one of the few sources of information for this topic, since modern public opinion polling did not come into extensive use in the United States until the late 1930's. Thus it is virtually impossible to analyze the typical American's attitudes prior to this period except through indirect means. 7 To support the selection of newspapers as one of the more significant tools for accomplishing this purpose, it should be pointed out that sociologists Robert S. and Helen M. Lynd found newspapers to be the single most important medium for

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6 Small, Public Opinion, p. 15.

information during the mid-1930's. Furthermore, even as late as the 1940's studies have shown that up to half of the entire American population relied almost exclusively upon the daily paper for their news on foreign affairs. Consequently, the papers selected for this study—which represent nearly four and a half percent of the total daily newspaper circulation in the United States—certainly had a significant influence upon their respective regions of the country. They served as the primary filter through which information relating to international affairs passed to their readers. It is reasonable to assume that their interpretations of events in Germany in the early 1930's both influenced and reflected the prevailing opinion existing in this country at the time.

While it is not the intention of this work to imply that editorial opinions and public opinion should be directly equated, it is admittedly difficult to measure and define precisely what 'public opinion' entails. The selection of editorials and articles in this study may provide some indication, in hopes of lending greater insight into this area which has yet to be fully explored.

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8 Ibid., p. 23.


INTRODUCTION

While the German nation was gradually being transformed from a troubled republic into an ideological dictatorship, the Western World was caught in the midst of a deep depression. In light of these domestic problems which were consuming most of their attention, it is the purpose of this investigation to attempt to assess the extent to which the American public was aware of the events occurring in Germany between the years 1930 to 1936. While there appears to have been an ample number of warnings of the trouble which lay ahead, somehow these signals were never totally appreciated in either the United States or Europe - all to the advantage of Hitler and the National Socialists.

The difficulty in assessing the public's general knowledge or opinion of what was happening in Germany at this time has presented a major challenge; yet if one considers the newspaper media as not only a device influencing public opinion, but reflecting it as well, a solution does become available. By selecting various influential papers throughout this country, a cross-section of American public opinion can be indirectly approximated.

The nation of Germany was stunned by the news of an armistice in 1918, particularly in view of the military's policy of concealing or minimizing reversals to the people. Now the stark reality was suddenly thrust upon them, and the typical citizen was
at a loss to understand what had happened. Feeling confused and even betrayed, the people of Germany embarked upon one of the most turbulent periods in their history. In attempting to come to grips with the challenges of returning to peace, the country likewise had to contend with the sanctions imposed by the Allies in the Treaty of Versailles. While many historians have judged these demands as unreasonable, the victors of 1919 lacked the advantages of hindsight and found it hard to forget the injuries which Germany had inflicted upon them must a few years earlier. It was, as Churchill said, an unparalleled event in history:

For four years Germany fought and defied the five continents of the world by land and sea and air. The German armies upheld her tottering confederates, intervened in every theatre of war with success, stood everywhere on conquered territory and inflicted on their enemies more than twice the bloodshed they suffered themselves. To break their strength and science and to curb their fury it was necessary to bring all the greatest nations of mankind into the field against them. Overwhelming populations, unlimited resources, measureless sacrifice, the sea blockade, could not prevail for fifty months. Small states were trampled down in the struggle; a mighty empire was battered into unrecognisable fragments; and nearly twenty million men perished or shed their blood before the sword was wrested from that terrible hand. Surely, Germans, for history it is enough!

While German moderates struggled against the armed hostility of both the communists and supernationalists to forge a democratic republic, the Allies devised a punative treaty which

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the hapless Republicans of Weimar had no choice but to accept. The treaty forced Germany to admit sole responsibility for the war and to pay reparations to the victors; it limited her army and denied her a navy; it decreed the occupation of the Rhineland for over 15 years; and it separated the Saar, whose mineral wealth was available for France to exploit.\(^2\) This harsh agreement, which was designed to preserve peace, contributed towards its own destruction. Many Germans felt they had been deceived both by the government which now represented them and by the Allies who had once offered them a 'just' settlement in the form of Wilson's Fourteen Points.

The mood in Germany was further inflamed by the drastic rise in unemployment and inflation. For a country already exhausted by war, what were the prospects for millions of demobilized men to be absorbed into the labor market? How could a nation deprived of its most valuable industrial areas possibly meet the exhorbitant reparations schedule and its normal expenses as well? It could not. Inflation went rampant throughout the country, and the mark collapsed. By 1923, the German currency was worth less than one ten-thousandth of its pre-war level, and still the treasury printed more money to meet its increasing needs. As the rich became richer, the poor became poorer. Social unrest spread throughout Germany.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 346.
It was amid this atmosphere of tension and strife that a man named Adolf Hitler was soon to start his rise to the pinnacle of power. One could hardly imagine a less likely candidate to become the leader of Germany than this poorly educated son of a humble civil servant; he was not even a citizen of Germany, but of Austria. His military record was undistinguished, and at the war's conclusion he departed without money, friends, or hope for a traditional career. His only major asset was his ability to appeal to the common man.

After initially joining the German Workers' Party in 1919, Hitler devoted his incredible energy towards becoming a political messiah. His masterful application of propaganda techniques gained him the public's attention and increased his party's following. In his speeches of 1923, Hitler promoted the belief that the Republic was totally corrupt and acting against the interests of the people. When the French occupied the Ruhr in that same year, Hitler launched a feeble putsch to overthrow the government. While the attempt was a complete disaster, it taught him a valuable lesson--he must use the system in order to destroy it!

Following a prison term, during which he wrote Mein Kampf, Hitler emerged to bring all the nationalist parties under his leadership. From 1925 to 1929, he spent most of his time in rightist circles trying to strengthen the party's foundation as Germany appeared to be recovering. The collapse of Wall Street in October of 1929, however, was especially hard felt in Germany. The growing economic crisis brought Communists and Nationalists
alike into the streets, each attacking the other and both attacking the impotent government under President von Hindenburg and Heinrich Bruening.

A series of events during the 1930's allowed Hitler to gain supreme power in Germany and then revitalize her military strength. These incidents provide the focal points for each of the upcoming chapters, and include: (1) the first major Nazi victory at the polls in 1930; (2) the Presidential campaign of 1932; (3) Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship in 1933; (4) the Reichstag fire and its aftermath; (5) the 'blood purge' of 1934; (6) Hindenburg's death and the rearmament of Germany; and finally, (7) the repudiation of the Locarno Treaty and the military takeover of the Rhineland. While naturally there were many other events during this period which could have been considered--such as the German withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933 or the passage of the anti-Jewish "Nuremberg Laws" in 1935--these selected developments were particularly crucial to Hitler's attainment of total power and were generally given more attention by the press.

As Hitler proceeded to establish himself in Germany, most Americans found themselves preoccupied with the Great Depression. Millions of people had lost everything they owned, and banks and businesses in general were having to close their doors. President Hoover assured the nation that prosperity was 'just around the corner', but his construction program for public
highways and buildings fell short of what was needed. The country was ready for a change and consequently elected Franklin Roosevelt as President in 1932. When he assumed office in early 1933, he vigorously promoted a series of measures designed to get the nation back on its feet. This was part of the 'New Deal' which was designed to create new jobs and shift the burden on to the backs of those best able to afford it. The economy began a slow recovery, and Roosevelt was re-elected by a wide majority in the year 1936.

Although absorbed by these domestic problems currently plaguing the nation, Americans were not totally unaware of the developments in Europe. Understandably, however, they failed to recognize the ominous patterns or appreciate the drastic consequences of Hitler's actions. How much did the public know and what was their interpretation? The answer is necessarily imprecise, but studies of the editorials included in this survey provide insights into the issue.

The first portion of each of the upcoming chapters is devoted to a basic description of the event itself, which normally would have been provided by the Associated Press in most of these papers. This information is drawn from the standard works on this period, and include: Karl Dietrich Bracher, The German Dictatorship (1970); Alan Bullock, Hitler-A Study in Tyranny (1964); Joachim C. Fest, Hitler (1973); William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (1960).
Each summary is then followed by an analysis of the editorial commentary offered by the papers themselves. These papers, which were selected both on the basis of their geographic locations (attached, p. 12) and their influence, include the following: the Atlanta Constitution (circulation 92,897 daily and 133,473 on Sundays); the Chicago Tribune (838,422 daily -- 1,235,442 Sunday); the Dallas Morning News (89,055 daily -- 102,305 Sunday); the Los Angeles Times (162,959 daily -- 246,453 Sunday); the Minneapolis Tribune (72,263 daily -- 170,704 Sunday); the New York Times (437,367 daily -- 752,689 Sunday); the Richmond Times-Dispatch (66,848 daily -- 70,005 Sunday); the Rocky Mountain News (45,337 daily -- 70,120 Sunday); and the Washington Post (76,006 daily -- 86,323 Sunday). 3

Offering a wide diversity of opinion on a variety of issues, these publications differed both in the quality as well as quantity of editorials which they gave to the events in Germany. There was never a common editorial voice in any of these key events, and for several of the papers (e.g. the Los Angeles Times and Minneapolis Tribune), there was little consistency in their interpretations from one event to another.

Narrative of Events

Arising from the chaotic depths experienced since its defeat in the First World War, the German nation by 1929 had taken significant strides towards recovery. This accomplishment had gradually diluted the elements of discontent upon which National Socialism was bred, though almost overnight this situation was radically altered as the worldwide depression reached Germany and the rest of Europe. Now the agitator who had long awaited such a disaster cited this new crisis as proof that the current regime was a failure. Adolf Hitler began to assume a position of prominence among the political figures of his day, and in the year 1930—for the first time since its inception—the Nazi Party demonstrated it was a formidable and viable political organization.

The economic crisis resulted in bankruptcy and collapse to many small businesses and industries, while causing a drastic rise in unemployment and the disruption of German society. Its effects were not limited to the working class, but encompassed the middle and lower classes, who felt equally threatened with the loss of their livelihoods and personal integrity. The
peasants and farmers tried desperately but unsuccessfully to escape the incessant demands being thrust upon them for rent and taxes. As the crisis deepened, the number of people alienated by the present administration grew in size and became increasingly receptive to the demagoguery of a man like Hitler who expressed their frustration so well.

Under these turbulent conditions, an influential group of critics and enemies of the Republic, predominantly from the Right, assumed positions of strategic importance from which they led the country away from democracy towards a system characterized by one-party rule. With the failure of the Grand Coalition to reach a political compromise in the spring of 1930, Presidential rule was swiftly evoked to allow a restructuring of the state toward an authoritarian model favored by the Right.¹ This provided the needed excuse for further agitation by various interest groups who advocated anti-democratic measures and the institution of a dictatorship.²

As the economic situation continued to worsen, the Chancellor of the Republic, Heinrich Bruning, dissolved the Reichstag for its refusal to support him in his rule. In the

¹ Karl Dietrich Bracher, The German Dictatorship. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 171. The Grand Coalition was an alliance of Social Democrats, Centre, and left-wing Liberal political factions which together formed the basis for a working majority in the Reichstag and held the Republic intact.

² Ibid., pp. 170-71. Special interests groups such as employer organizations and trade unions were included.
ensuing election campaign, the Nazis employed numerous imaginative ploys to draw additional strength and attention to their cause. The paramilitary arm of the party, the S.A., carried the campaign to the streets, plastering posters (or heads) on virtually every street corner and holding massive demonstrations throughout the country. Hitler, in turn, provided the people with the scapegoats on which to blame their ills—namely, the French, the Jews, the Allies, and most especially the Republic.3

To a people drained both financially and emotionally, Hitler lent a renewed sense of vigor and pride. As quoted by Alan Bullock, Hitler vehemently stated: "The Germans are the greatest people on earth. It is not your fault that you were defeated in the war and have suffered so much since. It is because you were betrayed in 1918 and exploited ever since by those envious of you... let Germany awake and renew her strength."4

Election day, September 14th, 1930, marked the turning point for Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. It signified the 'end of the reign of democratic parties' and announced the initial death throes of the Republic.5 With roughly 18 percent of the votes cast in their support, the Nazis surged from only 12 seats

3Bullock, Hitler, p. 82.

4Ibid.

in the Reichstag to a respectable 107. The Party now found itself second only to the Social Democrats, with a legitimate claim to the leadership of the Right. All other parties had suffered huge and unexpected losses, with the exception of the Communists, who received modest gains.

This surprising Nazi performance convinced not only millions of citizens, but business and military leaders as well, that perhaps Hitler was indeed the rising star of the future. While the party's ideology focused more on action than on a true philosophy, it had accomplished what no other party had seemed able to do: it had aroused the traditional feelings of the German people towards patriotism and nationalism, which were to many only a memory. It was, in a word, a success.

Many of the analysts abroad, both in England and the United States, recognized the underlying significance of the German election and attributed the results to "the (deepening) crisis of the party, or...(an) expression of a spreading lack of faith in the liberal and capitalist systems, coupled with a desire for a fundamental change in all conditions of life."6 What they were actually witnessing, however, was a testimony to the lesson Hitler had learned much earlier: that even the shakiest form of government remained secure against attacks from

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6 Ibid., p. 288.
the streets. He was determined, therefore, to play by the rules of the system, then try to destroy it.

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Editorial Analysis

The American press gave relatively little attention to the political contest in Germany until after the fact. This apparent lack of concern is not difficult to understand; the lack of extensive European coverage that had characterized American journalism during the 1920's was now exacerbated by the focus on critical conditions at home stemming from the Great Depression. Furthermore, the Reichstag election had become significant only in retrospect, as even the Germans themselves were surprised by the outcome.

Predominantly the headlines of the papers in this survey revolved around several major domestic issues during the period leading up to and immediately following the September 14th German election. Prohibition was by far the most controversial topic at this moment, since the upcoming state elections throughout this country brought the matter into bitter debate during these campaigns. Another major topic at this time was the nomination of Frank B. Kellogg as the American representative to the World Court. This drew widespread attention due to the political clout of the pacifist movement during the 1920's-30's, and the public support for military disarmament. Finally, several other events-
including Captain Coste's airplane flight from Paris to New York and Governor Roosevelt's reported interest in the Presidential nomination—rounded out the basic coverage given to domestic matters by the American press. However, this is not to imply the German election went entirely unnoticed, as the following analysis will indicate.

The New York Times provided the most thorough and accurate analysis of the Reichstag Election held in 1930. A full week before the election, its editorials predicted tremendous gains by extremist factions in the Reichstag, though the moderates were expected to retain control. "In the Reichstag election of Sunday week it seems likely that the diehard parties at either end, the Communists and Fascists, may make some gains. But a decisive majority of the German people continues to stand for (law and) order...(Thus) it is not unreasonable to expect a working majority ...made up of a coalition of middle parties." Furthermore, the foreign correspondent for the Times, Guido Enderis, reported in an article appearing September 12th that although general speculation tended to concede 'liberal gains' to the Fascists, German

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7 This information was derived through a sampling of the headlines of the papers included in this study.

officials were more optimistic and believed the moderates could retain control. After the election results were determined, the Times offered four editorials and six articles concerning the outcome, in addition to stories attributed to the Associated Press. One of the editorials offered on September 16th noted that while the election produced the predicted extremist gains, it fell 'noticeably short' of a complete disaster for the moderates. The increase in Nazi delegates was attributed to a realignment of the ultra-conservative elements within the country itself. Following this pronouncement, one of the most prophetic comments about the whole matter was offered in the editorial of September 21st, which stated: "If some years back, when (Hitler) was arrested for directing the ill-fated Lundendorff Putsch, the German authorities had expelled him to his native land, instead of imprisoning him and making him a martyr, they would have avoided a mistake which they have not been the first to make."

On the eve of the election itself, the Chicago Tribune carried a front-page article which accurately forecast the Fascist

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gains and the failure of the current regime to obtain a working majority. As its foreign correspondent, Sigrid Schultz, reported: "Political prophets held no hope of a majority for Chancellor Heinrich Bruening's...republic. The...campaign leads observers to predict a big increase in Fascist seats....While specific issues grip the voters, the fundamental issue at stake is a battle between the Communists and Adolf Hitler's Fascists...(and) between them stands the moderate bourgeoisie."12 Later editorials went on to stress the importance of the election, while advising the general public to take heart in what it termed a 'temporary phenomenon.' "Interpretation of...the German election is at this distance extra hazardous. What it means to Germany, to Europe and to the world must wait upon events....But for Germany we continue to have faith in republicanism. The Germans are the most stable and orderly people of the continent....If any people in the world are fit for self-government and popular institutions, they are."13

The Rocky Mountain News, while exceedingly limited in its coverage of this matter, showed considerable insight when it attributed the loss of support for the government to its inability

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12 Sigrid Schultz, "Germans Vote Today: 1 Slain, 8 Dying in Riot," Chicago Tribune. 14 September 1930, p. 1. See Appendix A.

to halt the spread of hunger and unemployment. In addition, it
pointed to the growing doubts concerning Hitler's sanity, and
described the leader of the Fascists as one who is "irresponsible
(and) unscrupulous... (and) hates to the point of madness anyone
resembling a Socialist... (or) Liberal." 14

Several of the remaining papers in this study drew various
conclusions about the results of the election, but most failed
either to anticipate or appreciate its significance. The Washing­
ton Post, for instance, did not appear overly worried about the
recent results. In response to observers who were suggesting the
disintegration of the German Republic, it replied in its editorial
of September 15th: "The nature of the radicals' gains suggests
they are temporary... and the moderate parties can keep Germany
headed in the right direction if they lay (their) petty rivalries
aside." 15 Yet as the accompanying editorial cartoon illustrates,
there was some doubt as to the direction in which the Republic was
going—particularly in view of the current internal rivalry among
the various political factions and the 'grip' the Fascists now
had over the country. 16

14 "Rumblings of War From Germany," Rocky Mountain News,
17 September 1930, p. 6.

15 "The German Elections," Washington Post, 15 September
1930, p. 5.

16 James North, "Too Many Political Links," Washington Post,
17 September 1930, p. 6. See Appendix A.
The Atlanta Constitution concurred in this analysis, and credited much of Hitler's success to his 'silver-tongued oratory' and 'unlimited willingness to make reckless promises.' While citing the ominous overtones of the election results, the Constitution nevertheless endorsed the ability of the moderates to regain control of the government in the period ahead. Their foreign correspondent, Frederick Kuh, quoted one government source as saying: "Despite the election results I do not for a moment perceive a menace to the republican constitution, the public safety or the foreign policy. It is absolutely out of the question that the radical parties that emerged victors at the polls should be given a chance to try out their recipes for government."  

The Los Angeles Times regarded this event as merely a consequence of too many parties vying for power simultaneously. It believed this condition was brought about by the government's attempt to continue to meet the reparations schedule, predominantly through fiscal cuts and a drastic increase in taxes. The Times noted that this policy was extremely unpopular among the people, and a mood for 'change' was created throughout Germany. Numerous political factions arose in response, each of them hoping to achieve a significant backing. "The radical parties are only agreed upon

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18 Frederick Kuh, "German Leaders Will Bar Fascists From Cabinet," Atlanta Constitution, 16 September 1930, pp. 1 & 4. See Appendix A.
one point, opposition to the government, and it seems impossible that they will be able to form a coalition ministry with no better rallying point than this.19

The Richmond Times-Dispatch offered a similar interpretation, though on a far more simple level. In its editorial of September 17th, the Times-Dispatch attributed the latest Fascist gain to what it termed merely a 'matter of taxation.' Feeling that one guess was probably as good as another in terms of explaining the recent election results in Germany, the following supposition was offered: "The problem is not a very complex one of statecraft or international diplomacy. It is very simple. The German of twenty-two, say, who was a lad of six when the war started and only ten when it ended, cannot marry the girl of his choice because so much of his earnings...go to...indemnity. Any alternative would be preferable to this condition of slavery."20

Of the two remaining papers, the Dallas Morning News seemed more preoccupied with the potential changes in government structure (i.e. realignment of the Cabinet and the possibility that Chancellor Bruening would govern without Parliament) that might occur, instead of the change in attitude that had already been demonstrated by the German people. "The next few days will be deeply important in Germany. Can a new Cabinet be formed, able to control a real


majority in the Reichstag, or will the turmoil of clashing parties drive Germany also into the list of modern dictatorships?"21

Finally the Minneapolis Tribune devoted only a minimal amount of attention to the election; with the exception of one or two articles by the Associated Press, it ignored the developments abroad and strictly concentrated on domestic and local issues. Within the next several years the Tribune would expand its coverage of the events in Germany, but for now it made little or no effort to enlighten its readers on this matter.

Hitler's increasing strength in the Reichstag election was thus greeted with mixed reaction by the American press. Although the journalists concurred in their findings that the Nazi gains were unfortunate, they formed no consensus about the implications to be drawn from this election. Furthermore, only four of the papers within this survey offered extensive coverage of this event (See Appendix B), and the Chicago Tribune and New York Times were the only ones which correctly anticipated the extremist victory.

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Chapter Two

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN
March - April 1932

Narrative of Events

After dramatically bursting upon the national scene in 1930, Hitler and the National Socialist Party sought to consolidate their power and make further efforts to entrench themselves within the political system. While there were many challenging problems still ahead, none was to prove any more pivotal than the Presidential election of 1932. As the level of unemployment spiraled to an incredible 6 million workers (25 percent), the general misery of the people provided Hitler with the opportunity to seek to remove the legendary Hindenburg. The Fuhrer did not make this decision easily; should he lose, the Party's image of invincibility could be permanently shattered. But once committed, Hitler threw himself wholeheartedly into the race for the Presidency as simply a 'risk that must be taken.'

There were four principal candidates vying for power in this election. Field Marshall von Hindenburg, Protestant, Prussian, and conservative, garnered most of his support from the Socialists, trade unions, and various elements of Bruning's Centre

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Party and the liberal democratic factions. Adolf Hitler, Austrian and Catholic by birth, enjoyed the backing of the Junker agrarians and a number of monarchists, in addition to the support of his own followers and the lower-to-middle classes. Theodor Duesterberg represented the Nationalist Party and had little support outside it; Ernst Thaelmann, the Communist candidate, competed with Hitler for the votes of the lower classes and the unemployed.²

Almost instantly the Nazis embarked upon a propaganda campaign that was unlike anything ever witnessed before in Germany. Financially secure with the newly acquired backing of numerous industrialists and extremely well organized, the Hitler campaign was a veritable blitzkreig that rolled over Germany. Hitler and some of his most emphatic speakers set out across the country to whip up the fever of a downtrodden people. Soon whole cities and towns seemed to be plastered with the bright red coloring of the Nazi emblems and symbols. Thousands of phonograph records could be heard spouting their slogans, and theatre owners were pressured into showing Nazi movies before the regular features. Nearly eight million pamphlets were distributed, and an additional twelve million copies of the Party newspaper were also circulated. Over three thousand meetings were staged each day, and swarms of

² Ibid.
S.S. units could be seen streaming through the streets behind vehicles equipped with loudspeakers to pronounce the National Socialist philosophy. It was what the propaganda minister, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, called a "war of posters and banners." 3

Hitler employed all of his demagogic gifts in one supreme effort to reach the pinnacle of power within Germany; only the aged Hindenburg and his Chancellor, Heinrich Bruning, remained in his way. Hitler underestimated the resolve of the Chancellor, however, who launched an effective campaign of his own to win re-election for the President. He proved astute and ruthless enough to reserve all radio time on the government-controlled networks to combat the Nazi barrage of verbal assaults. Hindenburg himself made only one speech, but obviously it had a far greater impact on a captive audience.

When the results were finally tabulated from the March 13th election, the Nazis were dealt a severe setback. Hindenburg had achieved an impressive plurality, with his 49.6 percent of the vote compared to Hitler's 30.1 percent. The Conservative Duesterberg received a meager 6.8 percent, and the Communist Thaelmann garnered only 13.2 percent of the total. Because Hindenburg had fallen short of the required majority, however, another election had to be held to determine a conclusive winner.

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3 Fest, Hitler, p. 318.
While most in the Nazi party were dejected by the outcome, Hitler immediately threw himself back into the thick of things, proclaiming: "The first election campaign is over. The second has begun today. I shall lead it." Since a mandatory truce on all the electioneering had been declared until April 3rd, Hitler chartered a plane to make maximum use of the time that was left. At numerous rallies in cities throughout the country, the slogan "Hitler over Germany" became the cry, reinforcing the implied link between the Nazi leader and the Omnipotent.

But the results on April 10th confirmed the simple reality that Hitler did not have the support among the general populace that his fanatical followers themselves supplied. Hindenberg captured a decisive 53 percent of the vote, while Hitler could only manage a respectable 36.8 percent. The majority he so desperately wanted still eluded him, though in the course of just two short years he had more than doubled the strength of the Nazi party. Now both the Republic and the Party found themselves at a pivotal point in their development and only time would tell which would succeed in the years ahead.

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4 Shirer, Rise & Fall of the Third Reich, p. 158.

5 Bullock, Hitler, p. 105.
Editorial Analysis

The German election of 1932 commanded attention in the media throughout the world as a classic struggle between the forces of left and right developed. Yet again the domestic events occurring in this country dominated the newspaper headlines. One of these incidents in particular, the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby, dwarfed all other news items during this interval. As the drama continued to unfold, the papers inundated their readership with assorted angles and details of this tragedy. Prohibition also resurfaced on the front-page, as the House of Representatives passed a bill legalizing beer, while rejecting a similar proposal to allow the individual states to regulate the sales of liquor.6

In regards to the coverage rendered by the American press on the recent German election, their interpretation of the final results showed remarkable variety. One particular segment viewed the continued rise in popular support for Hitler as a sign of his growing strength, while another regarded the Hindenburg victory as a symbol in itself of the return to conservatism. A third category of opinion appeared to be indifferent to the entire matter, drawing little significance from the election in either direction.

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6 This information was derived through a sampling of the headlines of the papers included in this study.
Only two of the papers within this study correctly judged that the returns from this election could hardly be interpreted to mean an end to Hitler's career, despite his obvious failure in the bid for the Presidency. One of the two, the Rocky Mountain News, was quick to point out that Hitler actually received twice as many votes in this election as he had two years earlier. "Considering the near mythical awe in which the aged von Hindenburg is held by the German people... the 49.6 percent of the voters supporting the government is a very small margin of safety for the republic." Furthermore, a continuation of this trend would eventually allow the Nazis to assume power peacefully. Thus Germany had escaped revolution only by precariously balancing itself between the Fascist and Communist parties. A subsequent editorial went on to speculate: "Unless America, Britain, and France permit a reparations-war debts settlement and a tariff-trade readjustment allowing the German Republic to live, the German people doubtless will turn to Hitler and his militarist for self-preservation."

Along a similar vein, the Dallas Morning News captured the real dilemma facing the German voter in this election in

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8 "German Fascists," Rocky Mountain News, 13 April 1932, p. 4.
deciding the direction which the country should take through its editorial cartoon of March 13th (attached, p. 38). The results clearly revealed the National Socialists had scored an 'amazing' victory at the polls and could expect growing support in the future. Hitler's loss to Hindenburg meant the "Republic has merely postponed coming to grips with the Nazis." While this analysis of the situation in Germany may appear almost superficial, it contrasts sharply with the more common editorial opinion which tolled the death knoll for Nazism. Certainly not everyone was convinced that the 'threat' was over and that Europe could once again feel at rest— as the question mark in the editorial cartoon of April 12th would indicate (attached, p. 39).

Many of the papers, however, shared the belief that the German Republic was safe again in the hands of the moderates. The Atlanta Constitution, for instance, regarded the Hindenburg victory as a decisive indication that "the German scales are (finally) balancing to a safe and sane basis...emphasizing the

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fact that not only Germany but all of Europe is getting back to a conservative basis. A later editorial went on to note that the German people have 'refused to be swept off their feet' by Hitler and National Socialism, thus accounting for their verdict at the polls.

The Chicago Tribune concurred in these observations, and further surmised: "Hitlerism will continue to be a disturbing factor, no doubt, but at least to outside observation, it does not seem to be a force likely to grow (in the future)." Moreover, with an increasing sense of cooperation among the European community-particularly on the issue of reparations- the prospects of both stability and recovery in Germany appear bright. This conjecture by the Tribune would, in effect, mean that one of Hitler's chief weapons- the general discontent of the people- would be removed.

The Washington Post was even more confident that Hitler had at last made a fatal error. In its editorial of March 1st it


In allowing himself to be drawn into the presidential race, Adolf Hitler made the greatest mistake of his career. He will be hopelessly defeated, and the prestige of his party in the Reichstag will doubtless undergo a considerable shrinkage. Germany may owe her salvation to the fate which drove the leader of the Nazis into (this) campaign. A subsequent editorial went on to stress that National Socialism was never a constructive ideology in the truest sense of the word; rather Hitlerism was an 'emotional expression of resentment' derived from the injustices imposed at Versailles. Thus Hitler's recent defeat at the polls confirmed that reason and common sense still prevailed in Germany.

The *New York Times* concurred with this position, and pointed out that the "main argument for (the) fair treatment of Germany... is that the German people must not be driven into the arms of Hitler." Realizing the Allies were at least partially to blame for the current malady in Germany, the *Times* correspondent, Edwin James, noted the Republic was at a 'crossroads.' Yet with

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the eventual defeat of Hitler in the election, the Times editorial of April 11th concluded: "(The Republic) under the auspices of President Hindenburg...and with the determination of the German people behind the Bruening Government, there can be little doubt that German internal questions will be dealt with successfully."19

The Richmond Times-Dispatch was equally optimistic about the situation and cavalierly dismissed the entire Nazi threat as more vocal than actual in nature. "To the rest of the world, the election should be a warning not to heed too much the propaganda of radicalism....In America we are too frequently led to misjudge the strength of popular trends by the noise of agitators who do not represent the sound sense of the body politic."20

The Minneapolis Tribune, on the other hand, vacillated in its prediction of the course which Germany and National Socialism would take. In one editorial just prior to the election it had suggested National Socialism was inevitable; even if Hitler were defeated in his quest for the presidency, the dream would continue. "The German electorate may reject Adolf Hitler in the first balloting of their presidential election today, but they cannot, by virtue of their ballots, defeat Hitlerism....For it is


founded on what is the dream and the hope of a large part of
the German people." 21  Ironically, however, a few days later
after the election, the Tribune boldly proclaimed that the
voters had emphatically rejected both Hitler and Fascism.
"Looked to all over the world as a serious test of the German
republic, this election was a more convincing rejection of
Fascism, as it was represented by Adolf Hitler, than had been
looked for by any one." 22  This drastic shift in position by the
Tribune, within only a two day period, seems difficult to under­
stand even in retrospect.

The final paper in this survey, the Los Angeles Times,
deserves a category all its own since it presented an opinion
quite different from the others. The Times, which gave meager
coverage to the election itself, judged the issue of Nazi violence
during the campaign as hardly more serious than the episodes which
occurred in a typical American city like Chicago. In fact, the
Times went on to say that "it may be that (the) Nazi violence is
being exaggerated." 23

21  "Germany Weighs Hitler," Minneapolis Tribune, 13 March
1932, sec. 2, p. 3.

22  "The Hindenburg," Minneapolis Tribune, 15 March 1932,
p. 8.

23  "Germany Campaigns," Los Angeles Times, 5 April 1932,
sec. 2, p. 4.
To summarize the coverage rendered by the American press on these latest developments, the growing disparity of opinion needs to be reiterated. Furthermore, despite the fact that the papers in this study greatly increased the amount of coverage they offered to their readers (see Appendix B), only the Dallas Morning News and Rocky Mountain News accurately interpreted the results.
Chapter Three

THE CHANCELLORSHIP
January - February 1933

Narrative of Events

The Nazi campaign in 1932 strongly emphasized that destiny had preordained their eventual assumption of power. This proposition was seriously undermined by the defeats they suffered in both the presidential and parliamentary elections of that year. The Party and its leader ultimately owed much of their success to the lack of nerve and action by their opponents. In the November election to the Reichstag, the people of Germany displayed their disillusionment with the Nazi myth when they cast 2 million fewer votes for the Party than they had in the earlier April contest. The Nazis lost 34 seats in the Reichstag, their first setback in over two years. The 'march to victory' appeared to be losing its momentum, but Hitler still refused to consider any overtures from the government. Thus the Chancellor was left with only two viable alternatives, to dissolve the Reichstag or revise the constitution.

As von Papen laid plans to use both presidential and military powers to ban opposing political parties like the Nazis and Communists, his untrustworthy ally, General Kurt von Schleicher, began negotiations of his own with the National
Socialists to form a government under his personal control.¹

On November 17th, von Papen, acting on the General's advice, resigned from the Chancellorship in order to expedite talks between Hindenburg and the Nazi leaders directly. When, as he anticipated, these discussions ended in failure, von Papen expected to be recalled to office in order to implement his bold program of constitutional reform and virtual dictatorial rule. He was distressed to find that the wiley von Schleicher had persuaded the aged Hindenburg that the only chance to avoid a civil war was to name him Chancellor, which he did on December 2nd.

While von Papen and Schleicher were embroiled in their continuous plots, the Nazi Party itself seemed headed towards an all time low. The disappointments at the polls had bred discontent among the rank and file members, and the exorbitant campaigns had depleted their treasury.² This situation was further exacerbated when the dynamic Gregor Strasser resigned from the Party in a dispute over the direction in which it was headed. Suddenly the entire upper echelon was thrown into turmoil and Hitler once again acted to grasp victory out of defeat. Swiftly he began to tighten his control over the entire

¹ Fest, Hitler, pp. 349-50.
² Ibid., p. 352.
organization and to embark upon a national campaign to restore his followers' faith in the Nazi ideology.

Meanwhile the von Schleicher government was experiencing serious difficulties, failing to achieve the support it had anticipated from assorted political factions. The concessions made to labor were insufficient to earn the backing of the Social Democrats, and the Catholic Centre was too concerned about retaining its own power to worry about the problems of others. The powerful landlords of the east were alienated by the government's continuing investigation into fraudulent use of land subsidies, and the Communists were screaming they would rather see the Nazis in control than lift a single finger in defense of the Republic.3

But ultimately it was a single man, the ex-Chancellor von Papen, who played the decisive role in bringing down von Schleicher's government. Having set his mind on revenge, Papen approached Hitler with a proposed coalition between the German Right and the National Socialists, jointly headed by the two men. Hitler unflinchingly demanded the Chancellorship and von Papen agreed, but only after Hitler promised to strengthen the office of the Vice-Chancellor which would fall to von Papen. These additional powers led Papen to believe he would still retain the control of the government and that Hitler could be easily contained. Using persuasive arguments with the aged Field Marshall, threats to his son, and intimidation towards everyone else, the two

3 Bullock, Hitler, p. 138.
politicians finally gained for Hitler his foremost aim, the legal assumption of power. Now Hitler could proceed to make radical changes upon the state, entirely with its approval, even if it resulted in its eventual destruction—and that was precisely his intent!

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Editorial Analysis

While the significance of Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship in 1933 drew widespread attention, American newspapers were generally preoccupied with the various reform measures being considered by President-elect Franklin Roosevelt. Most of these proposals were concerned with getting the economy back on its feet, including the devaluation of gold and a new war debts settlement. A bankruptcy reform bill also passed Congress, and a huge development project to put 200,000 people back to work was suggested for the Tennessee Valley.

In regards to the coverage given to Hitler's newly acquired position, there seemed to be a prevailing skepticism among the editorial opinions as to whether or not the conservatives in

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4 Shirer, Rise & Fall of the Third Reich, p. 187.

5 This information was derived through a sampling of the headlines of the papers included in this study.
Germany could retain control and keep the National Socialists in check. The achievement of what Hitler had termed the 'legal' revolution was largely ignored, and most of the papers in this survey seemed unable to explain either the success or the direction of Hitler and Germany. The number of editorials written on this event was surprisingly small, though the readers were inundated with articles from the Associated Press, which reported a detailed narrative of the events.

Several of the papers included in this study took a pessimistic approach to this latest development in Germany. The Chicago Tribune regarded Hitler's ascendancy with grave reservations, feeling it presented a danger still to be reckoned with. "The demonstrations grew to riotous proportions in many cities when inhabitants...showed their resentment to Hitler's regime.... It was evident that Hitler's ascendancy (has) sharply divided the nation."\(^6\) The Dallas Morning News was even more bleak in its outlook, stating that Germany was definitely 'swinging' towards a dictatorship.\(^7\) Furthermore, unless a working majority could be obtained in the Reichstag, its repeated dissolution seemed inevit-


able and a continuation of "the virtual dictatorship of the Hitler ministry" unavoidable.\(^8\)

The Minneapolis Tribune expressed the belief that it would be impossible to predict the outcome of this latest political jostling, though it did consider this event an important test for Hitler. In its editorial of January 31st, the Tribune stated that Hitler's recent appointment to the Chancellorship may indeed hold the 'key' to his future career in politics. "Although the rise of the Nazi movement has been rapid, the personal influence of Hitler is said to be on the wane....Whether the present episode means the beginning of the end for Adolf Hitler personally, or whether it will enable him to climb (even) higher, remains to be seen."\(^9\)

The New York Times and Washington Post were more guarded in their assessment of the recent developments in Germany. In an article by the Times correspondent Guido Enderis appearing on January 29th, the possibility of a government under the leadership of Hitler was mentioned as only one of several options still available to Hindenburg at this time.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) "German Election," Dallas Morning News, 3 February 1933, sec. 2, p. 2.


appointment, however, the Times editorial conceded that Germany had now embarked upon a 'perilous adventure.' "(Yet) anxiety will not be relaxed nor vigilance abated so long as it is uncertain whether the new Chancellor...is going to urge and seek the...people of Germany to take a leap into the dark." The Washington Post was equally realistic when it concluded that there was slim hope for either political or economic stability in Germany until Hitler was given a trial. "There is every reason to hope that this government will be given a chance to rule, for, whether there is agreement with his policies or not, there is little (possibility) for a restoration of political peace and orderly economic recovery until (this regime) has been given a trial." Yet the foreboding question which the Post ultimately left for its readers to decide was "what aspirations...have been kindled and powers (set) loose by the Hitler ascendancy?" Only time would tell.

A few of the papers included in this survey were actually optimistic about the situation now unfolding. The Atlanta Constitution informed its readers that there was little to fear from Hitler. "It is (far) more likely that, having achieved power, he will adopt a middle course in the effort to enlist strength from

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both radicals and conservatives (alike)."¹⁴ Moreover, the Constitution went on to add in its editorial a few days later that it did not consider many of Germany's demands (i.e. particularly on the issue of increasing her military strength and capability) to be unreasonable.¹⁵

The Richmond Times-Dispatch concurred in this belief that Hitler's 'wings have been clipped', and he could easily be brought to his knees if his policies proved unsatisfactory. A battered Germany might be willing to give Hitler a try (see the editorial cartoon of February 4th attached - p. 50), but: "German labor is ready to declare a general strike...the Communists are in open rebellion...a majority of the Cabinet (which Hitler) has been forced to accept (is) ready to curb him to preserve the national finances...(and) Hindenburg, who named Hitler Chancellor, can as quickly unmake him."¹⁶ With all these restraints taken into consideration, there seems to be ample reason for the Times-Dispatch's positive position. The paper likewise noted, as ingeniously depicted in an editorial cartoon carried February 1st,

¹⁵ "Germany on Arms," Atlanta Constitution, 2 February 1933, p. 6.
¹⁶ "Hitler Takes the Reins," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 1 February 1933, p. 6.
that Hitler was in reality little more than a poor imitation of two truly powerful men in Europe, Stalin and Mussolini.17 Hitlerism was simply much bigger than Hitler; and for Germany to be brought "under his heel, it would require more iron than (we) believe is in his system."18

The remaining two papers, the Los Angeles Times and the Rocky Mountain News, devoted the least editorial space to this latest news from Germany. Each of these major publications limited their analysis and interpretation of Hitler's appointment to a single editorial. The Times seemed convinced that the Junkers had allowed Hitler this opportunity to run the government in order to provide him with a chance to cut his own throat. "The Junker politicians believe the only way to squelch this upstart is to let him kill himself trying to run the government. They will then argue that events of several years have demonstrated the impossibility of parliamentary government in Germany, and end the whole affair with a coup d'etat."19 The Rocky Mountain News expressed

17 Fred Seibel, "Hitler: Two In One," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 1 February 1933, p. 6. See Appendix A.

18 "Hitler: Two In One," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3 February 1933, p. 8.

a similar view that Hitler was more of an imagined, than real, threat to peace—yet it also noted that the Allies were partially to blame for this malady by their injustice at Versaille to Germany. "Hitler is not the cause of anything; he is merely a symptom—a dangerous symptom."

As the drama continued to unfold, the American press was starting to hedge more and more in its predictions of the direction in which the Fuhrer was leading Germany and the rest of Europe. This, in turn, created a natural disparity in editorial opinion, which provides one of the major focal points of this study.

Fred Seibel, "Hitler: Two In One," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 1 February 1933, p. 6.
Hitler's strategy of seeking a legal revolution eventually paid off handsomely when he assumed the office of Chancellor on January 30, 1933, and at last found himself in the position to put his plans into action. His first major objective was to neutralize any potential opponent who might seriously challenge his control of the government or the direction in which he was leading the state. Since the combined backing of the Nazis and Nationalists failed to afford him the majority he needed in the Reichstag, he knew this situation would have to be remedied. The Communist Party, which held 100 seats in the parliamentary body, became Hitler's target; if somehow they could be eliminated, he would finally have the majority which had so long eluded him.

New elections were set for March 5th, and for once the Nazis had all the resources of the state behind them in order to recruit voters. They intended to win a mandate from the people. Unofficially most of the Nazi leaders hoped the Communists would cause a flare up which would enable them to move against them. As Goebbels candidly remarked: "We (will) lay down the line for
the fight against the Red Terror. For the moment we shall abstain from direct counter-measures. The Bolshevik attempt at revolution must first burst into flame. (Then) at the proper moment we will strike.¹

Despite ample provocations, the Communists refused to act, and so the Nazis took the offensive, beginning with a raid upon the Communist headquarters in Berlin. The tremendous amount of propaganda material they discovered gave rise to charges that an insurrection was being planned; this in turn caused more rumors to spread throughout the country. The mood was exactly right for the next provocation, none other than the firing of the Reichstag.

It was the night of February 27th when a bright glow appeared over the city, directly above the Reichstag; even before the flames were extinguished, the Nazi leaders had already accused the Communists of arson. Though the exact circumstances surrounding this event have never been completely unraveled, a pathetic half-witted Dutchman by the name of van der Lubbe was promptly arrested and charged with the offense. Exploiting his ties to the Communist Party, the Nazis quickly attacked their rivals of the extreme Left; several of the leading communist officials were arrested and held indefinitely in 'protective' custody, while a ban on all their publications was strictly enforced.

¹ Shirer, Rise & Fall of the Third Reich, p. 190.
On the following day, February 28th, Hitler prevailed upon von Hindenburg to sign a special emergency decree that would allow him to proceed against those presenting a direct threat to the state. This single act suspended many individual liberties guaranteed under the Constitution, curtailing freedom of expression and assembly, permitting censorship of mail and other communications, suspending the need for warrants to conduct searches of private homes, and allowing the confiscation and restriction of private property. Furthermore, this decree allowed the Reich government to assume full authority in any federal state when necessary and to institute the death penalty as a deterrent to serious crimes. Hitler now had the legal power to destroy any opposition that might confront him, without fear of retribution. This decree provided the legal foundation upon which the Nazi regime was based, and simultaneously resulted in the end of the Republic.

The last democratic elections were held on March 5th, and the majority of German people still withheld their support of Hitler and the Nazi ideals. The final breakdown of the voting revealed the National Socialists had won 43.9 percent, and in conjunction with the Nationalists, now held a scant 51.9 percent majority. This was hardly the resounding victory that had been anticipated,  

Bullock, Hitler, p. 145.
particularly in light of all the pressures and schemes Hitler and his associates had employed. Yet this last barrier was overcome with the passage of the Enabling Act on March 24th, by which the Reichstag delegated its legislative power to Hitler. The fate of Germany was now grasped firmly in the hands of their new Chancellor for the dozen years that the 'thousand-year Reich' would stand.

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Editorial Analysis

As the last remnants of democracy were being stripped away from the German nation, journalists seemed bewildered to explain the spectacle. The press remained absorbed by the domestic issues of this country, particularly President Roosevelt's inauguration and first hundred days of office. A four day bank holiday was declared during this period in order to reorganize the financial system, and an embargo on gold was implemented. Little attention was given to news originating from Europe, and the average American could hardly be expected to piece together an intelligent picture of German politics from what information was afforded.³

³This information was derived through a sampling of the headlines of the papers included in this study.
The burning of the Reichstag provided the excuse and the opportunity for Hitler to destroy the Communist Party, yet the significance of these events was overlooked by a number of papers throughout this country. This is not to suggest that the fire and its aftermath were totally ignored, but rather that they were ineptly interpreted and little emphasized.

Four of the papers in this survey refused to accept the contrived Nazi explanation which allowed them to persecute their Communist rivals. The Richmond Times-Dispatch regarded this entire incident as highly political and part of an overall attempt by the Nazis to "bring about a savage civil war." This editorial, appearing on March 1st, went on to relate: "It is wholly possible that the fire started from accidental purposes... (yet) it would not be to Hitler's advantage to view the conflagration as accidental. It would... be greatly to his advantage (, however,) to convince Germany that it was the work of the Communists and that the country needs a dictator... to save it from radicalism." 4

A similar skepticism about this incident was revealed in the New York Times. Both its foreign correspondent, Frederick T. Birchell, and an unidentified editor raised the same question in two related articles on March 2nd, namely: "What point would

4 "Drama in Berlin," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 1 March 1933, p. 6.
there be for the Communists to burn down the Reichstag and invite repression a few days before an election which may unseat Hitler?"  
Obviously both of these writers suspected the Nazis were somehow involved in this latest incident. Yet in response to charges that Hitler and the Nazis were merely employing the same tactics which previous administrations had utilized against them, the Times succeeded in drawing a major distinction: "The democratic authorities employed these methods for the defense of a constitutional regime against a party which openly... (promised) to send heads...rolling. It was the cause of law and order in Germany and the preservation of peace in Europe against a party openly preaching civil and foreign war (which compelled the democratic authorities to act)."  
This belief was further illustrated in an editorial cartoon offered on March 26th (attached, p. 62) depicting the threat of Hitler's militarism to Germany as well as the rest of the world.  

Both the Atlanta Constitution and the Chicago Tribune shared the opinion that the National Socialists were ultimately behind this deed, but they went on to add a unique twist of their own to their respective interpretations. Initially the Constitution openly questioned to what extent Hitler's political program would ever be implemented, 'except for the killings and ambushing' of his opponents? Yet strangely a few days later it went on to say that Hitler's victory would allow "Fascist control of Germany (to) stabilize and strengthen (the) economic and political conditions on the continent." Along this same idea, the Tribune went so far as to defend the Nazis, comparing their reprisals to similar action taken by the English, French, and Americans following their own revolutions. "It is theoretically ...(Hitler's) objective to unite Germany, to free it from the limitations imposed by an unjust treaty, and to give it the place to which its natural power and accomplishment would entitle it. Much of this assumes the sympathy of the rest of the Western World." Certainly both of these papers were in the minority in the expression of confidence and optimism which they accorded to Hitler and the Nazi regime.

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8 "Whither Germany," Atlanta Constitution, 5 March 1933, p. 10A.

9 "Hitler's Victory," Atlanta Constitution, 7 March 1933, p. 4.

In contrast to the above opinions, the Dallas Morning News and the Washington Post supported the Nazi claim that the fire was a prelude to a Communist uprising. In its editorial of March 2nd, the News stated it would be unfair to assume the current government had actually provoked this incendiary act, but: "When any large group (of people) is denied legal freedom of expression, illegal acts can be expected from its members... who see no other means of lodging a protest." Yet as its editorial cartoon of March 26th (attached, p. 63) indicated, the rise of Hitler and other similar dictators was in direct response to the dire economic and political conditions already existing. Thus the 'mother of dictators' was in reality simple necessity!

The Washington Post likewise agreed that the Communists were behind this deed and expressed relief that a revolution had been avoided. "Germany may have narrowly escaped a violent radical outbreak that may have plunged the country into civil strife. The firing of the Reichstag... was said to have been a signal for an uprising against the constituted authorities, which was only avoided by the prompt action of the police." The idea that the


Republic could ever be safe under the direction and control of the Nazis seems ludicrous in hindsight; yet it was the editor's belief during this time that any uprising against the 'constituted authorities' was even more repugnant than the actions of the Hitler regime itself. This same conservative approach was evidenced in another editorial printed a few days later which said: "There has been much criticism of the harsh measures... employed by Hitler;...whether justified or not (however) the results of the election shows that Germany has resolved to give Hitlerism a trial."\(^{14}\)

Of the several remaining papers in this study, there appeared to be a general apathy among them concerning both the fire and the election. The Los Angeles Times, for instance, simply noted that Hitler had garnered an unimpressive 43.7 percent of the seats in the Reichstag, and thus faced an uphill battle in gaining a majority. "Hitler has by no means convinced all the German people that this scheme is (either) wise or beneficial."\(^{15}\) The Minneapolis Tribune limited its coverage even further to a few small articles by the Associated Press and one short editorial, which observed: "There are those who think that a dictator is the only solution for America."\(^{16}\) Finally, the Rocky Mountain News

\(^{14}\) "Hitler Arrives," Washington Post, 7 March 1933, p. 6.

\(^{15}\) "Hitler's Victory," Los Angeles Times, 7 March 1933, sec. 2., p. 4.

\(^{16}\) "Terrorism in Germany," Minneapolis Tribune, 3 March 1933, p. 10.
offered no editorials whatsoever and presented only a minimal number of articles on the event itself. Presumably the impact on this occurrence completely escaped the attention of the editor as well as its readers.

To summarize the coverage given to this event, it is noteworthy that over half of the papers included in this study either misinterpreted or minimized this increasingly dangerous phenomena known as Nazism (see Appendix C). The New York Times stood alone in its ability to provide extensive and accurate commentary on these developments. Yet this is hardly surprising, considering the resources which this publication had at its disposal.
The tremendous suffering in Germany that had paved the path for Hitler's assumption of power in no way diminished simply because he gained the title of Chancellor in 1933. Rumors of a 'second revolution' continued to spread throughout the country, and the dissension between the regular Army and the Nazi S.A. grew to an alarming level. The Vice-Chancellor, von Papen, recognized the precarious situation Hitler faced and stood ready to exploit any opportunity which might present itself to overthrow the current regime.

Given these ominous conditions surrounding his second year of office, Hitler proceeded with remarkable calm and precision to assuage the fears of those portions of German society which had to be united if the nation were to become a dominant force throughout Europe. Knowing he could not afford to ostracize the entire military caste that had traditionally played such a

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Shirer, _Rise & Fall of the Third Reich_, p. 213.
major role in German politics, Hitler attempted to win the Army's support by attacking his own allies, namely, Ernst Roehm and the S.A.\textsuperscript{2} Corruption and homosexual tendencies in the S.A. had recently gained considerable attention in the German press, which in turn caused the Fuhrer some embarrassment. It became quite clear that if Hitler hoped to eventually replace the legendary Hindenburg as President, he could not continue to sanction an organization that offended both the Army and general citizenry. The time for reorganization of the Party seemed at hand.

Throughout his discussions with the military high command during 1933, Hitler displayed a reluctance to move decisively against the forces that had catapulted him into office. Rather than disband the S.A. or incorporate it into the Army, as the generals demanded, Hitler still believed a more moderate solution might be discovered which would spare the Party a shocking blow. By the end of June 1934, however, Hitler had become convinced that the sacrifice of Roehm and his men in exchange for supreme power was hardly unreasonable.

This change of heart could be directly attributed to the activities of Goering and Himmler. Both were currently engaged in a bitter struggle for power within the Party, and each professed

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 214.
to believe that Roehm was trying to challenge Hitler's authority. As the rumors of an overthrow continued to mount, Hitler confronted the S.A. leader with these allegations in hopes of reaching an understanding. Roehm vigorously denied any disloyalty, but he agreed to order his men on a general vacation for the entire month of July. During this period the troops would not be allowed to wear their uniforms or participate in any public displays. This was a temporary solution at best, and so the two men decided to meet later in June, at the town of Wiessee, to continue their discussions.³

Perhaps Roehm and the S.A. might still have been salvaged had it not been for von Papen. Taking advantage of Hitler's visit to Mussolini's Italy in the second week of June, the Vice-Chancellor delivered a scathing attack on the Nazi regime. Upon learning of the speech, given at the University of Marburg, Hitler became incensed and immediately launched a counter-attack on the 'pygmy' who thought he could stem the tide of National Socialism.⁴

Goebbels had banned any reproduction of the speech within Germany, and Papen became furious at this blatant form of censorship. He demanded that Hitler lift the ban immediately or he would submit his resignation. This was a move that Hitler had not

³ Bullock, Hitler, p. 161.
⁴ Fest, Hitler, p. 459.
counted on, and it clearly worried him since Hindenburg had threatened to put the entire country under martial law and hand over power to the Army if 'tensions' were not resolved.\textsuperscript{5}

When Hitler realized the seriousness of the situation, he decided to court the Army's support by suppressing the S.A. swiftly and effectively.

The actual details of the purge were left to the capable hands of Goering and Himmler, who had compiled a long list of enemies whom they wished to see eliminated. On June 28th the time seemed at hand. Hitler left Berlin to attend a wedding at Essen; the police and S.S. were put on alert, and the following day the executions began. The exact number of people who fell victim to this purge has never been definitely established, but Hitler alone decided the fate of his old cohart, Ernst Roehm. Speeding to the Hanslbauer Hotel in Wiessee, he confronted the S.A. leader, accused him of treason and treachery against the regime, and left a gun in his room so that fate might take its course.

Later that same day Hitler returned to Berlin, where Goering and Himmler greeted him at the airport and informed him of the events in greater detail. The killings continued until Sunday, June 30th, and most of the victims met a death as violent as the life they had led. The 'blood purge' of 1934 eased the political tensions and won Hitler the grudging support of the Army. He was finally the undisputed force in Germany.

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\textsuperscript{5} Bullock, \textit{Hitler}, p. 164.
Editorial Analysis

The American press continued to focus sharply on the economic developments at home during this period as President Roosevelt attempted to lift the nation out of a depression through federal regulation and spending. The Public Works Administration was awarded $25 million for a slum clearance project in New York, while a special labor board was created to settle the current longshoreman's strike. The President reiterated his support for the 'Brain Trust' he had assembled in Washington, and a new social program called Social Security was being studied by the Cabinet. Joseph P. Kennedy was named chairman of the newly formed Securities and Exchange Commission, and Senator Borah launched a campaign against the growing bureaucracy associated with the New Deal.6

Yet the newspaper media did not ignore the expanding internal strife occurring in Germany during June of 1934. The potentially explosive nature of this situation was recognized by most of the papers in this country, and no fewer than four of those being examined in this survey suggested a showdown of some description was imminent between the government and Nazi party.

The Rocky Mountain News, for example, hinted in its editorial of June 29th that the recent propaganda efforts by the

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6 This information was derived through a sampling of the headlines of the papers included in this study.
National Socialists meant Hitler's regime was at last on the offensive. Rumblings of discontent could be heard throughout the country, coming not only from the left, but the right as well. "The future...of Germany and, to no small degree, the entire old world is now in the balance....For Hitler a showdown is fast approaching." Thus while the impending violence was not predicted outright, certainly the editorials inferred something ominous was in the offing.

The Minneapolis Tribune, in its editorial of June 30th, related a similar feeling of apprehension as the fight between Hitler's storm troops and the Stahlhelm rose to more intense levels. It noted that the current political crisis was likely to come to an early conclusion, though it was undecided whom the winner would be. Additional analysis was provided by an editorial a few days later, which noted that a man such as Hitler who had attained power through violent means was himself susceptible to them. "While these methods may succeed in quelling revolts in (their) initial stages, the regime that uses them admits its one weakness in doing so. The use of force usually sows the seeds of..."
revolution and it remains to be seen whether Hitler will not fall victim to his own methods.\textsuperscript{10}

Two other publications, the \textit{Chicago Tribune} and the \textit{Richmond Times-Dispatch}, likewise alluded to the impending violence in Germany. On June 28th, the \textit{Tribune} reported that the rivalry between the Nazi storm troops and the regular Army was threatening to break into open warfare, and rumors had it that Hitler was leaning more towards the latter in his support.\textsuperscript{11} Then as the details of the purge gradually became known, one of the \textit{Tribune}'s foreign correspondents—Edmond Taylor—colorfully summarized the new situation as follows: "The Brown Shirts... have vanished overnight from the streets. But the raven black, silver trimmed uniforms of the Schutz Staffel...today stand watch over...Hitler's third reich—the successor to the empire and the republic."\textsuperscript{12}

The \textit{Richmond Times-Dispatch} also recognized the struggle taking place prior to its actual outbreak, and concluded: "Those

\textsuperscript{10}"Hitler Cracks Down," \textit{Minneapolis Tribune}, 2 July 1934, p. 4.


\textsuperscript{12}Edmond Taylor, "Hitler's Crack Guards Take Charge As Brown Shirts Disappear From Streets," \textit{Chicago Tribune}, 2 July 1934, p. 2. See Appendix A.
who think the Nazi system is likely to undergo fundamental changes would at this stage seem more correct than those who are looking for an early overthrow of Hitler.\textsuperscript{13} The paper went on to add two days later (July 1st) that while 'prophecy' was impossible, some form of change seemed likely in Germany as the people became 'desperate.'\textsuperscript{14} Again as news of the extent to which Hitler had 'purged' his opposition became known, the Times-Dispatch responded with an editorial on July 3rd, dubbing this incident "the most ruthless massacre known to modern times."\textsuperscript{15} Furthermore, as the accompanying editorial cartoon (attached - p. 76) illustrates, could Hitler ultimately succeed in purging all the other major political forces in Germany in order to quench his thirst for a total dictatorship?\textsuperscript{16}

The most thorough and accurate coverage given to this event, however, was provided by the New York Times and the Washington Post. Aside from their extensive day-to-day reports, the

\textsuperscript{13} "Descent From the Mount," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 29 June 1934, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{14} "A Revolution in Germany," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 1 July 1934, sec. 3, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{15} "Heads Shall Roll," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3 July 1934, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{16} Fred Seibel, "Can He "Purge" Them-Too?," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3 July 1934, p. 6.
Times tried to analyze the basis for the purge itself, while the Post sought to evaluate its overall impact. In a Times article by correspondent Eugene Young appearing on July 1st, the following conclusion was tendered: "Hitler sought to establish a unitarian, authoritarian state on two contradictions. One was the supreme party, which was to end factionalism, but was itself divided....The other was the dictatorial government, in which these...powers were divided between irreconcilable elements." These differences were to lead to what another correspondent (Frederick Birchell) termed 'neither a revolution, nor a coup d'etat, nor a counter-revolution, but authoritarian action intended to head off any of the three.' This attempt to deal with the looming internal dissension within Germany was later portrayed by the Times in an editorial cartoon carried on July 8th (attached - p. 77).

Similar attention to the plight of the German Republic was given by the Washington Post, whose editorial on July 1st


noted that Hitler could not 'indulge in bloody Saturdays forever.' An editorial the following day stated further: "The man whose mission it was to lead Germany out of enslavement has dragged his country into a servitude far more degrading than any alien conqueror could impose." With remarks such as these, both the Times and the Post succeeded in providing the most complete picture of what was actually happening in Germany among all the papers included in this survey.

The remaining group of publications added unique contributions of their own to the general assessment of the Blood Purge in Germany. The Atlanta Constitution compared this incident to those involving the famous gangster Al Capone, especially when his gang tried to 'muscle' in on him. "(A) dictator's road to power is spattered with blood and littered with the corpses of those who stood in his way." As 'hysteria soon turned to slaughter,'

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22 Paul Mallon, "News Behind the News," Atlanta Constitution, 4 July 1934, p. 4. See Appendix A.

Hitlerism now stood discredited throughout the world due to the recent tactics employed to consolidate the Fuhrer's strength. The *Los Angeles Times* offered the opinion that this purge was the point "from which the fall of the Hitler regime will be pegged by history." As the rest of Europe began to align itself against her, the internal situation within Germany continued to worsen and the *Times* speculated Hitler's ouster was 'probable.' Finally, the *Dallas Morning News* concluded that after further reorganization from within the Party occurred, Hitler would undoubtedly modify his actions and hopefully restore order. "Chancellor Hitler will retain his leadership, but he will doubtless...turn to the Right and become more conservative in his policies."26

While it has become apparent that the editors of the papers included in this survey differed quite widely in their assessment of Hitler's true intentions, much of this disparity could be attributed to the unpredictable nature of the Fuhrer himself. Furthermore, while the editors have seemed to become extremely reluctant to predict the outcome of the turmoil in Germany, often the same arguments and factors used to substantiate

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one point of view could be legitimately employed to support exactly the opposite position. In this chapter, for instance, one group of papers regarded the purge as a process consolidating Hitler's power, while another group saw it as evidence of the regime's weakness. Both of these conclusions were logical and understandable.
Chapter Six

THE PASSING OF A LEGEND AND REALMAMMENT

August 1934 - March 1935

Narrative of Events

After Hitler had consolidated his position within the Party and simultaneously appeased the Army's demand to bring the S.A. under control, only the ailing and senile von Hindenburg obstructed his assumption of total power. It was apparent that the aged warrior was rapidly succumbing to the illness that had plagued him for years, and Hitler eagerly anticipated the vacancy that would be created by his death. The official government bulletin on the Field Marshall's health was guarded in its assessment, but Hitler dispassionately moved to pass legislation to ensure his own succession to power once Hindenburg was gone. This new law merged the office of the President with that of the Chancellor, based on the power given Hitler via the Enabling Act in 1933, though ignoring the guarantees set forth in this measure that the office of the Presidency would be inviolate.¹

¹ Fest, Hitler, p. 474.
Finally, on August 2, 1934, at nine in the morning, Hindenburg breathed his last; Hitler's dictatorship could now be consumated in an orderly fashion. The Minister of the Interior was instructed to arrange for a plebiscite so that all of Germany could confirm and bestow legal sanction on Hitler's power. Furthermore, the Army was called upon to pledge unconditional support to Hitler. This oath of personal fealty, which would forever tie the military to Hitler and his Nazi regime, would allow basically 'honorable' men to commit some of the most hideous crimes of this century, all in the 'line of duty'. This same oath was soon required of most government and bureaucratic officials, and thereby the image of the monarchy was resurrected within Germany.

The services for the deceased President gave the Fuhrer the opportunity to further consolidate his symbolic and actual grasp on the reigns of power. It was a time to eulogize the legendary figure who had just passed away, while reminding everyone that the wave of the future lay in the ideology of National Socialism as interpreted by Adolf Hitler. The Minister of Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels, produced the purported Last Will and Testament of the


3 Fest, *Hitler*, p. 475.
President, which contained stirring words of praise for Hitler and an appeal that the people of Germany support him. This was a particularly effective tool just four days before the plebiscite, the results of which were predictable. What Hitler termed the people's chance to affirm or deny the policies of its leaders became merely a rubber stamp of what had already taken place.

Yet Hitler was less than enthusiastic at the outcome of the voting; for instead of the 100 percent affirmation given in most totalitarian states, almost four and a half million voters had the courage to reject the Fuhrer and his policies. For some elements of the opposition, this vote was the last gasp of indignation and resentment towards a man who had wantonly disregarded the Constitution of the Republic and the rights of nearly every citizen in Germany. Their protest was futile; the verdict was now complete. Roughly ninety percent of the electorate had gone along with Hitler's desire to start a 'thousand year Reich' which would be unsurpassed by any other nation.4

The long revolution was supposedly over, but in many ways it had just begun. The next move was to restore confidence both at home and abroad that things would soon be back to normal and

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4 Bullock, Hitler, p. 171.
that the new government would proceed in an orderly fashion to implement programs that would best serve the national interests. One of the most important items on this agenda included a directive by Hitler himself for the military to begin rearmament. The Army was encouraged to triple its size and strength immediately; the Navy was to start construction of high tonnage vessels, as well as submarines and u-boats; the Air Force was expanded under the leadership of Goering and the training of additional combat pilots commenced; and the industrial sector of the economy was instructed to prepare for the massive effort that would be required to bring Germany back to military parity with the rest of Europe. All of these moves were in direct violation of the treaty signed at Versailles, yet they were accepted as necessary if Germany was to ever become a major power again.

The only problem remaining concerned the public announcement of what most Allies already knew. Hitler was convinced they would accept his actions in exchange for further guarantees about collective security, but he was anxious to avoid tying his hands by such an agreement. Ultimately the excuse he was looking for presented itself when the French decided to double their period for military service and lower the age for enlistment; this move allowed Hitler the opportunity to justify Germany's own resumption of conscription as a necessary response. Throughout Germany he was

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Shirer, *Rise & Fall of the Third Reich*, pp. 281-84.
hailed as a hero, for finally the shackles of Versailles were destroyed, and the people could hold up their heads with honor. Hitler's gamble had worked, and now his aims for further expansion could proceed.

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**Editorial Analysis**

Various domestic events continued to dominate the headlines provided by the American press, centering almost exclusively upon the figure of Franklin Delano Roosevelt during this interval—the man as well as the President. In August of 1934, front-page coverage was given to his recent vacation cruise, in addition to his tour of the proposed sight of the Grand Coulee Dam. During March of 1934, the topic was now Roosevelt's numerous victories in the Senate on proposals relating to the various public works projects (i.e. the amount of funds to be allocated and the wages to be paid). Yet one receives the impression that the developments in Germany were gaining ground on domestic issues in terms of the attention devoted by the news media, and the seriousness of this situation abroad was gradually becoming felt.6

The American press was virtually unanimous in its acknowledgement of the accomplishments of the aged Field Marshall, both

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6 This information was derived through a sampling of the headlines of the papers included in this study.
as a political and military leader. One of the real giants of his day, possibly no other paper offered more stirring words of praise for von Hindenburg than the Washington Post. In its editorial of August 3rd, it stated: "There are periods in history when the entire race of man...is for a moment struck silent by the awful significance of some terrestrial event....(The) name and fame of Paul von Hindenburg are safe with the immortals. History will (indeed) probably regard this stern old Prussian in much the same manner it regards...Robert E. Lee. Both were great leaders of men." A similar assessment was offered by a former war correspondent for the Post who knew von Hindenburg personally, Col. Edwin Emerson. His article spoke of the near universal grief now being experienced in Germany as the 'grand old man' passed away. Finally, one other foreign correspondent, Aniou Anglo, noted the beginning of a new era for Germany- as the last remaining bond between the old and the new was now severed with Hindenburg's death.

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Although Hindenburg's death itself commanded tremendous attention, the consequences of his passing to Germany and the rest of the world were also in the forefront of the news. The Los Angeles Times pointed to an alarming new European crisis, as the Nazis and Junkers struggled to gain control over a powerful nation. Furthermore: "Hitler's accession to complete power will be viewed with favor nowhere outside Germany. It will aid in completing the isolation of the Reich."\(^\text{10}\) The Minneapolis Tribune believed, in fact, that Hindenburg had been the only man either in or out of government capable of keeping the extremist policies of the Nazis in check. Now, ominously, the buffer was irrevocably withdrawn. The only consolation the Tribune could offer was simply: "While the world may be most concerned about the immediate future of Germany, in learning of the death of Der Alte, it is not left without the hope that a people that could produce a von Hindenburg and admire him as it did will not surrender itself completely to a course in human affairs that is beneath it."\(^\text{11}\)

The Richmond Times-Dispatch related similar feelings of apprehension concerning the vast power which Hitler now wielded in

\(^{10}\) "New European Crisis," Los Angeles Times, 2 August 1934, sec. 2, p. 4.

Germany. Yet is also noted the somber reality that there was no one for the people to rally around even if they so desired. Thus the total repercussions of von Hindenburg's passing were still uncertain for Germany- as the editorial cartoon of August 3rd (attached, p. 92) seems to indicate. The New York Times concurred, and in its editorial of August 2nd, noted that Hindenburg had stood before the Reich as 'the pillar' of a nation's hope. Now, as one foreign correspondent for the Times-Otto D. Tolischus- put it; "At a critical moment in her history Germany has lost another pilot. Cut adrift from the moorings of the past, she is like a ship in a brown setting out on a turbulent sea, under the command of a man with a strong, arbitrary will. Already she is being buffeted by whirlwinds of world hostility."

12 "Hindenburg's Heir," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 2 August 1934, p. 6.

13 "Hitler at the Top," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 4 August 1934, p. 4.

14 "After Hindenburg-What?" Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3 August 1934, p. 10.


Where this man, Adolf Hitler, was to lead Germany and the rest of the world was still unknown— but it was felt the power which he now had at his command remained "unequaled...since the days of Genghis Kahn." 17

In marked contrast to the opinions offered above, most of the remaining publications in this study suggested that Hindenburg's passing would have only a minimal impact in the final analysis. The Atlanta Constitution, for example, believed this development would simply eliminate the need for the empty gestures of Hitler obtaining the President's approval for policies he intended to implement anyway. "In the last analysis, the death of Hindenburg and Hitler's succession to the presidency will... cause but little change in existing conditions." 18 The Chicago Tribune further emphasized that Hindenburg's influence had been diminishing for quite some time, and he was little deterrent to the Nazi movement at the time of his death. "We must...guess at the effect the removal of the great man will have upon the internal conditions and external relations of Germany and the world. (Yet) we may assume that it will not be as momentous as it might have been earlier...in Germany." 19


The remaining two papers, the Dallas Morning News and the Rocky Mountain News, shared the belief that the once great giant who had led Germany in the past had become but a feeble old man looking for his eternal rest. The Dallas paper noted in its editorial of August 3rd; "Had death ended his vigorous old age at the moment when his personal popularity had defeated the present Chancellor in the race for the chief official post of the Republic ...there would have been no subsequent obscuring of the famous soldier."20 And finally along this same line, the Rocky Mountain News said: "Maybe history's verdict will be that the eyes of the weary giant had seen too much of strife, the great heart leaped too often to the call of courage; that he who bent before the Nazi weaklings was not Von Hindenburg, the idol, but an enfeebled old man waiting for the grave."21

Turning to the subsequent issue of rearmament, the action itself was greeted with mixed emotions, ranging from quiet acceptance to utter surprise and anguish. The latter opinion was particularly obvious in the Atlanta Constitution and Los Angeles Times, which predicted the reaction of the other nations of the world would be to isolate Germany completely. As the editorial carried in the Constitution on March 19th stated flatly: "The chief result of the Hitler defiance...will be to bring about a


21 "Hindenburg," Rocky Mountain News, 3 August 1934, p. 10
close defensive alliance between Great Britain, France, Italy and Russia. Such an alliance...would build an iron ring around Germany, and the nation would be far more helpless than it is now." The Times concurred and added: "The general consensus seems to be that Hitler's new 'putsch'...will result in a new ring of alliances (around Germany)." Yet these ominous developments were not new to Europe, as pointed out in an editorial carried by the Richmond Times-Dispatch on March 24th. "There would seem to be a sinister significance...in the fact that events prior to the World War are so similar to those in recent days. It is to be fervently hoped, however, that the ultimate denouement will be far different...(and) the nations of Europe will not...be dragged once more into the bloody maelstrom of war."24

A number of the other papers included in this study were reluctant to condemn Hitler's actions, seeking instead to remind the public that the Allies were partially to blame themselves. The Minneapolis Tribune called the idea of 'an unarmed Germany in

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the midst of an armed European community' an anomaly which could only exist temporarily. The Washington Post went even further by calling rearmament a matter of national honor. "To her it is more than a matter of life and death. It is a matter of the fundamental honor of an organized people....The clauses of enforced disarmament are binding upon Germany only on the assumption that she is a servile state. And no other peace treaty in modern history ever attempted this." (Note the editorial cartoon appearing on the same day attached at the end of this chapter, p. 93.)

The several remaining publications (including the Chicago Tribune, the Dallas Morning News, and the New York Times) concentrated almost exclusively upon the enthusiasm and support of the German people for rearmament, rather than the shockwaves which it sent throughout the world. The Tribune's correspondence, Sigrid Schultz, reported the reaction as being 'delirious' among the


Germans. With this single stroke Hitler had succeeded in uniting the country behind him, and as one Times article stated, all Germans shall "rise up and cheer...Hitler's challenge to the world."

The final paper in this survey, the Rocky Mountain News, looked upon this situation with grave reservations. It saw this latest action as simply a part of the same old power game in Europe. Thus the United States should stay alert to the possibility of becoming entangled in another foreign war. To this end, the News stated in its editorial of March 19th: "We believe it is the duty of an American newspaper to help keep the nation from becoming involved in another nation's quarrel....America has its own mission in the world...(and) its own people and... shores to protect."

Although the editors continued to differ in their interpretations, gradually a consensus began to emerge. Furthermore,

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the coverage provided to these developments in Germany continued to expand in each of these papers. These two observations are probably related, since both could be attributed to a growing awareness of the seriousness of the situation in Europe.
"After Hindenburg--What?" Richmond Times-Dispatch
3 August 1934, p. 10.
Chapter Seven

THE REPUDIATION OF LOCARNO AND MOVEMENT INTO THE RHINELAND

March 1936

Narrative of Events

For the remainder of 1935 and into the early part of 1936, Hitler watched with anxious anticipation for the right moment whereby he could achieve another coup in foreign policy. With the League of Nations enbroiled in a losing effort to stem Italy's aggression in Ethiopia, an opening was created for Hitler to exploit the existing controversy surrounding the Franco-Soviet Mutual-assistance pact. The Fuhrer met with the French ambassador, Francois-Poncet, on November 21, 1935, to voice his protests against the pact, leaving the emissary with the distinct impression that he had every intention of using this treaty as an excuse to march troops into the demilitarized Rhineland. Little did the French know that preparations had been made as early as the previous spring by General Blomberg to accomplish exactly that aim. The only question still lingering was when.

Within France, the issue of an alliance with the Soviets had caused considerable controversy among the more conservative elements of the society. Hitler was, in fact, fearful that the French Chamber

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1 Fest, Hitler, p. 496.
might reject the proposal, and then he would be forced to find another pretext upon which to justify his plans. When the pact was decisively ratified on February 27th, Hitler felt the time was right to go ahead with his scheme.

While most of the German generals were wary of taking military action in the face of potentially superior forces, Hitler was firm in his belief that the Allies lacked both the nerve and resolve to oppose him. Despite numerous reservations, Blomberg gave the order for the army to move, while everyone waited breathlessly to see what would happen. The token German force met with no resistance, and thus victory seemed to hinge on the willingness of France and Britain to become involved in armed conflict.

In retrospect it is apparent that this was a major turning point for all of Europe. Had the Allies taken the initiative to resist Hitler and his expansionist policies on this occasion, they could easily have defeated him and the history of the twentieth century may have been drastically altered. The Germans were both outnumbered and outgunned, with no 'legal' justification for their obvious breach of the Treaty of Locarno. Yet Hitler had always been ingenious in his use of the element of surprise, and he wielded the weapon so effectively that it created doubt and indecision on the part of his adversaries. Knowing the French were currently facing severe economic problems at home, in addition to

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Shirer, *Rise & Fall of the Third Reich*, pp. 290-94.
political strife in several areas, he correctly judged that the present administration was in no position to challenge him at this time.

On the morning of March 7th, while the German Army proceeded into the Rhineland, the Foreign Minister calmly advised the British, French, and Italian ambassadors of this latest move, and the 'compelling' reasons they had for abandoning the Treaty. Then as a bitter twist to the melodrama currently unfolding, Hitler called for a new peace treaty to be established among the major powers of Europe. He claimed that Germany had not been eager to rearm or to reoccupy the Rhineland, for he argued, it was France who had betrayed the Allies by signing an agreement with Russia, thereby nullifying the Treaty of Locarno. Hitler had only responded by taking the steps which he felt were necessary to defend the national interests of Germany, and peace remained a primary objective in his own mind. The rhetoric seemed to work, and once again Hitler had gambled and won!

This small military venture added immensely to his already wide popularity at home, and it also taught his subordinates never to question his judgment. This one token victory was also to enhance his confidence for further military expansion, while confirming his suspicions that appeasement could be a useful tool in

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3 Bullock, Hitler, pp. 190-91.
diplomacy. He called upon the people of Germany to voice their opinion at the polls, and the results were overwhelming. Approximately ninety-nine percent of the electorate supported his actions, and the Fuhrer was now in a position to embark upon his great dream of creating an unparalled German civilization which would spread throughout the world.

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Editorial Analysis

The events in Europe were now being regarded as serious enough to warrant closer coverage in the newspapers. On the domestic front, the President had recently signed a neutrality bill aimed at avoiding American entanglement in Europe, while businessmen were urged to refrain from capitalizing on foreign conflicts. A new farm aid package was passed in Congress, and a proposal to increase corporate taxes was under consideration. The Presidential race was also beginning to heat up during this period, as Republicans sought to raise $1 million for the upcoming campaign.4

Turning to the developments in Europe, the reaction to Hitler's move to expand his power and influence was generally

4 This information was derived through a sampling of the headlines of the papers included in this study.
mixed. The press displayed both apprehension and uncertainty, and even at this late stage there appeared a wide diversity of opinion as to the direction in which Germany was going. Many of the publications involved in this study regarded this overt military move into the Rhineland as proof that war was in the offing; others maintained that this was little more than a symbolic flexing of Hitler's newly found strength.

One of the more popular explanations to Hitler's Rhineland venture suggested that war was his ultimate aim. This belief was shared by the editors and staff of the Atlanta Constitution, the Chicago Tribune, and the Rocky Mountain News. The only real distinction among their views centered around the question of timing for Hitler's next act of aggression. The Rocky Mountain News held the opinion that war was just around the corner, as it colorfully described in its editorial of March 10th:

"The prospects for European or perhaps world war were bright enough last week...now they are blinding....It's a cockeyed-world...slanted and twisted awry."\(^5\) A similar expression of concern was voiced by the Chicago Tribune, which related in its editorial on the event:

"If the so-called statesmen who imposed the treaty upon Germany had shown something resembling political and economic prudence...there probably would have been no Nazi revolution; the time has come when

\(^5\)"This Cock-Eyed World," Rocky Mountain News, 10 March 1936, p. 8."
the dictator must obtain foreign victories, either of diplomacy or war.... Hitler is plainly at that point now." (Note the editorial cartoon carried on March 12th - attached, p. 104, which effectively illustrates this position.) Finally the Atlanta Constitution emphasized the long-term implications of Hitler's actions, while admitting the move had been brilliantly timed psychologically. The other nations of Europe were currently preoccupied with critical internal problems of their own, and were unlikely to respond militarily to this newest venture. "The whole... movement is being classified in diplomatic files as another event which will lead up to war in a year or so, but probably not (any) sooner." 

Another group of papers assumed exactly the opposite stance about the likelihood of war and offered evidence to support their position. The Dallas Morning News, for example, believed that Germany would in all probability retain control of the Rhine-

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6 "Versailles Again," Chicago Tribune, 10 March 1936, p. 12.
8 "Europe's Cauldron Fumes," Atlanta Constitution, 10 March 1936, p. 6.
land and that only 'paper protests' would follow. "The results (are in) the laps of the gods. It is almost to be assumed that Italy will join Germany in renouncing the Locarno Pact. France would like to act against Germany but must first appeal to the League...England, it may be sure, will not pledge to go to war with France against Germany...(but will) seek to preserve peace."10

The editorial of March 10th in the Minneapolis Tribune was equally realistic in pointing out the ineffectiveness of any treaty to guarantee peace, especially one that was both punitive and humiliating in nature. War remained no more inevitable now than it had been over the preceding years. "It seems to be generally agreed in the principal capitals of the world that Germany's action...need not mean war...(For) it is important to recognize that the treaties which are being destroyed are suffering that fate, in part at least, because they were called upon to perform an impossible task....They sought to impose restrictions on the sovereignty of Germany which none of the other signatories of treaties would accept for itself."11 The Washington Post agreed with this analysis, and recalled the proverb which said a 'dog that barks doesn't


11 "What Are Treaties Worth," Minneapolis Tribune, 10 March 1936, p. 16.
bite. Thus in regards to the current situation, the more warnings we received about the impending violence, the less likely it was to occur.\textsuperscript{12}

While most of the publications included in this survey concerned themselves almost exclusively with the pros and cons of Hitler launching a more extensive military venture, the remaining papers cited various other issues which they considered to be of equal importance. The \textit{Los Angeles Times}, for instance, regarded the recent events as part of an elaborate chess game among the assorted European nations designed for better positioning. Since each of the signatories of the Locarno Treaty had repeatedly violated the terms, why had Hitler chosen this particular time to act, unless it was simply a well-calculated bluff to gain a small diplomatic victory?\textsuperscript{13} Further inconsistencies in Hitler's behavior were also cited, specifically his remilitarization of the Rhineland one day and his offer to initiate peace negotiations the next. "Hitler's plea of justification for violating the Locarno Treaty because...France did so first hardly holds water... (Yet this) is not his only inconsistency.... He tears up

\textsuperscript{12} Countess of Listowel (Special Correspondent), "War in Europe?," \textit{Washington Post} 9 March 1936, p. 9. See Appendix A.

treaties with one hand and tenders fresh ones with the other. With saber drawn, he offers to lead Europe into new paths of peace." (Note the editorial cartoon of March 9th - attached, p. 105, carried in the Times which illustrates this point.)

In contrast to this line of thinking, the New York Times focused most of its headlines and attention on the singular issue of whether or not England would come to the assistance of France in this matter. As one foreign correspondent for the Times, Edwin James, reported in his article, the extent of the current crisis could well turn on the attitude of London in reaching a settlement. What the British position would be remained to be seen, yet Charles Selden (correspondent) for the Times offered his belief following a speech by the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. "The British Government makes a distinction between German troops reoccupying their own territory and an invasion of French territory, (thus it appears) the British have no intention

14 "A Squeeze Play?," Los Angeles Times, 10 March 1936, sec. 2, p. 4.

15 "Nazi Movement!," Los Angeles Times, 10 March 1936, sec. 2, p. 4.

of giving military aid to France if she decides to use force to compel Germany once more to evacuate the forbidden zone."  

Finally, the Richmond Times-Dispatch showed unique insight in its attempt to identify with the German people, rather than the government that was supposedly representing them. "This newspaper has the utmost sympathy (for) the German people- as distinguished from the gang which is in control of their country- and it would like to see that people receive justice at the hands of the victors in the World War. But it is frankly suspicious of the assurances (of) their self-appointed spokesman-(Adolf Hitler)."

In summary, even by the year 1936 there was still no firm consensus of opinion as to the developments in Germany. Furthermore, there was actually a wider range of editorial views expressed in this chapter than in the preceding one. Yet a growing awareness and appreciation of the problems abroad led to an expanded coverage of the European situation. Consequently, even papers which had been previously apathetic attempted to upgrade their standards.


18 "Hitler Seizes the Rhine," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 8 March 1936, sec. 4, p. 2.
CONCLUSION

The original aim of this study was to assess the extent to which the American public was aware of the events occurring in Germany between the years 1930-1936. While definitive answers to the question of public awareness are virtually impossible, it appears from this critical survey that the press did remarkably well in keeping the public informed of the ongoing developments. The editors normally offered a wide variety of opinions, but they almost never ignored the incidents themselves.

Among the papers examined, the New York Times provided the most extensive and accurate coverage of Hitler's career. Not only did the Times recognize the threat posed by National Socialism to the rest of the world at a very early stage, but it constantly displayed an uncanny ability to correctly assess the direction in which Hitler was moving. The Chicago Tribune and Washington Post likewise devoted a tremendous amount of space to the German situation, yet the slant to their articles was often devoid of any long range implications. The Tribune tended to focus on the human drama currently unfolding as the people of Germany reacted to Hitler, while the Post assumed such a conservative or guarded stance that it frequently minimized the underlying significance to Hitler's position.

Furthermore, it may be significant that each of these papers were among the four included in this survey which utilized
foreign correspondents quite freely. While the by-line articles of these reporters were predominantly narratives of the events, rather than the analysis which might have been expected, it is still interesting to note the greater attention and consistency shown in the editorials of these publications.

Four of the papers included in this study (the Atlanta Constitution, the Dallas Morning News, the Richmond Times-Dispatch, and the Rocky Mountain News) provided only modest attention to the disputes abroad and limited most of their commentary to a reflection of the events after they had already occurred. Possibly this could be explained by the initial trouble they experienced in interpreting Hitler's actions and the reluctance which understandably followed in regards to making any further predictions. Finally, the two remaining newspapers, the Los Angeles Times and Minneapolis Tribune, seemed relatively less concerned with the situation in Europe versus domestic affairs. Since it is doubtful that a paper could survive for long without addressing the interests of its readers, this would tend to imply that isolationist attitudes still prevailed among their subscribers.

In summary, Hitler and National Socialism did not spring up overnight; their gradual development attracted considerable media attention. During the period from 1930 to 1936, the press gradually expanded the extent of its coverage and the quality of its analysis of international affairs, and began to prepare the American people for a world in which they could no longer afford to remain aloof.
APPENDIX A

Biographical Information

Aniou Angelo
A foreign correspondent for the **Washington Post**, no further information was available.

Frederick T. Birchell
Described as a 'spritely little Englishman', Mr. Birchell became one of the foreign editors for the New York Times in 1925. By 1936, he succeeded in becoming the chief of the Times foreign service, and was credited with much of the paper's success in this field. For more information, see John Hohenberg's work *Foreign Correspondence - The Great Reporters and Their Times*.

Gene Eldermann
An editorial cartoonist for the Washington Post, Mr. Eldermann was noted for being 'none too abstemious or dedicated' to his work. Yet few outside the newspaper profession realize just how important an effective cartoon is to convey the correct impression. For further information see Felix Morley's book entitled *For the Record*.

Col. Edwin Emerson
Born in Dresden, Saxony on January 23, 1869. After receiving his A.B. degree from Harvard University in 1891, he later married Mary Griswol in 1906. A member of the National Press Club, he served many years as a foreign and war correspondent in Europe, and occasionally wrote articles for the **Washington Post**.

Guido Enderis
Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on September 3, 1874, of Swiss parentage, Mr. Enderis went to Germany as a foreign correspondent in 1916, and was interned there during World War I. He joined the Associated Press in Berlin in 1917, and by 1929 was head of the New York Times bureau there. Soon after the start of World War II he was evacuated to Switzerland, where he suffered a stroke in 1945. He was never married, and died in April of 1948.
Edwin L. James
Born in Irvington, Virginia on June 25, 1890, he attended Chesa­ppeake Academy for his primary school education. He received his A.B. degree from Randolph Macon College in 1909, and married Simone Tremoulet in 1918. Originally a reporter for the Baltimore Sun, he joined the New York Times in 1915 as a war correspondent. He became the chief European correspondent during the late 1920's, and the managing editor of the Times in 1932. He was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa society.

John F. Knott
Born in Austria on December 17, 1878, he attended both the Royal Academy of Art in Munich, Bavaria, and the Holmes School of Illustration in Chicago. He married Carrie Louise Bowen of Dallas, Texas, in 1907. Mr. Knott joined the staff of the Dallas Morning News in 1905 as a cartoonist.

Frederick R. Kuh
Born in Chicago, Illinois on October 10, 1895, he obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1917. He married Renata Boern of Vienna, Austria, in 1929. Originally a reporter for the Chicago Herald, he became the European correspondent for the London Daily Herald in 1921. By 1924, Mr. Kuh was a special correspondent for the United Press Association in Europe, and occasionally contributed articles to the Atlanta Constitution.

Countess of Listowel
No information was available.

Paul Mallon
Born in Mattoon, Illinois on January 5, 1901, he attended both the University of Louisville and University of Notre Dame as an undergraduate. Mr. Mallon began as a reporter for the Louisville Carrier Journal in 1918, and joined the United Press in 1920. He married Viola Wingreene in 1929, and inaugurated a Washington column called the 'News Behind the News' in the early 1930's. This column was frequently carried by the Atlanta Constitution.

Anne O'Hare McCormick
Described as a small, red-headed woman, Mrs. McCormick wrote freelance articles while traveling with her husband across Europe. She was noted for having 'something extra' in her works, conveying what might have been called a sense of history. Additional information can be obtained in the book by Hohenberg.
James North
While the editor of the Washington Post began to add editorial cartoons in the early 1920's, most of these were originally obtained from syndicates. Mr. North joined the staff in the mid-1920's and his works appeared regularly over a decade. For more information consult Chalmers M. Roberts' work: The Washington Post - The First 100 Years.

Henry K. Norton
Born in Chicago, Illinois in October of 1884, Mr. Norton had an extensive college background in which he earned his B.S., LL.B., and M.A. degrees. The author of numerous books, he contributed works to the New York Times and various other journals. For additional information consult Who's Who Among North American Authors, vol. VI.

Sigrid Schultz
Born in Chicago, Illinois, Mr. Schultz received his college education at the University of Berlin. He became a foreign correspondent for the Chicago Tribune in 1919, and by 1925 was put in charge of the office there. He was also a member of the Federation Internationale des Journalistes.

Frederick Seibel
Born in Durhamville, New York in October of 1886, Mr. Seibel studied under many famous artists throughout this country. He began his career as a commercial artist in 1911, and became a cartoonist for the Utica Herald-Dispatch in 1915. He became an editorial cartoonist for the Richmond Times-Dispatch in 1926, and received the Harmon award for his work in 1926. He was married to Edna Anderson of New York.

Charles A. Selden
Born in Nantucket, Massachusetts on October 10, 1870, Mr. Selden received his A.B. degree from Brown University in 1893. He began his journalist career as a reporter for the Providence Journal in 1893, and ultimately joined the staff of the New York Times in 1918.

Edmond Taylor
A foreign correspondent for the Chicago Tribune, no information was available.
Otto Tolischus
Described as a calm, determined, professional newsman, Mr. Tolischus graduated from Columbia University and received his initiation into journalism in a Cleveland city newsroom. His first European assignment was given to him by the International News Service, and he later went to work for the New York Times. Additional information is provided in the book by Hohenberg.

Joseph Willetts
Born in 1887, Mr. Willetts joined the staff of the Dallas Morning News in 1923. Prior to this time he had worked at the Denver Post, the New York Times, and the Rocky Mountain News. As the assistant managing editor of the Dallas Morning News, he died at the age of 51 at Baylor University.

Eugene Young
A foreign correspondent for the New York Times, no additional information could be located.

**Unless otherwise indicated, further information on each of these journalists can be obtained in the appropriate volume of Who's Who in America.**
## Extent of Coverage

| Paper              | 1930 Election | 1932 Election | Chance | Reichstag | Blood Purge | Hindenburg Death | Rhinepur | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|--------|-----------|-------------|------------------|----------|
| Atlanta Constitution | +             | +             | *      | *         | *           | *                | *        |
| Chicago Tribune    | +             | +             | +      | +         | *           | *                | *        |
| Dallas Morning News | -             | +             | *      | *         | *           | *                | *        |
| Los Angeles Times  | *             | +             | -      | +         | -           | +                | +        |
| Minneapolis Tribune | -             | *             | *      | -         | *           | *                | *        |
| New York Times     | +             | +             | +      | +         | +           | +                | +        |
| Richmond Times-Dispatch | *         | *             | +      | *         | +           | +                | +        |
| Rocky Mountain News | *             | *             | -      | -         | *           | +                | -        |
| Washington Post    | +             | +             | +      | +         | +           | +                | +        |

**KEY TO SYMBOLS:** + Substantial  * Adequate  - Minimal

This is a subjective observation, determined on the basis of relative coverage given to a particular event in this study. It is not an attempt to directly quantify the actual coverage, but to convey an impression which was provided to the author through the research itself.
### APPENDIX C

#### Accuracy of Analysis

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<th>1932 Election</th>
<th>Chancellor</th>
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**KEYS TO SYMBOLS:**  
+ Thorough and/or Accurate  
- Superficial or Inaccurate

This is a subjective observation, determined on the basis of relative coverage given to a particular event in this study.
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Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles, California: September 1930 - March 1936.

Minneapolis Tribune. Minneapolis, Minnesota: September 1930 - March 1936.


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Secondary Sources


VITA

The author is presently engaged in managing a sizeable trust account under the auspices of a former accounting officer for the CSX Corporation. Born in Richmond, Virginia on November 6, 1955, he attended The Collegiate Schools of Richmond for his primary school education. After graduating in 1974, he attended the University of Richmond for his undergraduate studies, and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in History in May of 1976. The author subsequently received a Masters of Business Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University in May of 1982.