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Nazi Germany's "Second Revolution"

*Long-Standing Unrest Among the Storm Troops
Led to the Purging by Hitler Under Strong
Pressure From the "Right"*

By JOHN ELLIOTT

Berlin.

THE mutiny of Ernst Roehm and the radical Storm Troop leaders which has just been handled so dramatically by Chancellor Adolf Hitler had its inception in an order issued by the Nazi *Führer* a year ago when he declared that the revolution had ended and must be succeeded by evolution. Having obtained absolute power by the first revolution, Hitler proposed to build his Third Reich piecemeal with the counsel of conservative advisers. This policy did not meet with the approval of the revolutionary elements in the party, who were concentrated in the Storm Troop detachments, and who could not conceal their chagrin when their leader ignored the socialistic parts of his program.



Ever since then their discontent had been simmering and the purging of the malcontents was bound to come sooner or later. The Nazi party is composed of so many heterogeneous elements—Nationalist and Socialist—that the split was certain to come as soon as the party got into power. The only miracle is that it didn't materialize before.

The Storm Troopers, in particular, frequently have been the source of trouble to Hitler. As a frankly revolutionary movement in its early days, the National Socialist cause attracted many officers of the old Imperial Army, who found their former occupation gone and could not settle down to the humdrum pursuits of civil life—men such as Roehm, who wandered from one illegal anti-republican association to another, and, finally, bored by conditions in Germany during the comparatively prosperous days of the Dawes and Locarno era, accepted an offer from the Bolivian Government to drill its army, and Lieut. Edmund Heines, the "Vehme Murderer," who was sentenced for manslaughter for the execution of a subordinate in one of the secret semimilitary organizations which flourished in Germany in the early 'twenties.



When leader of German mutiny was friendly with his Chancellor: Ernst Röhm (second from left) at a Nazi rally with Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler, and Gen. Werner von Blomberg

Hitler's genius found a new field for the activities of these dissidents in organizing and drilling his private army which originally was founded as a body to prevent meetings of his party from being broken up by Communists. The first disorder with the Storm Troopers came in the late summer of 1930, when the *Sturm Abteilung* vented its grievances against the political leaders of the party by storming the Berlin headquarters and smashing doors, windows, and furniture.

—*Oberste Sturm Abteilungen Führer* (Supreme Leader of the Storm Troops). Previously the Storm Troopers had been subordinate to the local political leaders and they had complained that they were not paid enough to meet the cost of their police fines and their bills for medical attendance arising from the nature of their duties.

In September of that year Hitler summoned his old friend Captain Röhm from La Paz to assume the training of his Nazi Storm Troopers. The efficiency which the *Sturm Abteilung* has since attained and the respect which it has obtained abroad as a potential fighting force speaks volumes for Röhm's ability as an organizing genius.

Hitler again had difficulty with his Berlin Storm Troopers in April of the following year when Capt. Walter Stennes, rebelling against the authority of the "Osa," seized the party headquarters, and, for a time, turned the guns of the Nazi afternoon newspaper *Der Angriff* ("The Attack") against the movement. Captain Stennes, disgruntled with Hitler's insistence that the party must obtain power by purely legal methods, and assertion that a repetition of the march on Berlin would be "madness," said, "we fighting men were cheated out of

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victory for our cause in 1918, 1920 and 1923, but, now, we are alert and know what to do." Stennes accused Hitler of watering down the revolutionary program and pointed out the inconsistency between Hitler's luncheons with Berlin bank directors and Rhineland heavy industrialists, and Nazi tenets about abolishing "capitalistic interest-slavery."

Hitler gave Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, as Berlin leader of the party, full powers to "clean up" the Stennes revolt. The future Minister of Propaganda did this so efficiently that within a few weeks Stennes and his revolt were forgotten completely. The disillusionment of Lieut. Richard Scheringer, young Reichswehr officer, who was tried before the German Supreme Court in 1930 for seeking to form Nazi cells in the Army and who later turned Communist upon being convinced of the insincerity of the Socialistic planks of the Nazi program, and the disgrace of Gregor Strasser, one of the party's most revolutionary leaders, in December, 1932, for negotiating with the late Gen. Kurt von Schleicher, then Chancellor, regarding the governmental coalition, also foreshadowed the future discontent of the Bolshevist elements.

For a time after he came into power in January, 1933, Hitler was able to divert the attention of the radicals within his camp by brilliant demonstrations planned under the direction of Doctor Goebbels. Hitler kept his extremists amused during the summer in heresy-hunts against the alleged Communist plotters while, in the autumn, came the excitement of Germany's departure from the League of Nations and the resulting referendum.

Discontent Grows

All the time, however, the real revolutionaries in the movement, enshrined as Storm Troopers, kept on wondering when the Socialistic planks in the party's program were going to be put into effect.

The discontented Storm Troopers, who considered that they had "put across" the first revolution, began to talk about the necessity of a second revolution to eliminate "the fine gentry," whom they regarded as the real beneficiaries of the Nazi victory. Their dissatisfaction was fanned into a flame when Hitler sided against his old comrades of the Storm Troop detachments in their controversy with the Reichswehr. The former Army officers had looked on the Storm Troops as a means of regaining their commissions, but the Reichswehr high command, bent on retaining the efficiency of the Regular Army, refused to entertain the idea of appointing *Sturm Abteilung* leaders as officers in the new conscripted army

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which the Reich is to have unless these men
had fresh military training.



A 1934 drawing by Roger Roy

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