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Holocaust Timeline

The Night of the Long Knives

The four million brown shirted Nazi storm troopers, the SA (Sturmabteilung), included many members who actually believed in the 'socialism' of National Socialism and also wanted to become a true revolutionary army in place of the regular German Army.

But to the regular Army High Command and its conservative supporters, this potential storm trooper army represented a threat to centuries old German military traditions and the privileges of rank. Adolf Hitler had been promising the generals for years he would restore their former military glory and break the "shackles" of the Treaty of Versailles which limited the Army to 100,000 men and prevented modernization.

For Adolf Hitler, the behavior of the SA was a problem that now threatened his own political survival and the entire future of the Nazi movement.

The anti-capitalist, anti-tradition sentiments often expressed by SA leaders and echoed by the restless masses of storm troopers also caused great concern to big industry leaders who had helped put Hitler in power. Hitler had promised them he would put down the trade union movement and Marxists, which he had done. However, now his own storm troopers with their talk of a 'second revolution' were sounding more and more like Marxists themselves. (The first revolution having been the Nazi seizure of power in early 1933.)

The SA was headed by Ernst Röhm, a battle scarred, aggressive, highly ambitious street brawler who had been with Hitler from the very beginning. Röhm and the SA had been very instrumental in Hitler's rise to power by violently seizing control of the streets and squashing Hitler's political opponents.

However, by early 1934, a year after Hitler came to power, the SA's usefulness as a violent, threatening, revolutionary force had effectively come to an end. Hitler now needed the support of the regular Army generals and the big industry leaders to rebuild Germany after the Great Depression, re-arm the military and ultimately accomplish his long range goal of seizing more living space for the German people.

The average German also feared and disliked the SA brownshirts with their arrogant, gangster-like behavior, such as extorting money from local shop owners, driving around in fancy news cars showing off, often getting drunk, beating up and even murdering innocent civilians.

At the end of February, 1934, Hitler held a meeting attended by SA and regular Army leaders including Röhm and German Defense Minister General Werner von Blomberg. At this meeting Hitler informed Röhm the SA would not be a military force in Germany but would be limited to certain political functions. In Hitler's presence, Röhm gave in and even signed an agreement with Blomberg.

However, Röhm soon let it be know he had no intention of keeping to the agreement. In April he even boldly held a press conference and proclaimed, "The SA is the National Socialist Revolution!!"

Within the SA at this time was a highly disciplined organization known as the SS (Schutzstaffel) which had been formed in 1925 as Hitler's personal body guard. SS chief Heinrich Himmler along with his second-in-command, Reinhard Heydrich, and Hermann Göring, began plotting against Röhm to prod Hitler into action against his old comrade, hoping to gain from Röhm's downfall.

On June 4, Hitler and Röhm had a five hour private meeting lasting until midnight. A few days later Röhm announced he was taking a 'personal illness' vacation and the whole SA would go on leave for the month of July. He also convened a conference of top SA leaders for June 30 at a resort town near Munich which Hitler promised to attend to sort things out.

On June 17, Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen, who had helped Hitler become Chancellor, stunned everyone by making a speech criticizing the rowdy, anti-intellectual behavior of the SA and denouncing Nazi excesses such as strict press censorship. Papen also focused on the possibility of a 'second revolution' by Röhm and the SA and urged Hitler to put a stop to it. "Have we experienced an anti-Marxist revolution in order to put through a Marxist program?" Papen asked.

His speech drastically increased the tension between German Army leaders and SA leaders and further jeopardized Hitler's position. But for the moment Hitler hesitated to move against his old comrade Röhm.

A few days later, June 21, Hitler went to see German President Paul von Hindenburg at his country estate. Hindenburg was in failing health and now confined to a wheelchair. Hitler met with the Old Gentleman and Defense Minister Blomberg and was stiffly informed the SA problem must be solved or the president would simply declare martial law and let the German Army run the country, effectively ending the Nazi regime.



SA Leader Ernst Röhm

Meanwhile, Himmler and Heydrich spread false rumors that Röhm and the SA were planning a violent takeover of power (putsch).

On June 25, the German Army was placed on alert, leaves canceled and the troops confined to the barracks. An agreement had been secretly worked out between Himmler and Army generals ensuring cooperation between the SS and the Army during the coming action against the SA. The Army would provide weapons and any necessary support, but would remain in the barracks and let the SS handle things.

On Thursday, June 28, Hitler, Göring, and Goebbels attended the wedding of Gauleiter Josef Terboven in Essen. Hitler was informed by phone that he faced the possibility of a putsch by Röhm's forces and also faced the possibility of a revolt by influential conservative non-Nazis who wanted Hindenburg to declare martial law and throw out Hitler and his government.

Hitler then sent Göring back to Berlin to get ready to put down the SA and conservative government leaders there. The SS was put on full alert.

Friday, June 29, Hitler made a scheduled inspection tour of a labor service camp and then went to a hotel near Bonn for the night. He was informed by Himmler that evening by phone that SA troops in Munich knew about the coming action and had taken to the streets.

Hitler decided to fly to Munich to put down the SA rebellion and confront Röhm and top SA leaders who were gathered at the resort town of Bad Wiessee near Munich.

Arriving in Munich near dawn, Saturday, June 30, Hitler first ordered the arrest of the SA men who were inside Munich Nazi headquarters, then proceeded to the Ministry of the Interior building where he confronted the top SA man in Munich after his arrest, even tearing off his insignia in a fit of hysteria.

Next it was on to Röhm. A column of troops and cars containing Hitler, Rudolf Hess, and others, sped off toward Röhm and his men.

At this point, the story is often told (partly conceived by the Nazis) of Hitler arriving at the resort hotel about 6:30 a.m. and rushing inside with a pistol to arrest Röhm and other SA leaders.

However it is more likely the hotel was first secured by the SS before Hitler went near it. Hitler then confronted Röhm and the others and sent them to Stadelheim prison outside Munich to be later shot by the SS.

An exception was made in the case of Edmund Heines, an SA leader who had been found in bed with a young man. When told of this, Hitler ordered his immediate execution at the hotel.

A number of the SA leaders, including Röhm, were homosexuals. Prior to the purge, Hitler for the most part ignored their behavior because of their usefulness to him during his rise to power. However, their usefulness and Hitler's tolerance had now come to an end. Later, their homosexual conduct would be partly used as an excuse for the murders.

Saturday morning about 10 a.m. a phone call was placed from Hitler in Munich to Göring in Berlin with the prearranged code word 'Kolibri' (hummingbird) that unleashed a wave of murderous violence in Berlin and over 20 other cities. SS execution squads along with Göring's private police force roared through the streets hunting down SA leaders and anyone on the prepared list of political enemies (known as the Reich List of Unwanted Persons).

Included on the list: Gustav von Kahr, who had opposed Hitler during the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 - found hacked to death in a swamp near Dachau; Father Bernhard Stempfle, who had taken some of the dictation for Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* and knew too much about Hitler - shot and killed; Kurt von Schleicher, former Chancellor of Germany and master of political intrigue, who had helped topple democracy in Germany and put Hitler in power - shot and killed along with his wife; Gregor Strasser, one of the original members of the Nazi Party and formerly next in importance to Hitler; Berlin SA leader Karl Ernst, who was involved in torching the Reichstag building in February, 1933; Vice-Chancellor Papen's press secretary; Catholic leader Dr. Erich Klausener.

Saturday evening, Hitler flew back to Berlin and was met at the airport by Himmler and Göring in a scene later described by Hans Gisevius, a Gestapo official, present.

"On his way to the fleet of cars, which stood several hundred yards away, Hitler stopped to converse with Göring and Himmler. Apparently he could not wait a few minutes until he reached the Chancellery. From one of his pockets Himmler took out a long, tattered list. Hitler read it through, while Göring and Himmler whispered incessantly into his ear. We could see Hitler's finger moving slowly down the sheet of paper. Now and then it paused for a moment at one of the names. At such times the two conspirators whispered even more excitedly. Suddenly Hitler tossed his head. There was so much violent emotion, so much anger in the gesture, that everybody noticed it. Finally they moved on, Hitler in the lead, followed by Göring and Himmler. Hitler was still walking with the same sluggish tread. By contrast, the two blood drenched scoundrels at his side seemed all the more lively."

As for Ernst Röhm - on Hitler's order he had been given a pistol containing a single bullet to commit suicide, but refused to do it, saying "If I am to be killed let Adolf do it himself." Two SS officers, one of whom was Theodore Eicke, commander of the Totenkopf (Death's Head) guards at Dachau, entered Röhm's cell after waiting fifteen minutes and shot him point blank. Reportedly, Röhm's last words were "Mein Führer, mein Führer!"

On Sunday evening, July 1, while some of the shooting was still going on, Hitler gave a tea party in the garden of the Chancellery for cabinet members and their families to give the appearance things were getting back to normal.

By 4 a.m., Monday, July 2, the bloody purge had ended. The exact number of murders is unknown since all Gestapo documents relating to the purge were destroyed. Estimates vary widely from 200 or 250, to as high as 1,000 or more. Less than half of those murdered were actually SA officers.

In one case, a man named Willi Schmidt was at home playing the cello. Four SS men rang the doorbell, entered and took him away, leaving his wife and three young children behind. They had mistaken Dr. Willi Schmidt, music critic for a Munich newspaper, for another Willi Schmidt on the list. Dr. Schmidt was assassinated and his body later returned to his family in a sealed coffin with orders from the Gestapo that it should not be opened.

On July 13, Hitler gave a long speech to the Nazi controlled Reichstag (Parliament) in which he announced seventy four had been shot and justified the murders.

"If anyone reproaches me and asks why I did not resort to the regular courts of justice, then all I can say is this: In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German people, and thereby I became the supreme judge of the German people."

"It was no secret that this time the revolution would have to be bloody; when we spoke of it we called it 'The Night of the Long Knives.' Everyone must know for all future time that if he raises his hand to strike the State, then certain death is his lot."

By proclaiming himself the supreme judge of the German people, Hitler in effect placed himself above the law, making his word the law, and thus instilled a permanent sense of fear in the German people.

The German Army generals, by condoning the unprecedented events of the Night of the Long Knives, effectively cast their lot with Hitler and began the long journey with him that would eventually lead them to the brink of world conquest and later to the hanging docks at Nuremberg after the war.

A few weeks after the purge, Hitler rewarded the SS for its role by raising the SS to independent status as an organization no longer part of the SA. Leader of the SS, Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler now answered to Hitler and no one else. Reinhard Heydrich was promoted to SS Gruppenführer (Lieutenant-General).

From this time on, the SA brownshirts would be diminished and all but disappear eventually as its members were inducted into the regular Army after Hitler re-introduced military conscription in 1935.

The SS organization under Himmler and Heydrich would greatly expand and become Hitler's instrument of mass murder and terror throughout the remaining history of the Third Reich, another eleven years.

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Night of the Long Knives

The below is an incomplete list of the victims of in the "Nights of the Long Knives", 29-30 June 1934, ("Nacht der langen Messer" or "Blood Purge") compiled by members of the forum.

Killed

Otto Ballerstadt (*Diplomat, Ingenieur*)

Fritz Beck (*Director*)

Karl Belding (*SA Standartenführer*)

Erwald Kuppel Bergmann (*Born 5 February 1905, KPD, executed in Landeshut 1 July 1934*)

Veit Ulrich von Beulwitz (*SA Sturmführer. Executed in Lichterfelde 1 July 1934*)

Alois Bittman (*SA-Scharführer*)

Franz Blasner (*SA-Truppführer*)

Herbert von Bose (*Franz von Papen's Secretary. Gunned down at his desk in the Vice-Chancellery, 30 June 1934*)

Ferdinand von Bredow (*Major General in Reichswehr, associate of von Schleicher. Arrested 30 June 1934, arrived at Lichterfelde with bullet hole in his head, 2 July*)

A. Charig (*Executed in Hirschberg 1 July 1934*)

? von der Decken

Georg von Detten (*SA-Gruppenführer, SA political chief, NSDAP Reichstag deputy. Executed at 2:30 AM, 1 July 1934 at Berlin-Lichterfelde*)

? Ender-Schulen (*SA-Sturmbannführer*)

Kurt Engelhardt (*Born 1 May 1891, SA-Sturmbannführer. Executed in Breslau 30 June 1934*)

Werner Engels (*SA-Sturmbannführer, acting Police President of Breslau. Driven out to the woods by SS troopers and killed with a shot-gun*)

? Enkel (*SA-Standartenführer*)

Karl Ernst (*Born 1904, Freikorps Roßbach, ex-hotel doorman, homosexual protégé of Paul Röhrbein + Ernst Röhm, SA Gruppenführer, NSDAP Reichstag deputy. Arrested on the dock at Bremen (where he was preparing to leave for Maderia on honeymoon) 30 June 1934. Flown to Berlin where he was shot by Leibstandarte-SS firing squad at Lichterfelde. Last words: "Heil Hitler!"*)

Ernst Martin Ewald (*Born 19 January 1900, Leiter der ND Gau Sachsen. Executed in Dresden 1 July 1934*)

Hans Joachim von Falkenhausen (*Born 15 October 1897 in Brieg, SA-Oberführer. Executed at 2AM, 2 July 1934 at Berlin-Lichterfelde*)

Gustav Fink (*SS Mann*)

Dr. Walter Förster (*A Hirschberg lawyer who had taken part in legal proceedings against National Socialists.*

Executed in Hirschberg 1 July 1934)

? Gehrt (*SA-Sturmbannführer*)

Fritz Gerlich (*1883-1934, anti-Nazi Catholic journalist, arrested 9 March 1933, killed at Dachau 1 July 1934*)

Daniel Gerth (*SA-Obersturmführer, member of staff SA Gruf Ernst. executed at Lichterfelde on 1 July 1934*)

Dr. Alexander Glaser (*Born 1 July 1884. Executed in Munich 30 June 1934*)

Freiherr von Guttenberg

Dr. Haber

Hans Hayn (*Born 7 August 1896 in Liegnitz, freikorpskämpfer, Black Reichswehr, Fehmemord, SA-Gruppenführer. NSDAP Reichstag deputy. Shot by SS firing squad in Stadelheim Prison, 30 June 1934*)

? Heck (*SA-Standartenführer*)

Edmund Heines (*Born 1897, WW1 Officer, Freikorps Roßbach, Fehmemord, protégé of Gerhard Roßbach + Ernst Röhm, expelled from the SA in 1927 for notorious homosexuality, reinstated by Röhm as SA-Obergruppenführer in charge of Silesia 1931, NSDAP Reichstag deputy. Shot while in bed with his chauffeur and Lustknabe at Bad Wiesse, 30 June 1934*)

Oskar Heines (*Brother of Edmund, born 3 February 1903, SA-Obersturmbannführer. Hearing of the attempted "Putsch" he turned himself in to Gestapo headquarters in Breslau, 30 June 1934. Executed immediately*)

Robert Heiser (*Born 28 November 1904, Reh Ju. KPD.. Executed in Landeshut 1 July 1934*)

Hans Peter von Heydebreck (*Born 1 July 1889 in Koslin/Pommern, SA-Gruppenführer, NSDAP Reichstag deputy, the "Hero of Annaberg." Shot by SS firing squad in Stadelheim Prison, 30 June 1934*)

Anton Freiherr von Hohberg unt Buchwald (*SS Reiter Und OberTruppführerführer. Shot in the smoking room of his estate by SS troopers on order of his rival Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski*)

Edgar Julius Jung (*Born 1894, DVP, Herrenklub, Journalist, Speech writer for von Papen. Shot in the Lichterfelde Barracks ? 30 June 1934*)

Gustav Ritter von Kahr (*Born 1862, Staatskommissar for Bavaria at the time of the Beer Hall Putsch. Abducted in Munich 30 June 1934, hacked to death with axes and thrown into a swamp near Dachau*)

? Kamphausen (*Waldenberg Municipal Engineer, Murdered for being un-cooperative about building licenses. Killed in SS Abschnitt VI*)

Eugen von Kessel (*Hauptman Polizei*)

? Kirschbaum

Dr. Erich Klausener (*Head of Preussischen Ministerie Polizei, Center Party, Catholic Action. Shot by SS-Hauptsturmführer Kurt Gildisch in his office 30 June 1934. Left to bleed to death, he managed to telephone for a priest, but the SS men wouldn't allow the priest to enter and give Klausener the Last Rites of the Church*)

Willi Klemm (*Born 9 March 1892 in Aaken, SA-Brigadeführer in Berlin. Executed 1 July 1934 by SS firing squad in Berlin-Lichterfelde*)

Hans Karl Koch (Born 17 October 1897 in Potsdam, SA-Brigadeführer. Executed 1 July 1934 by SS firing squad in Berlin-Lichterfelde)

Heinrich König (SA-Oberscharführer)

Ewald Koppel (communist, executed at Landeshut in Silesia 1 July 1934)

? Krause (SA-Sturmbannführer ? Executed in Lichterfelde 1 July 1934)

Fritz Ritter von Kraußner (Born 29 April 1888 in Nürnberg, cavalry officer, Freikorps Epp, SA-Obergruppenführer, protege of Röhm, NSDAP Reichstag deputy. Shot 30 June 1934 at Berlin-Lichterfelde)

Friedrich Karl Laemmermann (Born 20 March 1914, HJ Führer. Executed in Plauen 1 July 1934)

Gotthard Langer (Born 1 December 1914, SA-Obertruppführer. Executed in Leopoldsdorf 1 July 1934)

Dr. Lindemann (Executed in Glogau 1 July 1934)

Karl Lipinsky (Born 29 May 1896, SA Reiter-Sturmführer. Executed in Breslau 30 June 1934)

? Max (Röhm's chauffeur and Lustknabe. Arrested at Bad Wiessee, 30 June 1934, and taken to Stadelheim Prison. On 1 July 1943, Hitler ordered that he be shot and then that Röhm be informed of this)

? Marcus (SA-Standartenführer)

Dr. Hermann Mattheis (Born 18 July 1893, SA-Standartenführer Executed in Ellwangen 1 July 1934)

Walter von Mohrenschildt (Born 6 June, 1910 Executed in Lichterfelde 1 July 1934)

? Muhler

Edmund Neumeier (Born 8 August 1908, SA-Rottenführer. Executed in Dachau 1 July 1934)

Heinrich Nixdorf (Born 19 October 1890, SA Oberst Feldjagerei. Executed in Breslau 30 June 1934)

Dr. Ernst Oberfohren (Nationalist Reichstag Deputy. (Possibly spurious, not on official list))

Lambertus Ostendorf (Born 20 May 1893, SA Oberst Feldjagerei. Executed in Dresden 1 July 1934)

Otto Pietrzok (Born 13 December 1908, SA-Sturmbannführer. Executed in Dresden 1 July 1934)

Fritz Pleines (Born 8 July 1906, SS Mann. Executed in Stettin 30 June 1934)

Adalbert Probst (Catholic youth leader in Munich, former Bavarian Landtag deputy)

Hans Ramshorn (SA-Brigadeführer, Police president of Gleiwitz, executed 30 June 1934 in Breslau)

Robert Reh (communist, executed at Landeshut in Silesia, 1 July 1934)

Ernst Röhm (Born in Munich on 28th November 1887. WW1 Captain, Ex-Reichswehr, Freikorps Epp, Frontbahn, "Du friends" with Hitler, Stabschef SA, NSDAP Reichstag deputy. Arrested at Bad Wiessee, 30 June 1934, taken to cell 474 in the new cell block of Stadelheim Prison, München. After declining the option to commit suicide with a revolver, he was shot on 2 July by SS-Brigadeführer Theodor Eicke and/or SS-Sturmbannführer Michael Lippert on orders of Sepp Dietrich)

Paul Röhrlein (Frontbahn, homosexual associate of Röhm + Ernst)

Wilhelm Sander (Born 14 June 1895, SA Stabsführer. Executed in Lichterfeld 1 July 1934)

Emil Saasbach

Wilhelm Sander (SA-Brigadeführer, executed 1 July 1934)

Martin Schätzl (Painter, homosexual associate of Röhm, SA-Standartenführer)

Gaiseric Scherl (Born in Plauen 12 September 1912, SA Standartenführer, homosexual associate of Röhm, NS Studentenbund, Harvest Commando. Executed along with his wife at Landeshut 1 July 1934)

Erich Schieweck (Born in Breslau, SA-Obertruppführer. Killed Dachau 1 July 1934)

Elisabeth von Schleicher (Born 18 November 1893. Shot dead along with her husband, General von Schleicher, at their house at Neu-Babelsberg, 30 June 1934)

Kurt von Schleicher (Born 1882, WW1 Staff Officer, Reichswehr, Chancellor of Germany (1932-33). Shot dead in his house at Neu-Babelsberg (just outside Berlin) by six SS troopers, 30 June 1934, along with his wife)

Hans W. Schmidt (Born 19 April 1912, SA-Obersturmführer. Executed at Frankfurt- Berlin ? 2 July 1934)

Theodor Schmidt (Born Kolmar 23 May 1907, SA. Executed in Dachau 30 June 1934)

Dr. Wilhelm Schmidt (Music Critic. Mistaken For SA-Gruppenführer Schmid, arrested 30 June 1934 by the SS and killed while in custody. Hess later apologized for the mistake. This is the only documented case of such a mistake, though François-Poncet assures us that there were many)

Wilhelm Eduard Schmidt (SA-Gruppenführer ,Arrested in Munich, 30 June 1934, by Emil Maurice who shot him later that day)

August Schneidhuber (Born 8 May 1887 in Traunstein, SA-Obergruppenführer, Munich Police Chief, NSDAP Reichstag deputy. Arrested in Munich, 30 June 1934, by Emil Maurice, shot at Stadelheim shortly thereafter)

Walter Schotte

Konrad Schragmüller (SA-Gruppenführer, NSDAP Reichstag deputy. Arrested and killed 30 June 1934)

Dr. Joachim Schroder (SA-Obersturmführer Born 2 April, 1897 Executed in Dresden 1 July 1934)

Max Walter Otto Schuldt (Born 3 May 1903, SA-Sturmführer. Executed in Dresden 1 July 1934)

Walter Schulz (Born 2 September 1897, 2 Stabschef der SA Gruppe Pommern. Executed on 1 July 1934)

Max Schulze (Born 21 October 1900, SA-Obersturmführer. Executed on 1 July 1934)

Hans Schweighardt (Born 12 July 1894, SA-Standartenführer. Executed in Dachau 1 July 1934)

Emil Sembach (Born 2 April 1891, SS Oberführer. Attached to SS headquarters in Silesia, he was expelled for embezzlement in February 1934 and had denounced Kurt Wittje's homosexuality to the Minister of Defence and to the Reichswehr. He then asked Frick for protection. Udo von Woysch, who had a personal vendetta against Sembach, discussed the case with Himmler in June and Sembach was arrested the afternoon of 30 June 1934 in Brieg (HQ of SS Oa Sudost) and taken to Oels. On 1 July Sembach was taken into the mountains and shot by a Commando under SS-Hauptsturmführer Paul Exner on Woysch's orders OR , drowned in a reservoir near Brieg.)

Hans graf von Sprei-Weilbach (SA-Standartenführer, SA-Führer zur besonderen Verwendung, protégé of Röhm. Arrested at Bad Wiessee, 30 June 1934, taken to Stadelheim Prison and shot)

Oskar Stable (Freikorps Maercker, Freikorps Roßbach, NSDAP / NSDStB. (Possibly spurious, not on official list))

Father Bernhard Stempfle (Catholic priest, former associate of Hitler, found in a forest outside of Munich with a broken neck and three bullets in his heart. Probably killed because of what he knew about Geli Raubal)

Gregor Strasser (Born at Geisenfeld on 31 May 1892, WW1 officer, freikorpskämpfer, Ex-GDVG, Ex-NSFP, NW Arbeitsgemeinschaft, NSBO, Gauleiter of Niederbayern-Oberpfalz (1925-1929), Reichsorganisationsleiter (1929-1932). Arrested in his Berlin home 30 June 1934, taken to Prinz Albrechtstrasse Gestapo jail and shot in cell #16. Died of his wounds 2 July 1934. His death was officially announced as a "suicide.")

Otto Stucken (Born 18 December 1896, SA Obersturmführer. Executed in Breslau 30 June 1934)

? Surk (SA-Standartenführer)

? Thomas (SA-Standartenführer)

Ottmar Toifl (Born 16 July 1898, SS Truppführer u Polizei kommissar. Friend of Daluge. Killed on Heydrich orders in Berlin 1 July 1934. His body was left in an alley of Grunewald)

Julius Uhl (SA-Standartenführer. Arrested at Bad Wiessee, 30 June 1934, taken to Stadelheim Prison and shot)

Dr. Erwin Villain (Born 3 November 1898, SA-Standartenarzt, SA medical officer. Arrested by SS-Hauptsturmführer

Kurt Gildisch, executed in Lichterfelde 1 July 1934)

Max Vogel (Born 18 July 1908, SA-Obersturmführer. Executed in Dachau 1 July 1934)

Gerd Voss (Attorney to Strasser, shot dead during a search of his office)

Karl Eberhard von Wechmar (SA-Gruppenführer, executed 30 June 1934)

Udo von Woyrsch (Killed in Blood Purge after himself having ordered the execution of his rival, Emil Sembach)

Karl Zehnter (Proprietor of the "Nürnberger Bratwurstglöckl" restaurant, homosexual associate of Röhm and Heines)

Ernestine Zoref (Born 23 May 1896. Executed in Dachau 30 June 1934)

Jeanette Zweig (Executed in Hirschberg 1 July 1934)

Alex Zweig (Executed in Hirschberg 1 July 1934)

Survivors

Ernst Beissner (arrested in the Purge, expelled from the SA, though later was Kreisleiter and received the Golden Party Pin)

Leonhardt graf Du Moulin Eckart (Born Jan. 11, 1900, doctor at law, SA, homosexual associate of Röhm, chief of the Nazi Party's information service in the Brown House in 1932. Hid during Blood Purge, arrested afterwards and confined at Dachau. Indicted for procuring and for unnatural sexual intercourse on Oct. 21, 1934, having provided his apartment to Röhm for homosexual activities; acquitted)

Theodore Düsterberg (1895-1950, WW1 officer, Stahlhelm founder, DNVP, Arrested after Blood Purge)

Hermann Ehrhardt (1881-1971, WW1 naval officer, Freikorpsführer, Kapp Putsch instigator. Upon arrival of the Gestapo, he fled to the woods of his estate with a couple of shot-guns, was later smuggled to Austria by friends, where he lived in exile even after the Anschluss. Erroneously listed among the dead by French Ambassador François-Poncet)

Paul Giesler (Born 15. Jun. 1895 in Siegen. arrested in the Purge, expelled from the SA, though later was Gauleiter of München-Oberbayern (1944 - 1945). Committed Suicide 8 May 1945, at Berchtesgaden, along with his wife)

Alexander Glaser (attorney to Kurt Lüdecke, arrested during Blood Purge)

Hans Elard Ludin (1905-1947, Reichswehr officer 1924-1930, under fortress arrest for Nazi political activities 1930-1931, SA-Obergruppenführer, Leader of SA Group Southwest 1933. Arrested during Blood Purge. Later Minister to Slovakia Jan 1941-1945, convicted by a Czech court in Slovakia, sentenced to death by firing squad. Executed at Bratislava (Pressburg) 9 December 1947)

Gerd Luetgebrune (Attorney to Röhm. Arrested during Blood Purge)

Georges Mappes (Arrested in the Purge, expelled from the SA, though later was NSDAP Orstgruppenleiter he received the Golden Party Pin)

Fritz von Papen (1879 - 1969, Ex-Reichswehr, Catholic Center Party, Herrenklub, Chancellor (1932-33), Vice Chancellor. Placed under house arrest for three days during Blood Purge)

Rolf Reiner (SS-Gruppenführer, arrested but not executed)

Gerhard Roßbach (1893 - 1967, WW1 Veteran, Decorated Officer, Freikorpsführer, Munich Putsch. Arrested during Blood Purge)

Dr. Alfons Sack (Attorney, homosexual associate of Röhm, Heines, and Ernst. Arrested during Blood Purge)

Karl Schreyer (SA-Gruppenführer. Arrested in Berlin and taken to Columbia House. About to be shot at 4AM, 2 July 1934, when the order to stop all executions came from the Führer)

Paul Schulz (Ex-Reichswehr Oberleutnant, associate of Strasser. Deeply anti-Socialist he strove to keep the socialists Strasser and Röhm separated by homophobic baiting Hitler and Strasser. Out of power following the Strasser/Schleicher incident, he had earned Hitler's enmity by imprudent homophobic statements. Arrested June 30 in Berlin and driven out towards a lonely stretch of woods near Potsdam, he was shot while running away and played dead. When his captors went back to the car for something to wrap the body in, he bolted up and ran off in the woods. To escape dogs, he hid in the waters of the Nuthe stream. He made his way to the house of retired admiral Lübbert where he hid while an amnesty was negotiated with Hitler through a third party)

Gertrude Strasser (Wife of Otto Strasser. Arrested in Berlin, 30 June 1934 by the Gestapo, tortured and held for several weeks, while pending shipment to a concentration camp she escaped to Prague)

Otto Strasser (Born at Geisenfeld in 1897, WW1 officer, freikorpskämpfer, Ex-SPD, NW Arbeitsgemeinschaft, Ex-NSDAP, Black Front leader. Attempted assassination, 30 June 1934, in Vienna)

Gottfried Treviranus (1881-1971, politician, ex-DNVP, founder of People's Conservative Union, minister in Brüning cabinet. Barely escaped arrest during Blood Purge, exiled to England)

Ernst Udet (1896-1941, SA Air Squadron Führer. Invited to Gauleiter Wagner's banquet/trap on Munich 30 June 1934, he was the only one to escape from the banquet room, albeit dazed and with a large gash on his forehead, when he ran into Hitler, who told him to leave immediately)

Struck from the "death list" by Hermann Göring

? von Bülow (Under-secretary in the Foreign Ministry)

Rudolf Diels (1900 - 1957. WW1 veteran, lawyer, Prussian police from 1930, Gestapo investigator of the Reichstag fire, protégé of Göring, forced from office by Heydrich and Himmler. Prosecution witness at Nürnberg)

Frederick Wilhelm Viktor August Ernst Hohenzollern , Kronprinz von Preußen (1882 - 1951)

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Night of the Long Knives

By 1934 [Adolf Hitler](#) appeared to have complete control over Germany, but like most dictators, he constantly feared that he might be ousted by others who wanted his power. To protect himself from a possible coup, Hitler used the tactic of divide and rule and encouraged other leaders such as [Hermann Goering](#), [Joseph Goebbels](#), [Heinrich Himmler](#) and [Ernst Roehm](#) to compete with each other for senior positions.

One of the consequences of this policy was that these men developed a dislike for each other. Roehm was particularly hated because as leader of the [Sturm Abteilung](#) (SA) he had tremendous power and had the potential to remove any one of his competitors. Goering and Himmler asked [Reinhard Heydrich](#) to assemble a dossier on Roehm. Heydrich, who also feared him, manufactured evidence that suggested that Roehm had been paid 12 million marks by the French to overthrow Hitler.

Hitler liked [Ernst Roehm](#) and initially refused to believe the dossier provided by Heydrich. Roehm had been one of his first supporters and, without his ability to obtain army funds in the early days of the movement, it is unlikely that the [Nazis](#) would have ever become established. The SA under Roehm's leadership had also played a vital role in destroying the opposition during the elections of 1932 and 1933.

However, [Adolf Hitler](#) had his own reasons for wanting Roehm removed. Powerful supporters of Hitler had been complaining about Roehm for some time. Generals were afraid that the [Sturm Abteilung](#) (SA), a force of over 3 million men, would absorb the much smaller [German Army](#) into its ranks and Roehm would become its overall leader.

Industrialists such as [Albert Voegler](#), [Gustav Krupp](#), [Alfried Krupp](#), [Fritz Thyssen](#) and [Emile Kirdorf](#), who had provided the funds for the Nazi victory, were unhappy with Roehm's socialistic views on the economy and his claims that the real revolution had still to take place. Many people in the party also disapproved of the fact that Roehm and many other leaders of the SA were homosexuals.

[Adolf Hitler](#) was also aware that Roehm and the SA had the power to remove him. [Hermann Goering](#) and [Heinrich Himmler](#) played on this fear by constantly feeding him with new information on Roehm's proposed coup. Their masterstroke was to claim that [Gregor Strasser](#), whom Hitler hated, was part of the planned conspiracy against him. With this news Hitler ordered all the SA leaders to attend a meeting in the Hanselbauer Hotel in Wiesse.

Meanwhile Goering and Himmler were drawing up a list of people outside the SA that they wanted killed. The list included Strasser, [Kurt von Schleicher](#), Hitler's predecessor as chancellor, and [Gustav von Kahr](#), who crushed the [Beer Hall Putsch](#) in 1923.

On 29th June, 1934. Hitler, accompanied by the [Schutzstaffel \(SS\)](#), arrived at Wiesse, where he personally arrested [Ernst Roehm](#). During the next 24 hours 200 other senior SA officers were arrested on the way to Wiesse. Many were shot as soon as they were captured but Hitler decided to pardon Roehm because of his past services to the movement. However, after much pressure from [Hermann Goering](#) and [Heinrich Himmler](#), Hitler agreed that Roehm should die. At first Hitler insisted that Roehm should be allowed to commit suicide but, when he refused, Roehm was shot by two SS men.

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[David Low](#), *They salute with both hands now* (3rd July, 1934)

Roehm was replaced by [Victor Lutze](#) as head of the SA. Lutze was a weak man and the SA gradually lost its power in Hitler's Germany. The [Schutzstaffel \(SS\)](#) under the leadership of Himmler grew rapidly during the next few years, replacing the SA as the dominant force in Germany.

The purge of the SA was kept secret until it was announced by [Adolf Hitler](#) on 13th July. It was during this speech that Hitler gave the purge its name: Night of the Long Knives. Hitler claimed that 61 had been executed while 13 had been shot resisting arrest and three had committed suicide. Others have argued that as many as 400 people were killed during the purge. In his speech Hitler explained why he had not relied on the courts to deal with the conspirators: "In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German people, and thereby I become the supreme judge of the German people. I gave the order to shoot the ringleaders in this treason."

The Night of the Long Knives was a turning point in the history of Hitler's Germany. Hitler had made it clear that he was the supreme ruler of Germany who had the right to be judge and jury, and had the power to decide whether people lived or died.

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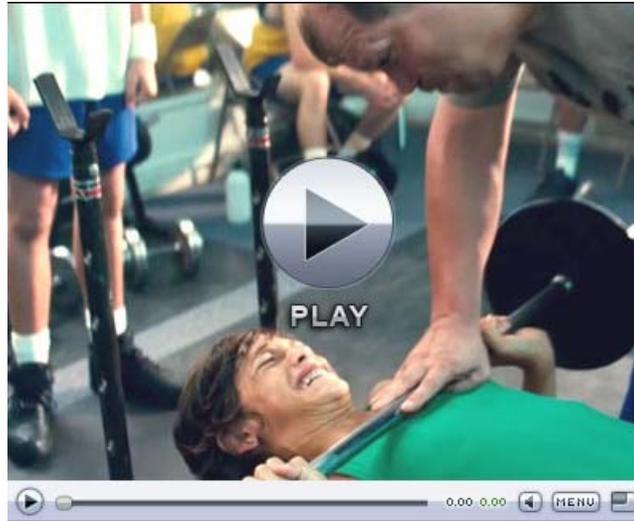
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(1) Comments made by [Ernst Roehm](#) to [Kurt Ludecke](#) (January, 1934)

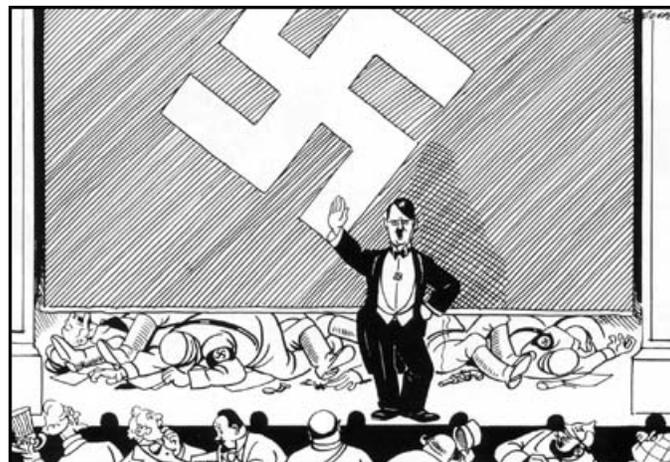
Hitler can't walk over me as he might have done a year ago; I've seen to that. Don't forget that I have three million men, with every key position in the hands of my own people, Hitler knows that I have friends in the Reichswehr, you know! If Hitler is reasonable I shall settle the matter quietly; if he isn't I must be prepared to use force - not for my sake but for the sake of our revolution.

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(2) [Ernst Roehm](#), announcement to the [Sturm Abteilung \(SA\)](#) (May, 1934)

1934 will require all the energies of every SA fighter. I recommend, therefore, to all SA leaders to begin organizing leave already in June. Therefore, for a limited number of SA leaders and men, June, and for the majority of the SA, July, will be a period of complete relaxation in which they can recover their strength. I expect the SA to return on 1st August completely rested and refreshed in order to serve in those honourable capacities which nation and fatherland rested and refreshed in order to serve in those honourable capacities which nation and fatherland expect of it.

FIGHT SUPERSTORE

"Will the audience kindly keep their seats."

[Sidney Strube, Daily Express, \(3rd July, 1934\)](#)

(3) After the war [Edward von Kleist](#) of the [German Army](#) recalled the events of June, 1934.

Round about 24 June 1934, I as the army commander in Silesia was warned by the Chief of the General Staff (Ludwig Beck) that an attack by the SA on the German Army was imminent and that I should unobtrusively keep my troops on the alert. During the tense days following, I received a flood of reports and information which gave a picture of feverish preparations on the part of the SA. In this situation, I considered that bloodshed could only be avoided by a man-to-man talk.

On the afternoon of 28 June, therefore, I asked SA Commander Heines to come and see me; I told him to his face that I knew of his preparations and I gave him a warning. He replied that he knew all about my measures and had thought that they were preparations for an attack on the SA. He had only put the SA on alert in order to resist an attack. He gave his word as an officer and SA leader that he had not planned or prepared any surprise attack upon the Army.

During the night of 28-29 June, Heines rang me up again. He had just learned that the Army throughout the Reich, was on the alert for an SA putsch. I said to him that "I have the impression that we - Army and SA - are being egged on against each other by a third party." By that I mean Himmler.

(4) [Erich Kempka](#), was Hitler's chauffeur on 29th June, 1934. In 1946 he gave an interview where he described what happened when Hitler arrived at the Hotel Hanselmayer that night.

Hitler entered the room where Edmund Heines was staying. I heard him shout: "Heines, if you are not dressed in five minutes I'll have you shot on the spot!" I withdrew a few steps and a police officer whispers to me that Heines had been in bed with an 18 year old Obertruppfuher.

Hitler entered Roehm's bedroom alone with a whip in his hand. Behind him were two detectives with pistols at the ready. He spat out the words; "Roehm, you are under arrest."

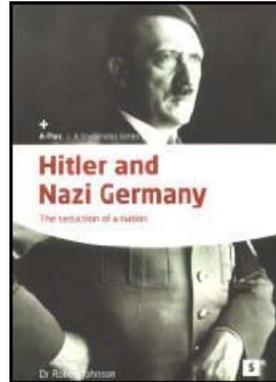
Roehm's doctor comes out of a room and to our surprise he has his wife with him. I hear Lutze putting in a good word for him with Hitler. Then Hitler walks up to him, greets him, shakes hand with his wife and asks them to leave the hotel, it isn't a pleasant place for them to stay in, that day.

Now the bus arrives. Quickly, the SA leaders are collected from the laundry room and walk past Roehm under police guard. Roehm looks up from his coffee sadly and waves to them in a melancholy way. At last Roehm too is led from the hotel. He walks past Hitler with his head bowed, completely apathetic.

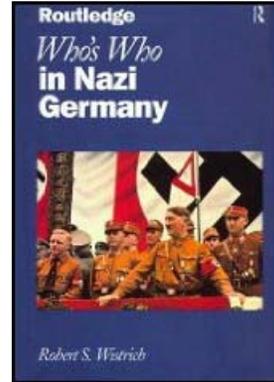
(5) [Albert Speer](#) met [Adolf Hitler](#) the day after the Night of the Long Knives. He wrote about the meeting in his book, *Inside the Third Reich* (1970)

Hitler was extremely excited and, as I believe to this day, inwardly convinced that he had come through a great danger. Again and again he described how he had forced his way into the Hotel Hanselmayer in Wiessee - not forgetting, in the telling, to make a show of his courage: "We were unarmed, imagine, and didn't know whether or not those swine might have armed guards to use against us." The homosexual atmosphere had disgusted him: "In one room we found two naked boys!" Evidently he believed that his personal action had averted a disaster at the last minute: "I alone was able to solve this problem. No one else!"

His entourage tried to deepen his distaste for the executed SA leaders by assiduously reporting as many details as possible about the intimate life of Roehm and his following. Bruckner showed Hitler the menus of banquets held by the Roehm clique, which had purportedly been found in the Berlin SA headquarters. The menus listed a fantastic variety of courses, including foreign delicacies such as frogs' legs, birds' tongues, shark fins, seagulls' eggs, along with vintage French wines and the best champagnes. Hitler commented sarcastically: "So, here we have those revolutionaries! And our revolution was too tame for them."



[Hitler and Nazi Germany](#)



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