THE ESTABLISHMENT, RISE, AND FALL OF THE GERMAN SA

Matt Hall

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Dr. Busick

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There have been many stories told, many books written, and many documentaries made that show how the events of World War Two took place in Germany. Some say that it was a complete surprise when war broke out while others were merely counting down the days until the first shots were fired. There were many famous events such as the bombing of London and its heroes the RAF. What scholars tend to leave out at times are the smaller details such as the economics, social conditions, and most importantly the names of lesser people. During this period there is but one singular name that sticks out amongst all other names. This name is one that almost every person can recognize and show some educated knowledge about. This name of course is Adolf Hitler. Hitler was the face of all aspects of World War Two and it is he who often gets either all the praise or all the disdain. When discussing and learning about Hitler most people only know the basic Spark Note facts about him and his Riche. There are many contributing factors that led Hitler to his total dominance over Germany but none of them compare to an important piece of Nazi history called the German SA. This group was created by Adolf Hitler and to be used for whatever purposes he deems necessary. At first this select group of men was a huge boom to Hitler’s rise to power due to the fact that they did anything that Hitler commanded without question or restraint. Later as he assumes more control of the German State the SA starts to become more bloodthirsty and demands for crucial changes that will in fact harm Hitler’s grasp for power. He then realizes that his creation has tuned against him and will eventually lead to the possibility of his complete downfall. This is the history that many do not know of and it is my hope to show the reader that though Hitler's creation of the German SA was intended to be a genius political ploy, the socioeconomic atmosphere of the Third Riche would corrode its function and members to the point where eventually Hitler feared the monster his creation will become.

To first understand the SA one needs to know where they came from, what they are comprised of and how they function. Hitler believed that the strength of the old state rested on three pillars: monarchist state form, the civil service, and the army.[[1]](#footnote-1) Hitler believes that due to the ending of World War One this German state has dissolved leaving the government to nothing but traitors and backstabbers. Therefor he joins the NSDAP party to due to the fact that is was at that time the first party that was shifting in a movement away from their old system of government towards a different path. This political party was called the National Socialist German Worker's Party. Within this party Hitler sought out to create a distinct group that watches or monitors their party meetings. This group was to be an elect smaller group with a distinct philosophy that aligned completely with Hitler’s.[[2]](#footnote-2) For a short time these men were disguised as the gymnastic and sports division to avoid trouble with the government. Their goal as this was to serve as a means for bringing our youthful members together into a powerful organization for the purpose of utilizing their strength as an offensive force that eh disposal of the movement.[[3]](#footnote-3) On October 5, 1921 the title of sports and gymnastic division was erased and the birth of the Sturmabteilung or SA commenced. These men were modeled after Mussolini’s black shirts therefore their dressed in dark brown colors and were given the name brown shirts.[[4]](#footnote-4) This gave the NSDAP movement the appearance of having an armed force division that was dangerous and posed a threat to communist Marxism. It was comprised up of men from the free corps as well as any young lad who wanted to join the NSDAP and have a position of power and influence. Once joined it gave young men the feeling of being important and having an important job. They were initially set as a guard or bouncer to meetings in the beer halls when NSDAP members met. Once the party grew larger they shifted their focus to protecting party rallies as well as speeches. Initially they were a defensive group but quickly driven mad with influence and power grew to be one of the most feared groups in Germany. They eventually took to the streets and formed a gang like society. “Reports continually appeared I the press of brutal beatings, torture, and ritual humiliation of prisoners from all walks of like and all shades of political opinion apart from the Nazis.”[[5]](#footnote-5) It is through their violent actions that these men from the SA grew to understand the idea of comradeship. The way to integrate in this society was through community violence and shared ideological views of hatred toward a particular person or group. Through these actions, an individual belonging to the SA became greatly more entangled in the organization or gang. This gave them the ability to participate as a close knit community in which violence, security, and hierarchy were all intermixed together.[[6]](#footnote-6) The extreme glorification of violence inside the SA had almost unanimous appeal as the founding principles of this sect of the NSDAP party. The focus of these groups stands on the shoulders of comradeship up at the front, meaning fighting together on the war front as to defend Germany from communism. Some even say that they had gone wild arresting, beating, and murdering communists all up and down the streets of Munich.[[7]](#footnote-7)

While the SA used mostly fear and intimidation to rule they did in fact have other methods to attracting possible candidates or party members as well as other ways to showcase their membership than violence. “On the occasion of the party rally in Nuremburg it was evident that the party, wherever it appeals publically, places great value on impressing the general public with the strength of its organization, displaying this through parades of uniformed SA members accompanied by flags, standards, and bands.”[[8]](#footnote-8) This practice was not unusual for the SA to be a part of. Often when parades like this would occur it would happen as a result in the amount of bad press on the latest beating and Gang Street fights that the SA would be a part of. Therefore parades and rallies would be scheduled to show the German folk that they were also a large, powerful, important party that as a German citizen, you would want to be a part of. These rallies and parties grew much attention and they were often looked forward to due to the fact that they were fun as well as how it showcased the NSDAP and SA. Another reason it was fun to be in the SA was the sense of being a “bad boy” meaning that you got to get into fights and assert your authority over others. It was the cool thing to do at the time in Germany. You would get treated specially in almost all forms of life. There were certain places only SA members could go to as well as certain parties and parades that you and only you and your fellow comrades got to be a part of. But the most important reason for joining the SA was to hopefully get the privilege to be around or serve personally Adolf Hitler. A good example of one of the major payoffs of joining the SA would be Hitler’s showcase at Coburg. Once Hitler saw how quickly Italy fell in love with Mussolini’s success he decided to showcase his own prestige and power as to gain further support. He decided to visit a town names Coburg in upper Bavaria and to be a part of the German Day celebration. He was invited to this occasion but was instructed to bring some escort meaning just a few. Therefor he took it upon himself to show the might the German SA and selected 600 men from the SA and boarded a train and attended the party and or celebration. Then when they arrived another 200 SA men traveled there on their own to be a part of Hitler’s company.[[9]](#footnote-9) Most of the men SA men who were selected to go were to pay their own expenses the entirety of the trip. Once they arrived there the people were furious at the amount of SA men that came and as the SA marched down the streets of Coburg there were protestors and rioters who slandered and screamed and threw objects at the SA men therefore Hitler as a show of power and force of his brown shirts immediately took over the city and contained his parade. So this like many others was an incentive of joining the SA. You got to get into fights and got to wear special uniforms. Also one got to be a part of something important and even possibly get close to Adolf Hitler himself. This is how it was in the beginnings of the NSDAP and SA party. It was fun and games and made you feel important but quickly as Hitler rose to power so did the power and influence of the SA which soon leads to an all-out attempt to seizing the government.

“During the evening of November 8th and the morning of November 9th, 1923, Hitler and his supporters staged an unsuccessful bid for power in Germany, launched in alliance with other right-winged nationalist groups from a Munich beer hall where party meetings were often held.”[[10]](#footnote-10) This even was one of the defining moments in not only Hitler’s history but SA history as well. It was about a quarter to nine on the evening of November 8, 1923 and Gustav Ritter von Kahr who was a right wing politician had just finished speaking to roughly 3,000 burghers. (Wealthy middle class) There at almost 9:00pm Hitler with almost 600 SA men surrounded the Bürgerbräukeller or large beer hall and mounted a machine gun at its entrance. There once surrounded Hitler along with some of his high ranking officials and SA moved in and took hostages and declared that, “The National Revolution has begun!”[[11]](#footnote-11) While this was a turning point for Hitler it meant an even more important role of the SA. This two day attempted revolution showed three key elements that the SA were progressing more towards a powerful entity. The first element is that Beer Hall Putsch shows that the SA or storm troopers are able to mobilize quickly. The decision to try and size the German government through this little coup was not a plant that Hitler had in the making. While he wanted to rise to power one day through forceful means he did not intend on this being the precise date, time, and place. It was only after the big rally that Kahr held that Adolf Hitler decided to make a movie and make it quickly. He was worried that Kahr would try to make a seize on the government for himself and therefore Hitler could not allow such a thing giving way to the decision to stage the coup. To be able to successfully pull this off he needed able bodied men and therefore he turned to his Storm troopers and SA.

The second element is that Hitler’s followers and SA had large scale influence. When Hitler and his SA men arrived in Munich it was during a rally and due to the fact that there were already thousands present for it, it was difficult for Hitler and his men to get into the rally to find its leaders. “He was even able to induce police to clear the street of spectators so that his storm troopers could move his militia to and around the beer hall.”[[12]](#footnote-12) Hitler and more importantly his storm troopers had enough influence to get the city officials and city police to show deference to them as they began their seize of the beer hall. Though given way to act by the city officials it does not imply that they care about the NSDAP party but instead more than likely fear it but their numbers as a city police were too low to start a defensive front at that time. The last element that shows the strengthening power of the SA was the fact that they were at that time sufficiently supplied to a point. An actual eye witness to the Putsch writes, “On morning of November 9, 192, Munich looked like a beleaguered city. The nearer I came to the laboratory where I was completing my chemistry studies, the more brown-shirted uniforms and barbed-wire barricades’ I saw. Throughout the night Nazi storm troopers had .streamed into the city from outlying villages and camps, distributing arms to sympathizers. Telephone and telegraph wire had been cut.”[[13]](#footnote-13) This eye witness shows that while the SA or storm troopers may not have grand amount of munitions and manpower to take on the entire country of Germany they could at least take control of a city. There were also accounts that the SA men had places machine guns all around the beer hall where the right wing leaders were so that anyone that attempted to escape would be cut down in a blistering heat of hot led. Therefore these three elements show that whole the SA was not at its greatest numbers they were in fact able to mobilize a sizeable amount of men and munitions added to its fear capabilities to quickly take over a city. Eventually Hitler after bully tactics he was able to convince Von Lossow, Von Seisser, and Von Kahr to back his putsch. Eventually through a deal the three right wing leaders were able to leave the hall and began their defection from Hitler and his plan. During this period of time Hitler was able to increase his numbers from 600 SA men to a little over 2,000. Due to the betrayal by the three right wing politicians, Bavaria was able to gather up enough troops and policemen to suppress Hitler’s march on Berlin. This incident ended with the death of 14 Nazis many of which belonged to the SA and 4 Bavarian police men. After this event Hitler will be tried for treason and sentenced to prison for a very brief amount of time but while he is there many believe that the NSDAP party and more importantly the SA will just fade away.

After the Putsch the Bavarian government feared the NSDAP or Nazi party therefore they decided to ban anything and all that had to do with this party with a special emphasis on the SA. This was a time where many believed the SA and Nazi party would die off. When Hitler was released from prison in 1924 from serving only roughly nine months, he had to deal with a growing problem of an unorganized uncontained SA. Before this time the chief of staff over the SA was a man close to Hitler names Ernst Röhm. Under Hitler he served as the head of the SA and only answered to Hitler. While Hitler was in prison he gave Röhm to rebuild the SA any way he saw fit therefore since there was a ban on the Nazi part as well as the SA he created the Frontbann. It was created in April 1924 as a means for a legal alternative for the banning on the Nazi SA due to the events of the failed Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923. Since the NSDAP and or Nazi Party was banned by the Weimer republic it underwent a name change and was briefly called the National Socialist Freedom Party in hopes of maintain its legitimacy. Since the Nazi party underwent a name change all of its affiliates had to follow suite and therefore the SA became known as the Frontbann. There was logistically no difference between the members of the SA and the members of the now Frontbann. Much like its old membership it also maintained the same practices as it did before. Since Hitler was not around to take supreme leadership separate Frontbann units were created to disburse power all throughout Germany. All together the sum total members of the Frontbann were about thirty thousand members spread all across Germany. As for the uniform of the Frontbann it was quite the same as the old SA uniform. One of the main differences was that instead of wearing a dark brown shirt with a brown cap they chose to wear a grey shirt with a grey cap. They also wore the same arm band as before with the only difference being a different symbol on their helmets. Due to the fact of Hitler being gone the structure of the Frontbann quickly dissipated. Once Hitler was released from prison he had to deal with the concerns of rebellious actions taken Röhm. Röhm attempted to make the SA into his own private personal army instead of the political instrument Hitler had designed them for.[[14]](#footnote-14) Filled with ambition Röhm presented to Hitler a memorandum on April 16 that the 30,000 men of the Frontbann could become the foundation of a new national political organization but only if it was under Rohm’s absolute authority. Hitler feared the notion of having such a large scale force not directly under his control therefore he demanded the Frontbann accept his and his authority alone. This eventually led to the resignation of Röhm and the full control of the Frontbann by Adolf Hitler.[[15]](#footnote-15) On February 27, 1925 the ban was lifted therefore instituting the new life into the Nazi party as well as the SA.

While Hitler did many things to restore the SA he did change some factors about it that would eventually help shape his own political career. He deemed it necessary that the rebuilding of the SA must be in accordance with the association’s law. Hitler learned that force was not the path to power therefore he wanted to show that he had a legitimate group of men and supporters in his rank therefore he outlawed the formation of armed groups within the SA and went as far as to say that if an SA member carried a firearm or secretly stored one at home he would receive immediate dismissal from the SA. Along with these new rules Hitler also demanded that there were to be no public protests or processions without the consent of his word and those that chose to disobey were purged from the SA.[[16]](#footnote-16) During its reorganization Hitler saw that the SA was, “growing more and more into its task, and had moved further and further away from the character of a senseless and unimportant defense movement and risen to the level of a living organization of struggle for the erection of a new German state.”[[17]](#footnote-17) He believed the purpose of the SA should remain as it was before and that’s to harden the bodies of the German youth, to educate oneself towards a specific ideal and self-discipline, and lastly to learn how to become a master in the ways of propaganda as to further advance the cause of the SA and the party.[[18]](#footnote-18) While Hitler viewed the ending of the year of 1923 as a possible fracture to his party it was also a necessary evil that needed to happen to further the development of his SA. The newly founded NSDAP of 1925 must once again reestablish, reorganize, and retrain its SA members according to Hitler’s new principles of legitimacy. “It must return to its original healthy views, and thus once more find its highest task in creating, in its SA, an instrument for the conduct and reinforcement of the movement’s struggle for its philosophy of life.”[[19]](#footnote-19) From now on the SA can no longer be just a simple combat league of sorts or a gang of brutes or street bullies. It must not be a sort of secret society to which there is few to no admittance. No it must take the steps towards something great and must undertake an endeavor to train as though it were a professional guard. They are to grow their numbers from a few thousand men to nothing less than hundreds of thousands. Eventually Hitler invited Röhm back into the fold to take back up the head of the SA. Finally they must stand guard and ready to fight the greatest evil in the world, Marxism.

Due to Hitler wanting to legitimize himself and the NSDSP party he needed to reign in the SA and its members. Once the ban was lifted on the Nazi party and after assuming command once again of the SA Hitler began his political career and in doing so restructured the tasks for the SA. At first they were designed to torment, fight, and produce fear in the hearts of anyone that held any views that contradicted those of the NSDAP. This being the case Hitler reorganized his party to take part in using different means to gain supporters and votes for the party. These newer waters would be tested by means of party propaganda. While this type of campaigning was used before it was not utilized as the main measure to gain support. Now that Hitler knows that his way to power is derived through using the system, he chooses to bring this new life and style over into his SA. The newly formed storm troopers or brown shirts would now use propaganda as their primary form of persuasion. “This style propaganda is backed up everywhere by the simultaneous appearance of the SA people, who on bicycles or on trucks – some belonging to the party – go to the individual meetings in an area and merely through being there give a speaker considerable support, help fill the hall itself, act as a protective force for the meeting.”[[20]](#footnote-20) During this process they would also as a minute coercive force so that no one present would be able to speak up and interject or even contradict the message the speaker is giving. This makes it to where the possibility of risk for anyone to present a counterargument would be swiftly contained.

Since Hitler was trying to shift the purposes of the SA towards a merely more political atmosphere he needed to find a replacement for the SA in the arena of professionalism as a fighting unit. After some time he knew that reorganizing the SA would be difficult and that it would be hard to contain. After the band and its reorganization it was made up of several hundred thousand men. Some of its leaders hoped and encouraged Hitler to have the SA replace the army itself. But over time the brown shirts never became nothing more than a mutely mob of brawlers. “Many of its leaders such as Röhm were notorious homosexual perverts.”[[21]](#footnote-21) Shirer goes on to write that even the leader of the SA of the Munich branch was homosexual and that these two men and dozens of other men were only good for quarreling and feuding as, “only men of unnatural sexual inclinations can.” Therefore due to this and the lack of professionalism of the SA Hitler decided that he needs a new military force to lead his pack. This will lead to the creation of the Schutzstaffel or the SS. On January 6, 1929 Hitler appointed the faithful Himmler as heads of his personal protection formation, the SS. While it had its small bodyguard origins in 1923 it was re-founded in 1925 under Hitler until Himmler’s appointment in 1929.[[22]](#footnote-22) Hitler wanted to distinguish the difference between his SA and his SS therefore he gave the SS a black shirt and black cap uniform to reflect Mussolini’s black shirts. Hitler will eventually overtime see that under Himmler the growth of the SS. It will become an extremely well trained and supplied part of his Nazi party and will also be very secretive and serve Himmler and Hitler only. It will eventually grow so much that when Hitler calls for world war, “by 1944, the Waffen SS made up over one-fourth of Germany's armored divisions and one third of its mechanized divisions.”[[23]](#footnote-23) This just gives us a foreshadowing of the importance and usage of the SS and how they will eventually outgrow and outperform and outlive the SA.

Eventually overtime after a series of close elections, campaigning, and most importantly a back room deal Hitler were able to achieve the goal of being named Chancellor on January 31, 1933. Once seeing Hitler’s initial rise to power Goering, a close friend of Hitler’s and minister of the interior of Prussia, immediately removed hundreds of republican officials in Prussia and replaced them with mostly SA officers. He then ordered the local police to avoid completely the actions of the SA unless they should show hostility to the state.[[24]](#footnote-24) This is not the first of the long list of what caused the SA to run amuck with power but it in fact adds to the timeline of events. By doing this and executing this order the SA have complete free roam in Prussia and are given unprecedented authority over local police. Obviously as seen in the past when not constrained the SA wants nothing more than blood and violence and it will eventually lead to this. Goering went on to urge the police in Prussia, which controlled two thirds of Germany, to “make use of firearms.” Therefore those who did not shoot on sight anyone that was contradictory to the Nazi cause would be dealt with in a severe manor. “Just to make sure that the job would be ruthlessly done, Goering on February 22 established a force composing of 50,000 men and of those men a sum total of 40,000 were members belonging to the SA.[[25]](#footnote-25) This gave the SA the ability to kill anyone and everyone who did not follow Hitler or was a sympathizer to anything else but the Nazi cause. The odd thing is that the folk of Germany were okay with this and these acts due the constant bombardment of Propaganda. Time and time again due to SA and NSDAP Propaganda the people of Germany feared this idea of a red scare. They were told repeatedly that the Marxists and communists were going to try and strike at Germany and render it to ashes then rebuild it in a communist fashion. This was hampered over and over again to the point where most of the people residing in Germany bough into this notion. Therefore all actions taken by Hitler through his decrees or actions taken by his extension the SA were looked upon with joy and good standing. It was a time when Germany which had been for so long a multitude of piece finally came together as one great nation with one voice. “In every German village and town the red and black swastika waved side by side with the black-white-red flags of the old Reich. The Führer’s storm troopers were now accepted almost as an arm of government; and nearly every important post was held by Nazis or someone in the party. In the classroom and the church, the Brown Revolution was receiving commendation and blessing.”[[26]](#footnote-26) This was the panicle time period for the SA. They were given a rule book with no pages and told to write their own story. There was no limit on the amount of force that was allowed to be used nor a limit set on what made up an official enemy of the state. They had unprecedented authority along with the supplies and means to make anything possible. Sadly for Germany this unchecked force of men would eventually turn into a nightmare and a monster that would try to take on Germany itself in response incurring the wrath of their leader Adolf Hitler.

By the time that summer came of 1933, Hitler’s Nazi party had completed and meshed together Germany’s political and social institutions. “By July 14 the NSDAP constituted the only political party in Germany, and peasants, workers, and professionals had seen their former organizations replaced by Nazi ones.”[[27]](#footnote-27) The term Gleichschaltung had been put into full effect in Germany and the meaning of this term is coordination, making the same, and bringing into line. Once Hitler became chancellor it took him only a total of six months to completely dominate the entire country and receive total control. There was no more fighting within the country and the Nazi party had decimated all remnants of a possible Bolshevik or Marxist revolution. He had gotten the peace he wanted and preached about therefor there was no more need to fight internally for the country. While this was the sentiment for most of the German folk there were still factions that wanted to continue to fight and continue to shed blood. The main antagonist for Germany will now become the SA. Dr. Gobbles, Hitler’s minister of propaganda even wrote a message to the Nazi party stating that while the Bolshevik revolution may be over, there are still SA members who are restless and not content to see the ending of the revolution.[[28]](#footnote-28) This was starting to become one of the main problems all throughout Germany. While Hitler and the NSDAP were getting the concessions and power they were demanding the had little use for resources such as intimidation and violence. This will become a problem due to the fact that the SA was instituted to get into fights and wreak havoc and now that is no longer needed.

During the year 1934 Hitler and his Nazis had almost complete control of the entire country of Germany. There were just three obstacles that stood in his way of total dominance, the cries of outrage and wanting for a second revolution by the SA, the competition between the professional German army and the SA, and lastly who would succeed Hindenburg, the president of Germany at the time. “The radicalism of the SA had troubled Hitler since the seizure of power and by the spring of 1934 the Führer was ready to put an end to the threat of a second revolution which leading elements were calling for Ernst Röhm, the chief of the SA.”[[29]](#footnote-29) At this point in time under Earnest Röhm the SA’s numbers were a little over two and one half million members worldwide. Due to its large numbers, Röhm presented Hitler with a memorandum basically stating that his SA should become the new foundation for a new German army. All other existing forms of a military or those that resembled it should be put under the umbrella of the SA with the leader of this new ministry being Röhm.[[30]](#footnote-30) Due to Hitler’s fear of the professional army’s intervention he chose to not back Röhm’s idea and instead condemned the idea. Then soon after in February he met with one of his officers and began a plan to disarm the SA and reduce its size by a sum total of around two thirds. Furthermore Hitler also wanted to start up a new series of yearly inspections to be given at his discursion that would insure that the SA would not receive any type of military training or arms. Overtime relations got worse and worse within Hitler’s cabinet between leaders of the SA and the Generals of the standing professional army. Hitler needed the army’s support and help to help him carry out his future plans for war but at the same time he also needed to find a way to keep them from starting a civil war with the SA. Germany’s president Hindenburg was old and dying and it was only a matter of time. Hitler knew that most of the army and several other conservative leaders all throughout Germany wanted to restore the old Hohenzollern monarchy when Hindenburg died; therefore he understood his necessity to act and to act swiftly. Finally during the month of April an opportunity presented itself. It was during a routine naval maneuvers inspection on board of one of the German’s cruiser’s named the Deutschland. There while on inspection Hitler came to an understanding with The commander and chief of the German army, Colonel Freiherr von Fritsch, as well as the German Navy commander Admiral Erich Raeder. “Hitler agreed to make sure that Rohm’s ambitions would come to nothing and to protect the army as a separate unit; the generals agreed to support Hitler's succession to the presidency.”[[31]](#footnote-31) Hitler realized that, “the price he paid for this elevation to supreme power was paultry: the sacrifice of the SA.”[[32]](#footnote-32) Eventually Röhm learned of this pact between Hitler and the army and it infuriated him and created even more tension. All throughout the summer in Germany there were nonstop never ending cries for a second revolution from the SA. Finally in the beginning of June Hitler made one last attempt with Röhm to calm the SA and end their call to arms. Hitler quotes, “I informed him that I had the impression from countless rumors and numerous declarations of faithful old party members and the SA leaders that conscienceless elements were preparing a national Bolshevist action that could bring untold misfortune to Germany…I implored him for the last time to voluntarily abandon this madness and instead to lend his authority to prevent a development that, in any event, could only end in disaster.”[[33]](#footnote-33) While after this conversation with Hitler, Röhm agreed to back down, he chose to act differently. He continued to preach alongside with Dr. Goebbels to promote a, “second revolution.” Therefore Hitler felt even more threatened and unappreciated but most importantly was the fact that Röhm continued to ridicule him by refusing to accept his Führer’s messianic authority over him.[[34]](#footnote-34) Once this meeting took place Hitler demanded from the SA that they go on a temporary leave for the entire month of July and that they were not allowed to get together to practice military exercises or participate in parades or any public showing of some sort. Along with this Hitler also banned temporarily the wearing of the SA uniform. Even during this period of repressed SA activities tensions still grew and it started to affect other high ranking members of the Nazi party. Himmler and Goering were two of Hitler’s most trusted men as well as high ranking officials in his regime. Over time they became sour to the SA due to the fact that the SA was calling for a second revolution which would disburse and possibly eradicate their newly founded powers and authority. Sourness grew into contempt which blossomed finally into complete and utter hatred for the SA and Röhm. They were some of the first that plotted to do away with the SA but they knew it could not be done without the consent and help from their Führer. “Himmler did not want his SS to be overshadowed by the SA any longer and Goring was intent on becoming the regime's number two.”[[35]](#footnote-35) Both of these men had an interest and with the growing numbers and unrest of the SA it was going to be near impossible to keep their grasps on power if they chose not to act. Bouncing back to President Hindenburg, though sick he was aware of the unrest in Germany and was starting to see the possibility of a civil war therefore he sent notice to Hitler that if he did not get the situation under control with his own SA he would declare martial law and give the army full authoritarian rights. This will become a horrible turn of events for Germany’s Chancellor and not only will Hitler’s plan to become the president come to an end if the army takes control of the country it would also be the end of him as well as the entire Nazi party.[[36]](#footnote-36) Eventually Himmler and Goering will push Hitler to make the decision that will forever change the SA. They convince him that Röhm was planning on seizing all power in Germany for himself via a putsch just like Hitler had done. They continued to tell false information of a threatening plot to be undertaken by the entirety of the SA to destroy the Nazi party and claim all of Germany for themselves. Therefore Hitler gave Himmler the orders to suppress the upcoming putsch. On June 25 the commander in chief of the army put the entire state of Germany of a state of nationwide alert. Following that Röhm just three days later was completely expelled from the German Officers League to set as a warming for what is soon to come to the SA and all of its members.[[37]](#footnote-37) Over time the SS had been secretly building its army and numbers under Himmler. Since the army was pressing Hitler for a purge Himmler had his SS evaluate all the incriminating evidence they could find to use against the SA and with that information they were able to begin to compile multiple death lists in which other Party leaders such as Goring also had a say. Then to push the matter even more on June twenty fifth Dr. Goebbels went on the radio and gave a very long and vile speech in which he used as propaganda against the SA. He described the SA through the entire speech as a “virulent power struggle.”[[38]](#footnote-38) These steps taken by Hitler and his men such as Himmler and Goering are what it took to completed the requisite preparations. It took only about a total of four days for all these men including the generals of the standing German army to agree on how to go about this purge. They were to emphasize that the army was to not be involved in any way except that they are supporting Hitter and the decisions he chooses to make.

Fearful of a putsch at any given moment Hitler decided to strike first and strike quickly. On June thirtieth he sent word to all of his SA officers informing them of a meeting that would be taking place in a place called Bad Wiessee, which was a Bavarian spa. Hitler and his SS men arrived a few days before the meeting was to take place to prepare for the blood purge. They then on June thirtieth at four in the morning arrive in Munich and saw that some of the action had already taken place. The SA leaders located in Munich were already arrested and some even killed. Therefore Hitler and his professionally trained SS men marched on to Weissee to face off against Röhm. When they arrived they actually found Röhm and his cohorts asleep in the town’s inn. Hitler bursts in his room shouts, “you are under arrest for treason”, and then begins to have Röhm’s men dragged from their beds outside to be shot on sight. Röhm was sent back to Munich to be held in a prison there.[[39]](#footnote-39) This event was names the Night of the Long Knives. Most all of the highest leaders on Himmler’s list were executed without a trial. Most of these men were completely unaware of what was happening and it has been recorded that some were on vacation with their families and even the right wing conservative Von Kahr was on his honeymoon when he was murdered.[[40]](#footnote-40) Back in Munich in one final act of kindness Hitler attempted to let Röhm end his own life. In his cell Hitler had placed a revolver on a desk and gave him the courtesy of not being gunned down like a mad dog. Due to his pride he ordered the guard to have his Führer kill him himself. Then after he made that statement three SS officers went into his cell, had him stand straight and proper and then all three shot him at point blank range.[[41]](#footnote-41) During Röhm’s time in prison and even after there were still executions taken place. Hitler had his SS go after a multitude of his old enemies even some back from his failed Beer Hall Putsch. There have even been I witness accounts of this purge taking place. One recent SA man named Hans Frank saw all this with his own eyes. “Frank went to the prison and found about 200 SA men who had been rounded up on Chancellor Adolf Hitler's orders. He was even more surprised later that evening when two aides relayed an order from Hitler himself: 110 of the men were to be shot.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

In Berlin during this time Himmler and Goering gotten around one hundred and fifty SA members and officers and lined them up along a school wall to be massacred by a firing squad. The killing did not end with the SA though; one of the biggest impacts that happened as a result of the Night of the Long Knives was the murder of General Von Schleicher. SS men showed up at his front steps ran his doorbell and when he answered he was shot in the head as was his wife who ran to the door.[[43]](#footnote-43) Most of the killing was over by July first and Hitler even flew back on the thirtieth to host a tea party in the gardens of chancellery. Due to the service of the SS during the night of the Long Knives they were congratulated for their efforts and made a completely operate entity from the SA.

Hitler emerged from this event without a single black mark. Politically he was a hero and it actually bolstered the Nazi support which will give way to more and more members added to the party and an overall unification of Germany. “One reason that the German population acquiesced was their relief that no major upheaval occurred.”[[44]](#footnote-44) Hitler in the aftermath began giving several speeches and in them he repeatedly cheered and boasted about how no windows were broken and how he single handedly saved Germany from a second violent revolution. On June thirtieth Hitler will rise from the Night of the Long Knives more powerful than ever. Almost unanimously, the army applauded the Night of the Long Knives which was odd due to the fact that he had previously had their General Murdered. Even Von Hindenburg who was still ailing at the time had a telegram sent to Hitler that expressed to him his profoundly felt gratitude and he then congratulated Hitler for ending the seditionist treason. This event was so celebrated that even one of the other high ranking generals of the German army went as far as saying that Schleicher actually was plotting to overthrow the government and was in fact an enemy of the state. To end the entire blood purge one thing was needed for Hitler to achieve his total grasp on power. On August second nineteen thirty four Hindenburg died leaving the seat of president of Germany vacant and ripe for the plucking by Hitler. Therefore the army stood by the agreement made with Hitler aboard the Deutschland. The title "President" was dropped, and Hitler was called Führer and Reich Chancellor.[[45]](#footnote-45) When this event took place even the officers and other soldiers in the army took a solace other to the allegiance of Hitler and he alone and they looked upon his as their new supreme commander of the armed forces.

On August nineteen thirty four to prove that the German citizen was excited about this new regime change the had a vote cast and out of almost forty five million voters there was a turnout of thirty whether that were in favor of Hitler and the Nazi party’s takeover of Germany. So what became of the SA and its leadership? Well when the purge took place it completely broke the power of the SA and its top leadership. The new prominent leaders within the Nazi party became the SS and even within the own German army a place was formed for them to serve side by side in military operations of war.

Personally for Hitler this was a big bolster to his own Reich. He had grown in favor with the German folk as well as acquired a new position as the president of Germany. Also he was able to do away with the SA and with them all of his competitors within Germany. Also he was now in charge of the entire German army as their supreme commander In chief. This purge enabled Hitler to become the master of all parts of Germany during the nineteen thirties. There was no one above him in the chain of command and he had to answer to no one but himself.[[46]](#footnote-46)

While there were countless murders of the SA the entire organization was not completely wiped off the face of German History. It was still present during all of World War two but the difference was that this group was now in all practical terms powerless. It was even more disorganized than before and lacked any leadership. Only a few of its members were killed the other couple million just slowly drifted away from the party due to the fact it now has Bolshevistic views as an enemy of the state. While not important after the purge the SA was a huge stepping stone and a solid foundation for Hitler as he ascended to power. He could not have risen without it but like many of his ideas and groups, they were only useful for so long. While the SA was Hitler’s creation he obviously could not contain it and therefore came to fear it for the monster it had become which is why he had to find a way to put it down.

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