

STATEMENT OF GOERING

1. When did you first meet Hitler?

In the fall of 1922, I think November. I was living in Garmisch and studying economics at the University near Munich. One evening I went to a public meeting of the Nationalistic political parties. Hitler was there, but did not speak. I had never heard of the National Socialists, but I had heard of Hitler only because every one made fun of him. I asked why Hitler did not speak. I was told that he did not agree with what was said and did not wish to spoil the unity of the meeting.

I did not meet Hitler on that occasion, but was told that every Monday Hitler spoke at a little place in Munich, so I went the following Monday. Hitler spoke an hour and a half. Said he did not believe in empty speeches - that an earnest will had to be behind a party. He protested against the Versailles Treaty. The main point of his program was German rehabilitation. It was the first time I could agree with a political speech. I was attracted to him. His personality made a strong impression on me. I decided to join as a common member. The next week I registered as a member.

2. Up to this time, had you had a personal talk with him?

No. But in late December (22) or early January, Hitler spoke to me and said he had heard of me, and was glad to have me join because of my service in the last war with Richthofen. He said he needed young officers especially those from the U boats or from aviation. Hitler said "You are the man I am looking for." I need you to take charge of my SA units."

Did he explain what this unit was?

Yes. He said it was a volunteer unit, organized on military lines. It was a guard for political meetings. It was used either to defend the party meetings or to attack the meetings of opponents. Most political meetings in Germany at that time ended in fights.

Hitler said he wanted SA to have a structure similar to Freikorps; that he wanted this organization ~~to cooperate~~ to cooperate with other nationalistic societies to make the revolution in Munich.

Were these units formed as military units?

You might call them para military, like the Freikorps. They were then in field gray uniforms, but later they wore brown shirts. On another occasion he told me he wanted to make this unit master of the streets.

Q. What was the size of this unit?

A. At the beginning about 800, the size of a small battalion, but later it developed into about 3,000 in Munich alone. Of course other nationalistic groups united with us and made demonstrations in the streets.

Q. Who of the defendants were in this movement at that time?

A. The defendant Hess, was in command of a student group. Rosenberg was also in one.

Q. Did Hitler discuss with you plans which resulted in the Munich Putsch?

A. Yes he did. He did not agree with the Bavarian movement, which was looking for separation from Berlin. He wanted a united Germany, and therefore he was opposed to the program laid down by the Bavarian Nationalists. He wanted no neutrals. He wanted to overthrow the Berlin government.

Q. What was your work?

A. I devoted most of my time to training the troops and recruiting young officers for leadership in the field.

Q. Did you confine your activities to Munich?

A. At this time the situation in the Ruhr under French occupation was bad, so we sent money to the people there and used this also as means of propaganda for our party and for our movement. For this we were well repaid, because later Goebbels

and many others came to the movement while Hitler was in prison.

Q. Was the SA used against the Jews at this time?

A. Before the Putsch, although we had an anti-Semitic program, we did not use the SA at that time against the Jews. The active anti-Jewish movement was here in Muerenberg.

Q. Who directed the anti-Jewish movement in Muerenberg?

A. Streicher had his own organization here, and was very active in inciting attacks upon the Jews and in writing newspaper articles about them. He was influential in bringing about more rigorous measures against them, after his party came into the National Socialists. That was his main work. Hitler of course was always anti-Semitic since his Vienna days. I did not accept the movement until much later.

Q. Will you tell us briefly of your plan for the Putsch, and its result?

A. This Putsch took place in Munich on the 8th of November 1923. Von Kahr, State Commissioner of Bavaria, was speaking at a hall in Munich. Hitler knew that von Kahr would speak on separation from Berlin. He wanted to break up the meeting and not have von Kahr say "Let the North stay red and burn itself out, but we will separate."

Q. How did you plan to break up the meeting?

A. It was intended, and actually done, that the SA go into the meeting together with other nationalist organizations; would guard the aisles and doors; certain others to go to their own quarters for arms - one group to an artillery school for two hundred young officers who actually did march with us. Upper Bavaria was alerted. Hess had the assignment to arrest all the Bavarian ministers. This he did and took them to a hunting lodge near Munich.

Q. What was the cause of your failure?

A. Unfortunately one minister was not at the meeting. He called Berlin and reported what was happening. Berlin acted and gave orders to suppress the rising. A Reichswehr detachment, which was on its way to help us, was ordered instead to resist us.

Q. What was Hitler doing all this time?

A. In the meantime Hitler had conferred with von Kahr, von Lossow and the colonel of police, von Seisser, and with Ludendorff had persuaded them to establish a provisional national government, with Hitler as the Reich Chancellor. Then Hitler had to leave for the SA barracks, and while he was away, von Kahr and his associates left. Hitler very soon found out that they had communicated with Berlin and repudiated the arrangement they had made with Hitler.

Q. What happened the next day?

A. The next day more of the Nationalist followers came into Munich. When Hitler saw this he called on Ludendorff and with him he decided to march into Munich. A big parade might swing the crowd. So we marched - all the leaders in the first line. Sure enough the first police and army lines gave way and let the columns pass. There must have been over 20,000 people surging through the streets, with our SA and similar units distributed through the columns. We turned into the direction of the Feldherren Halle. Kahr, and the others were there. Hitler wanted to talk to them and see if he could persuade them to keep their promise of the night before. He walked up to the police lines and asked to pass. Instead the police fired, and I fell at the first volley, shot in the thigh. I saw the man beside Hitler shot in the head, and as he fell he jerked Hitler's arm out of its socket. The SA unit fired at the police and killed 20 or 30. Both sides cried "Stop firing!" General von Epp appeared and dispersed the crowd.

Q. What then was done to you?

- A. Two men picked me up, carried me into a house, took my first aid packet and put it on my wound. Then they called an ambulance, took me to a private clinic, and then went in a friends car to Garmisch. In the mountains for two days, and then, trying to get into Austria, was stopped at the frontier, arrested and taken to a sanatorium in Garmisch by the police. There an old flyer came to me and took me across the frontier. I went to a hospital in Innsbruck and on March 24 went to Vienna. Went to one SA meeting there, and turned over my command to Hossbach as my successor, until Hitler could make new decisions. Escaped arrest in Vienna, went to Italy May 1 1924. Saw Mussolini twice, then went to Venice, where I lived in complete retirement until March 1925.
- Q. Did you hear from Hitler in this period?
- A. Hitler sent word to me not to return to Munich for trial as it might be secret and I should stay outside and tell their story.
- Q. And did you do as he asked?
- A. Yes, I stayed out. I was in Sweden and out of contact with Hitler and his movements until 1927. I worked for a parachute firm in Sweden, Roebur, and travelled on the continent.
- Q. Did you see Hitler at any time?
- A. I was in Berlin in October 1926; met Hitler by accident - nothing political. At that time Hitler gave me his book "Mein Kampf". I read it in Sweden, - agreed with most of what I read - have forgotten a lot of it by now.
- Q. Did Hitler say anything to you then?
- A. Hitler told me he hoped for an election soon, and if so would put me up for the Reichstag. But until 1928, hardly heard a word, and then I was elected, and that began my political career, and I had to fight my way back into the party.