

'PREPARING FOR GOVERNMENT?' : WILHELM FRICK  
AS THURINGIA'S NAZI MINISTER OF  
THE INTERIOR AND OF EDUCATION,  
23 JANUARY 1930 - 1 APRIL 1931

Kevin John Crichton

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews



2002

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23 January 1930 - 1 April 1931



Submitted for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy at the *University of St. Andrews*,  
2001

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## DECLARATION

- (i) I, Kevin John Crichton, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 73,303 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date: 25 March 2007

signature of candidate:

- (ii) I was admitted as a research student in September 1995 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in September 1995; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1995 and 1998.

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signature of candidate:

- (iii) I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews and that

the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

date: 14 June 2007

signature of supervisor:

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the course of this research I have run up many debts, and, therefore, I would like to thank the following individuals and institutions, which assisted the research for this degree.

First and foremost I would like to thank my parents for their support. I would also like to thank the following individuals for their assistance: Prof. A.G. Jones, Dr. C. McInnes, and the late Dr. M. Hughes, all *University of Wales, Aberystwyth*; Dr. R. Henig and Dr. G. Philips, *University of Lancaster*; Mr. I. Farr, *University of East Anglia*; Dr. P.D. Stachura, *University of Stirling*; Prof. J. Caplan, *Bryn Mawr College, PA., USA*; Professor. P. Pulzer, *All Souls College, University of Oxford*; Dr. L. Pine, *University of Luton*; Dr. A. Steinweis, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA*; Dr. C.C.-W. Szejnmann, *University of Middlesex*; Dr. P. Weindling, *Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of Oxford*; Dr. B. Stenzel, *the Weimarer Stiftung*; and, finally, Dr. J. Matthews, Fleetwood.

I would also like to thank the following institutions and staff for their assistance with my research and enquiries. In the Federal Republic of Germany: the Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde and Bundesarchiv Koblenz, and its previous Aussenstellen in Berlin-Zehlendorf and Potsdam; Herr Archivdirektor Dr. B. Post and Herr Archivrat Marek,

*Thüringische Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar; the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Weimar; the Hauptlesesaal and the Universitätsarchiv of the Friedrich-Schiller Universität, Jena; the Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Thüringen, Erfurt; the Rheinlandische Landesbibliothek, Koblenz; the Stadtbibliothek, Koblenz; the Universität Koblenz-Landau; and the Senatsbibliothek, the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Häuse 1 und 2), and the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaft, Berlin. In the United States: the National Archives, Washington D.C., and College Park, MD.; the University Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.; the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C. In the United Kingdom: the Public Record Office; the German Historical Institute; the Wiener Library, London; the library staff of the University of East Anglia, the University of Lancaster, the University of Manchester, the University of St. Andrews, the Blackpool and the Fylde College of Further Education, and Fleetwood Central Library.*

Last but not least, I would like to thank the following institutions, organisations, and individuals for their role in helping me to secure funding for this project: the German Historical Institute; Dr. Peter Stachura, the *University of Stirling*; my supervisor Dr. Anthony McElligott, Lorna Harris, Susan Whitehead, and Professor Wilkinson and Professor

Guy, and the Russell Trust Research Awards Committee, all of the  
*University of St. Andrews.*

## ABBREVIATIONS

BABL=Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde

BAK=Bundesarchiv Koblenz

BDC=Berlin Document Center

Bl=Blatt

Bll=Blätter

DDP=Deutsche Demokratische Partei

DNVP=Deutsche Nationale Volkspartei

DVFP=Deutsch-Völkische Freiheitspartei

DVP=Deutsche Volkspartei

FO=Foreign Office, Great Britain

fr=frame number

GVG=Großdeutsche Volksgemeinschaft

GL=Gauleitung

KdfK=Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur

KPD=Kommuniste Partei Deutschlands

LB=Landbund

MdL=Mitglied des Landtags

MdR=Mitglied des Reichstags

NA=National Archives, Washington, D.C., USA

NL=Nachlaß

NS=Nationalsozialistische

NSDAP=Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei

NSFB=Nationalsozialistische Freiheitsbewegung

NSFP=Nationalsozialistische Freiheitspartei

OPG=Oberparteigericht (NSDAP)

OVG=Thüringische Obergerverwaltungsgericht Jena

PK=Partei Korrespondence (NSDAP)

PRO=Public Record Office, Kew

RIM=Reichsinnensminister

RK=Reichskanzlei

RL=Reichsleitung

RMdI=Reichsministerium des Innern

RS=Reverse Side

RStH=Reichsstatthalter

SA=Sturmabteilung

SPD=Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands

SS=Schutzstaffel

StGH=Staatsgerichtshof für das Deutsche Reich

ThFiMin=Thüringisches Finanzministerium

ThHStAW=Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar

ThMdI=Thüringisches Ministerium des Innern

ThIM=Thüringische Innensminister

ThM.-P.=Thüringische Minister-Präsident

ThStM=Thüringisches Staatsministerium

ThVbM=Thüringisches Volksbildungsministerium

ThWiMin=Thüringisches Wirtschaftsministerium

VFTh=Völkische Führerring Thüringen

V-SB=Völkisch-Soziale Block

WP=Wirtschaftspartei

WTB=Wolffs Telegraphisches Büro



# Chapter One:

## *Introduction*

## Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation

The ministerial activity of Wilhelm Frick in Thuringia, from 23 January 1930 to 1 April 1931, has suffered from an analytical imbalance. Both German and non-German scholars have largely considered Frick's period in office from a deterministic standpoint, frequently drawing a straight line from the events in Thuringia between 1930-1931 to the Nazi seizure of power throughout Germany in 1933-1934.

"There can be little doubt that the Thuringian case represented a model for the Nazi seizure of power in 1933"<sup>1</sup>

"The Frick ministry illustrates Hitler's tactics so clearly as to constitute a general model for the assumption of power"<sup>2</sup>

"What happened gives an indication of the way at this time the 'seizure of power' in the Reich itself was envisaged".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Broszat, M., *Hitler and the Collapse of Weimar Germany* (Leamington Spa/Hamburg/New York, 1987), p.78

<sup>2</sup> D.R. Tracey, "The Development of the National Socialist Party in Thuringia, 1924-1930", *Central European History* (1-March), Volume 8, 1975, p.48

<sup>3</sup> I. Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889-1936: Hubris*, p.319. For similar comments, see also: H. Heiber, *The Weimar Republic* (Oxford, 1993), p.174; E.J. Feuchtwanger, *From Weimar to Hitler: Germany, 1918-1933* (Basingstoke, 1993), p.225; G. Schulz, *Von Brüning zu Hitler. Der Wandel des politischen Systems in Deutschland 1930-1933. Band III. Zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur. Verfassungspolitik und Reichsreform in der 'Weimarer Republik'* (Berlin/New York, 1992), p.140

These interpretations have arisen from a retrospective analysis of German interwar history, which cannot provide a satisfactory analysis of Frick's period in office. The aim of my research is to provide an alternative to this picture, by undertaking a complete analysis of Frick's activity as Thuringia's Minister of the Interior and of Education on its own terms. The main areas of investigation are: the origins, drafting, and implementation of Frick's measures; his impact upon Thuringia's civil service and administration; the nature of the relationship with his coalition partners; the perception of him by the opposition parties; and finally, his relationship with, and portrayal by, the NSDAP in Thuringia and the Reich. The interpretative framework focuses upon the significance of Frick's measures and behaviour as a means of validating, modifying, or refuting the commonly held belief that his period in office represented a model for the 'seizure of power' carried out in Germany between 1933 and 1934.<sup>4</sup>

It would be something of a cliché to point out that all research projects encounter problems of one kind or another that demand, or force, changes in methodology. Yet, as far as this research has been

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<sup>4</sup> See E.A. Mower, *Germany puts the Clock Back*, Revised Edition (Harmondsworth, 1937), p.158 for one of the earliest views that Frick's activity was 'the shape of things to come' after 1933.

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concerned, the cliché is much closer to a truism. Problems - or rather, limitations - with primary sources have meant that it has not always been possible to accumulate enough data to satisfy the original aim of the thesis, i.e. a complete analysis. It is necessary, therefore, to define the nature and scope of these limitations since they have had an important influence upon the methodological, analytical, and interpretative frameworks of the dissertation.

## The Scope and Limitations of the Primary Sources

### *The Thuringian Ministry of the Interior (ThMdl)*

Frick's measures within this sphere of ministerial competence are very few and far between. Frick's personnel measures, such as his anti-Communist decree, and its implementation have been reconstructed from ThMdl files, but other measures such as the Enabling Act, which were in the remit of the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior, have had to be reconstructed from files within the Education and Finance Ministries.<sup>5</sup>

Investigation into Frick's handling of the Thuringian police has

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<sup>5</sup> See ThVbMin A/6 and ThFiMin/6

been severely hampered by the paucity of the documentation.<sup>6</sup> This collection appears to have been ‘weeded’ given the fact that other collections for the periods before and after Frick appear to be reasonably intact.

### *The Thuringian Education Ministry (ThVbMin)*

This collection has proved to be a richer source of material. Yet the utility is restricted to certain areas, and again there are limitations. For example, there is much detail about the implementation of Frick’s anti-Semitic school prayers,<sup>7</sup> and his banning of Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*,<sup>8</sup> but the files do not record how, why, and on whose initiative such measures were adopted.

Outside of Frick’s most controversial measures, the files in the ThVbMin reveal little. The vast majority of files have not recorded any ‘impact’ that Frick may or may not have had. As with the ThMdI files, there does not appear to be any record of any policy overview of Frick’s actions - proposed or enacted - committed to paper by either him or

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<sup>6</sup> ThMdI P/14 deals with the administration of the Thuringian police from the late 1920s to the 1940s. It contains only two documents from the period of Frick’s *Ministerzeit*.

<sup>7</sup> ThVbMin A/1010

<sup>8</sup> ThVbMin A/1011

anyone else.

### *The Thuringian State Ministry (ThStMin)*

It was hoped that this collection would prove to be a valuable source of material in regard to the governmental overview of Frick and his actions. This has not proven to be the case. The files of the Thuringian cabinet are merely a record of its conclusions (*Beschlüsse*)<sup>9</sup>, with no record of any discussion or debate. The supplementary documentation given to the meetings (*Beiakten*) are also devoid of any data.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, files, which could have shed light on the three conflicts between the Reich and Thuringian governments, from the perspective of the latter, have proved to be ‘dead-ends’ due to the absence of data within them.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Thuringian Landtag*

Apart from files relating to Frick’s attempts to grant Hitler

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<sup>9</sup> ThStMin/60, /61

<sup>10</sup> ThStMin/64, /65

<sup>11</sup> ThStMin/101, /102, /103, /104, /107-1 on Thuringia’s plenipotentiary to the Reich government and the Reichsrat; ThStMin/220 Decisions of the State Supreme Court for the German Reich. The files of the Thüringisches Justizministerium (ThJuMin) contain no record of any inter-

Thuringian citizenship in mid-1930,<sup>12</sup> this collection, from a parliamentary perspective, fails to advance the understanding of Frick's activity. There is no record on the negotiations leading to his entry to government,<sup>13</sup> and nothing is revealed on how the NSDAP operated within the various Landtag committees, e.g. the Council of Elders (*Ältestenrat*) or the Permanent Committee (*Ständiger Ausschuß*).<sup>14</sup>

Other collections of documents from ThHStAW were consulted on the basis that they concerned areas of governmental or ministerial activity in which Frick was known to be active.<sup>15</sup> These collections have not yielded any significant degree of material other than fragments

### *The Reich Chancellery (R 43 I)*

This collection has been indispensable in charting the three conflicts that developed between the Reich and Thuringian governments whilst Frick was in office. The two files dealing with

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departmental or ministerial discussion of the disputes.

<sup>12</sup> Landtag von Thüringen/52, /57, /196, /197

<sup>13</sup> Landtag von Thüringen/24

<sup>14</sup> Landtag von Thüringen/182

<sup>15</sup> Thüringisches Finanzministerium (ThFiMin); Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Heimatschutz; Staatliche Hochschulen für Baukunst, bildene Künste, und Handwerk Weimar; Staatliche Hochschule für Handwerk und Baukunst Weimar; Thüringische Oberverwaltungsgericht



Thuringia<sup>16</sup> contain intra- and inter-Reich Chancellery and Reich Ministry of the Interior notes and memoranda, clippings from national German newspapers and the Wolffs' Telegrafisches Büro (WTB), and other aspects of Frick's activities. The two collections contain almost all of the correspondence between the Reich and Thuringian governments, which has proved to be essential given that the Thuringian archives contain only remnants of the entire correspondence.<sup>17</sup>

Other files of interest have been the records of the Reich cabinet,<sup>18</sup> the police,<sup>19</sup> and those on the NSDAP compiled from mid-1930 onwards,<sup>20</sup> especially the Prussian Ministry of the Interior's manuscript on the Nazi Party and the Reich Ministry of the Interior's similar documents of November 1930. Collections dealing with Frick's coalition partners, i.e. the Deutsche Volkspartei (DVP),<sup>21</sup> the Wirtschaftspartei (WP),<sup>22</sup> and the Landbund (LB)<sup>23</sup> contain no relevant material. The same can be said for those collections relating to the opposition parties

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Jena

<sup>16</sup> Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfeld (BABL), R 43 I/2315, /2316

<sup>17</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin B/3413; ThFiMin/6

<sup>18</sup> BABL, R 43 I/1442, /1447

<sup>19</sup> R 43 I/2694

<sup>20</sup> R 43 I/2682, /2683

<sup>21</sup> R 43 I/2656; Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK), R 45 II

<sup>22</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2685

in Thuringia, i.e. the Deutsche Demokratische Partei (DDP),<sup>24</sup> the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD),<sup>25</sup> and the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD).<sup>26</sup>

*The Reichskommissar für Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung (R 134, R 1507)*<sup>27</sup>

The Reich government's surveillance of Frick and the NSDAP in Thuringia is not particularly well developed in these collections. The main benefit of the R 134 collection is its copy of the Reich Ministry of the Interior document "Kann ein Nationalsozialistischer Polizeibeamter sein?".<sup>28</sup> This was written at a crucial point in the Reich-Thuringian dispute over police subsidies, and is an important summary of the Reich Ministry's opinion.

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<sup>23</sup> R 43 I/2687

<sup>24</sup> R 43 I/2661; BAK, R 45 III

<sup>25</sup> BAK, R 45 IV

<sup>26</sup> BAK, R

<sup>27</sup> R 134 is the Reichskommissar collection that was held by the Bundesarchiv prior to German unification in 1990. R 1507 is the collection previously held by the Deutsches Zentralsstaatsarchiv Potsdam.

<sup>28</sup> R 134/90 Bll.56-66

*Reich Ministry of the Interior (R 18, R 1501)*

Most of the Reich Ministry of the Interior's material that was not destroyed during the Second World War appears to have found its way into R 43 I/2315 and /2316. However, some interesting and very useful documentation on the Reich Ministry of the Interior's contacts with Thuringians opposed to Frick was found in a collection sent to him in 1934 by his former NSDAP associates in Thuringia.<sup>29</sup>

*The Reichsgericht (R 3002), and the Staatsgerichtshof für das Deutsche Reich (R 3007)*

The involvement of the Thuringian government in three disputes with the Reich Ministry of the Interior has already been remarked upon. These collections provide the full transcripts of the proceedings before the two courts, which have been essential in revealing details and viewpoints not available in either the Thuringian or Reich documentation, and supplies crucial insights into how the Reich Ministry of the Interior perceived the NSDAP in the year of its electoral

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<sup>29</sup> See R 18/5051 Bll.20-22 Brill to Wirth, 17 June 1930; R 18/5051 Bll.26-44 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930; R 18/5051 Bl.46 Wirth to Brill, 6 June 1930; The complete four pages of R 18/5051 Bll.54-56 Brill to Menzel, 26 May 1930, may be found in ThHStAW, RStH/132 Bll.13-16.

breakthrough.

### *Nazi Party Documentation*

It was hoped that sufficient material would exist within both the Reich and Thuringian NSDAP collections to assist in the execution of the research. This has not proved to be the case. Dietrich Orlow has pointed out that “[v]irtually no Gau ... archives survived intact”,<sup>30</sup> and with reference to Thuringia, this statement is fully justified. Almost all of the Thuringian Gau material either pre- or post-dates Frick’s period in office.<sup>31</sup> The Schumacher Sammlung of Gau documentation falls within the same category.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the archive for the NSDAP’s Landtag faction in Thuringia, which could shed important light upon the party’s attitude towards Frick and his coalition partners, appears not to have survived. Enquiries have revealed that it is neither held by the present Thuringian Landtag in Erfurt, nor by the ThHStAW.<sup>33</sup> It has

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<sup>30</sup> D. Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party: Volume II: 1933-1945* (Newton Abbot, 1973), p.x

<sup>31</sup> National Archives (NA), RG 242, T-81, roll 116, fr. 136429-137002. This is the microfilm version of BABL, NS 20/123 and NS 20/124, both of which have now been relocated from BABL to ThHStAW as NSDAP-GL/1 and NSDAP-GL/1-1 respectively.

<sup>32</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, folder 209 “Gauleitung Thüringen”. This is the microfilm version of BABL, Schumacher Sammlung 209, Group VIII

<sup>33</sup> My thanks to Herr Archivrat Marek (ThHStAW) for answering this question. It appears

to be said that this want of material relating to the NSDAP in power prior to 1933 is not confined to Thuringia. Jeremy Noakes' study of the NSDAP in Lower Saxony, which looked at its participation in the governments of Braunschweig and Oldenburg, found "no documentation whatsoever" on the policies of the Nazi ministers concerned.<sup>34</sup>

Documentation collected or compiled by the Reich NSDAP is also sadly deficient. The NSDAP's own historical service concentrated upon the early years of the Thuringian Gau,<sup>35</sup> and other NSDAP organisations and affiliates have largely omitted this period in the Gau's history altogether.<sup>36</sup>

### *The NSDAP's Historiography of Frick as Minister.*

As mentioned earlier the Nazi Party biographies of Frick, and the newspapers *Völkischer Beobachter* and *Der Nationalsozialist*, have been useful in revealing how the Nazi Party regarded Frick. There are another five NSDAP sources. The NSDAP history of itself reveals little,<sup>37</sup> yet the

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that the archives for any of Thuringia's Landtag factions have not survived.

<sup>34</sup> J. Noakes, *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony, 1921-1933* (Oxford, 1971), p.3

<sup>35</sup> See NSDAP-HA microfilm, roll 7, folder 160

<sup>36</sup> See BABL, NS 25/233 Hauptamt für Kommunalpolitik collection on Thuringia, 1929-1932

<sup>37</sup> H. Fabricius, *Geschichte der nationalsozialistische Bewegung*, 2. Auflage (Berlin, 1935).

Thuringian NSDAP's pamphlet on Frick's activity is of more interest.<sup>38</sup> Although it does not go into detail, other than reciting the already known features of Frick's rule, it does, however, engage in polemics against his coalition partners, revealing how the NSDAP saw itself and the other parties in the coalition. The *Festschrift* for Frick's sixtieth birthday merely recites Frick's 'achievements' with the typical Nazi phraseology,<sup>39</sup> as do two articles by Frick. Both of these are of interest in that they were written by Frick,<sup>40</sup> but their authorship for the *Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch*, has meant that they extol his activity in typical Nazi prose for the party faithful.

### *Private Papers, Diaries, and Memoirs*

Collections of private papers (Nachlässe) have not been an extensive source of data. Of the eight-man government in Thuringia,

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<sup>38</sup> *Der Kampf in Thüringen. Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit des ersten nationalsozialistischen Staatsministers um der thüringischen nationalsozialistischen Landtagfraktion* (Weimar, n.d.)

<sup>39</sup> H. Fabricius, "Der Reichsleiter Dr. Frick", in H. Pfundtner (ed.), *Dr. Wilhelm Frick und sein Ministerium. Aus Anlaß des 60. Geburtstages des Reichs- und Preußischen Ministers des Innern Dr. Wilhelm Frick am 12. März 1937* (Munich, 1937). For a similar view see "Dr. Wilhelm Frick", *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, 1. Jahrgang, 1930

<sup>40</sup> W. Frick, "6 Monate nationalsozialistischer Minister in Thüringen", *Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch*, 5. Jahrgang, 1931; W. Frick, "Thüringische Bilanz", *Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch*, 6. Jahrgang,

Frick is the only member to possess a Nachlaß, which reveals nothing about this stage of his political career.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the Nachlaß of Walter Ortlepp, one of Frick's Nazi appointees, is also silent, save for biographical data accrued from a Nazi Party questionnaire.<sup>42</sup>

Private papers relating to figures opposed to Frick, both in Thuringia,<sup>43</sup> and the Reich,<sup>44</sup> have not been of benefit. However, that belonging to Eduard Dingeldy,<sup>45</sup> Reich leader of the DVP, contains two interesting letters from Thuringia,<sup>46</sup> which have been of assistance in helping to reconstruct the attitudes of Frick's coalition partners.

Diaries, like private papers, are also rare. The diary of Hermann Pünder,<sup>47</sup> permanent secretary (*Staatssekretär*) in the Reich Chancellery,

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1932

<sup>41</sup> BAK, NL 1241 Wilhelm Frick contains eight volumes. BABL, R 18 contains also a Frick Nachlaß, though this dates from his period of office as Reich Interior Minister. There are mentions to his Thuringian *Ministerzeit*, but these are in the form of career résumés, and do not contain anything which is not already known.

<sup>42</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl D/49, /50. The questionnaire is found in D/49.

<sup>43</sup> BAK, NL1086 Hermann Brill

<sup>44</sup> Collections of private papers exist in BABL, R 43 I/2875 Heinrich Brüning (Reich Chancellor from late March 1930); R 43 I/3633 Joseph Wirth (Reich Interior Minister from late March 1930)

<sup>45</sup> BAK, NL1002 Eduard Dingeldy

<sup>46</sup> NL 1002/61 Bll.1-4 anon "Die DVPl und N.S. in Thüringen", n.d.; NL 1002/61 Bll.7-12 Baum and Witzmann to von Kardoff, 27 June 1930

<sup>47</sup> H. Pünder, *Politik in der Reichskanzlei. Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1929-1932*, edited by T. Vogelsang (Stuttgart, 1961)

has yielded some interesting differences to the documentation and events in which he played a role. The diary kept by Otto Wagener,<sup>48</sup> a senior figure in the SA, sent to Thuringia by Hitler to assist in the negotiations, has been very useful in revealing the non-public aspects of the negotiations. Similarly, the diaries of Joseph Goebbels<sup>49</sup> have also proved to be of value regarding the negotiations, but information relating to Frick's ministerial activity and his perception by others, especially by the NSDAP, is not particularly extensive in the depth or range of topics recorded.

The memoirs of Carl Severing,<sup>50</sup> Albert Krebs,<sup>51</sup> and Heinrich Brüning,<sup>52</sup> are only of passing interest. The memoirs of Georg Witzmann,<sup>53</sup> faction leader of the DVP in Thuringia's Landtag, are more detailed in the range of topics dealt with.

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<sup>48</sup> O. Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe. Aufzeichnungen eines Vertrauens 1929-1932*, edited by H.A. Turner Jr. (Frankfurt am Main, 1978)

<sup>49</sup> E. Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941. Teil 1, Band I. 27. Juni 1924-30. Dezember 1930* (Munich, 1987); E. Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941. Teil 1, Band II. 1. Januar 1931-31. Dezember 1936* (Munich, 1987)

<sup>50</sup> C. Severing, *Mein Lebensweg. Band. II. Im auf und ab der Republik* (Cologne, 1950)

<sup>51</sup> W.S. Allen (ed.), *The Infancy of Nazism: The Memoirs of ex-Gauleiter Albert Krebs, 1923-1933* (New York, 1976). Krebs was a Nazi Gauleiter.

<sup>52</sup> H. Brüning, *Memoiren 1878-1934* (Stuttgart, 1970)

<sup>53</sup> G. Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933. Erinnerungen eines Politikers* (Meisenheim am Glan,



## *Personal Files*

In contrast to private papers and diaries, personal files have proved to be a much more readily available source. However, the availability of personal files has not been a guarantee of plentiful and/or useful material. Some files have revealed nothing at all,<sup>54</sup> whilst others have only surrendered data (usually of a biographical nature), which is available from other sources.<sup>55</sup> The remainder has been of assistance, but is limited to specific contexts.<sup>56</sup>

Files relating to those appointed by Frick have helped to reconstruct the background to their appointment, but have not always supplied the reason why.<sup>57</sup> Not all the files exist for those civil servants retired under Frick's Enabling Act, but a sufficient number have survived in order to sustain conclusions.<sup>58</sup> It is a disappointment to

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1958)

<sup>54</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/262 Erwin Baum; ThStMin/307 Willy Kastner; ThVbMin Hans Severus Ziegler; ThStMin/358 Fritz Sauckel is a particularly bad example of a file containing almost no documentation.

<sup>55</sup> ThStMin/331-1 Willy Marschler; ThStMin/390 Fritz Wachtler; Landtag von Thüringen/46-1 Paul Hennicke

<sup>56</sup> ThStMin/281 Wilhelm Frick; ThStMin/341 Hermann Münzel

<sup>57</sup> ThVbMin Hans F.K. Günther; ThVbMin Paul Schultze-Naumburg; Staatliche Hochschulen für Baukunst, bildene Künste, und Handwerk Weimar/126 Paul Schultze-Naumburg; ThMdl Georg Hellwig; ThMdl Personal File Helmuth Gommlich is an exception to the rule.

<sup>58</sup> ThFiMin Personal Files Karl Dittmar; Konrad Huschke; Kurt Schack; Felix Schmid; Karl

record that files relating to those civil servants directly under Frick in his ministries appear not have survived.<sup>59</sup>

### *NSDAP Personal Files*

A comparable situation exists with these sources also. Files exist for many of the Nazis known to be active in Thuringia.<sup>60</sup> Yet the eclectic nature of the contents, e.g. press clippings, party questionnaires and correspondence, mean that the files are of use only in specific contexts, or merely supply background information, such as biographical and career data.

### *The Scope and Limitations of other Sources*

In light of the above limitations other sources were examined to see what they could reveal. The purpose was not to fill in the empirical

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Strohmeyer; Ernst Zaubitzer; ThMdl Personal Files 8529 Paul H.R. Goeths; 3405 Georg Hellwig; 4583 Martin Krause; 8307 Kurt Schumann; 9218 Kurt Wagner; ThVbMin Personal Files Albert Bock; 15038 Alfred Jacobi; 14782 Ernst Kluge; 17726 Gerhard Kummer; 33740 Richard Wicke; ThWiMin Personal Files Hans Gräter; Karl Rauch; Karl Siedel; Richard Sommer

<sup>59</sup> Conspicuous absences are Paul Guyet and Rühle von Lilienstern who were Frick's Referenten for the police within the ThMdl.

<sup>60</sup> See BABL, BDC NSDAP Personal Files, Wilhelm Frick (12.3.1877); Hans Ludwig (2.5.1894); Willy Marschler (12.8.1893); Walter Ortlepp (9.7.1900); Fritz Sauckel (27.10.1894); Fritz Wachtler (7.1.1891); Otto Wagener (20.4.1888)

gaps with non-archival sources in an indiscriminate manner, but rather to deploy them constructively after a critical, but open minded, scrutiny. Analysis of secondary sources, for example, did not solely concentrate upon whether they revealed anything new or already known, but also upon the sources they cited, and whether these were known. As expected, the non-archival sources consulted have had their advantages, and as well as their drawbacks.

### *Biographies*

There are two Nazi biographies of Frick,<sup>61</sup> and one scholarly work.<sup>62</sup> The two Nazi works have been useful in accessing the party view - albeit with hindsight - on Frick's activity, whilst the academic study, which did not consult any Thuringian archival material, has only provided an overview. The biographies of Herman Brill,<sup>63</sup> Frick's most persistent critic in Thuringia, and Carl Severing,<sup>64</sup> are also limited to the

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<sup>61</sup> H. Fabricius, *Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick, der revolutionäre Staatsmann*, 1. Auflage (Berlin, 1933); H. Fabricius, *Dr. Wilhelm Frick. Ein Lebensbild des Reichsministers des Innern* (Berlin, 1938)

<sup>62</sup> G. Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick. Der Legalist des Unrechtsstaates. Eine Politische Biographie* (Paderborn, 1992)

<sup>63</sup> M. Overesch, *Hermann Brill in Thüringen 1895-1946. Ein Kämpfer gegen Hitler und Ulbricht* (Bonn, 1992)

<sup>64</sup> T. Alexander, *Carl Severing. Sozialdemokrat aus Westfalen mit preußischen Tugenden* (Bielefeld,

‘overview’ approach associated with political biographies.

### *Newspapers*

These have been helpful in recovering aspects not readily available from archival sources, e.g. the NSDAP Gauleitung,<sup>65</sup> the general view of Frick,<sup>66</sup> and possible stimuli upon the Reich Ministry of the Interior.<sup>67</sup>

### *Thuringian Landtag Printed Material*

In contrast to the ThHStAW collection ‘Landtag von Thüringen’, the printed material has proved to be a valuable source. Given the fact that Frick was subject to not one, but four votes of no-confidence, this material has been crucial in tracing the changing attitudes of the opposition parties and Frick’s coalition partners. It has also provided examples of political opinion towards specific aspects of Frick’s measures, both in the Landtag and in its committee.

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1992)

<sup>65</sup> *Der Nationalsozialist* and *Völkische Beobachter* have been valuable in this respect.

<sup>66</sup> See ThHStAW, ThMdI P/126 for a series of press clippings about Frick from January 1930 onwards.

<sup>67</sup> See BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl. 204 *Vossische Zeitung*, “Severing bricht Beziehungen ab”, 19 March

## Thuringian Government Printed Material

The *Gesetzsammlung für Thüringen*, the *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt*, and the *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung* have all helped identify which legislation or decrees Frick issued. Just as importantly, it has provided an ‘index’ for those decrees which Frick did not issue. The publications have also been helpful in providing a reference point by which the archival material could be more efficiently investigated through the concentration of measures enacted, or ignored. They have also been useful as a means of comparing draft and finished versions of decrees as a means of identifying any changes made and of input made by others.

## Postwar Interrogations of Frick

One significant limitation has been the lack of ‘inside’ knowledge about how Frick conceptualised his *Ministerzeit*, either during 1930 to 1931, or afterwards. Part of this is due to the lack of extensive or clear documentation in certain areas, e.g. the police files, or the Thuringian cabinet conclusions. It could also be argued that part of Frick’s silence is

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1930; R 43 I/2315 Bl.269 *Vossische Zeitung*, “Nationalsozialistischen Polizeidirektoren?”, 30 April 1930

attributable to his career as a civil servant in the Wilhelmine Reich, i.e. he considered it 'incorrect' to talk about his activity<sup>68</sup> when a true career politician would have had no qualms about doing so. In addition, Frick neither left diaries to posterity, nor wrote any memoirs. He also refused to testify at the Nuremberg trials, though he did co-operate in pre-trial interrogations with the Americans. Unfortunately, for the purpose of this dissertation, the questions of his interrogators and Frick's statements concentrate almost wholly upon his participation in the Munich Putsch, or his subsequent career as Reich Minister of the Interior.<sup>69</sup> Some questions were asked about his activities as Thuringia's Minister and his relationship to Hitler at the time, but they were considered as incidental and are only fragments of limited use. Fortunately, interrogations of a more contemporary nature do exist. The Landtag stenographic reports, and those of its committee, have helped broaden the picture of Frick's opinions, albeit with a degree of Nazi rhetoric. Information from the direct questioning of Frick also exists in the Thuringian Landtag's special committee on his attempt to grant Hitler citizenship in 1930, and the State Supreme Court's investigation

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<sup>68</sup> W.S. Allen, (ed.), *The Infancy of Nazism: The Memoirs of ex-Gauleiter Albert Krebs, 1923-1933* (New York, 1976), p.261

into the police subsidies dispute of 1930.

## *Conclusions*

The fragmented nature of the primary and secondary sources represents an obstacle for any exhaustive survey of Frick in office. To some extent it is possible to account for these limitations, e.g. the ‘weeding’ or deliberate destruction of files by the Nazis prior to May 1945, or accidental destruction due to the effects of war. Perhaps, the explanation, which is the closest to the actual truth, is that these limitations are an accurate reflection of Frick’s day-to-day activity. In other words, the gaps in the files are a direct result of Frick refusing to concern himself with the daily minutiae of his ministerial duties simply because it was not within his political remit to do so. Any such undertaking would have diverted him from the specific policy objectives he had assumed office to pursue.

Nevertheless, these limitations have meant that the research could only progress ‘thus far, and no further’. The dissertation and its constituent research chapters have been forced to concentrate upon specific policies, events, and actions from particular perspectives, and

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<sup>69</sup> NA, RG 238, M1019, roll 18, and M1270, roll 4.

then to base its conclusions from these ‘skewed’ perspectives. In some areas of the research, inference and deduction have had to take the place of solid, verifiable conclusions, though sufficient of the latter can be retrieved to provide an admirable balance between the two.

## **The Context of the Dissertation**

Research on the Weimar Republic and its subsequent collapse has largely concentrated upon the political hostility that the Republic aroused from both the left and the right in the early 1920s, the era of government rule by presidential approval from March 1930, and the events leading to Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor in January 1933.<sup>70</sup> Frick’s period of rule in Thuringia began as the Weimar Republic was (retrospectively) entering the final phase of its existence when the right in Germany began to reassert its hostility to the Republic when the financial crisis in Germany brought about the Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression began to affect German finances at all levels of German politics. Whilst this aspect of the Republic’s history has been

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<sup>70</sup> See, for example, K.D. Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik. Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie*, 5. Auflage (Villingen, 1971); K.D. Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism* (London, 1971)



recited many times, the hostility of the right towards the ‘modern’ and novel aspects of Weimar culture throw the vehemence of the German right towards the Republic into sharper relief.

The Weimar Republic is commonly believed by many to have constituted a ‘Golden Age’ for German culture, but research has shown that for all the modern, progressive, and novel aspects of the period, many of the cultural manifestations were the culmination of trends, ideas, and movements that had originated in the Wilhelmine era. Yet recent research has illuminated another side to the cultural experience during the Weimar Republic, one that, although evident to contemporaries at the time, was obscured by the focus on the ‘modern’ aspects of the period, that is the cultural backlash of the right against the modern aspects of the Republic’s cultural life.<sup>71</sup> It will be seen in Chapter Five how much of Frick’s actions within the areas of culture and education can readily be placed in this anti-Weimar framework.

The reaction of Germany’s ‘serious’ musicians and composers was hostile to the new musical forms of atonality developed by Ernst Krenek,

Paul Hindemith, *et al.* Journals and periodicals, such as *Zeitschrift für Musik* under the editorship of Dr. Alfred Heuss, were responsible for hostile, xenophobic campaigns identifying the new musical forms with foreign racial elements hostile to the German nation.<sup>72</sup> Jazz music, in particular, became an “integral part of the Weimar Republic’s metropolitan culture”,<sup>73</sup> a manifestation of the ‘Americanisation’ and the modernisation of Germany, and of Europe as a whole, following the First World War. The German Right fearing a “cultural usurpation”,<sup>74</sup> attacked Jazz since they could not divorce it from its ‘foreign’, i.e. black, origins, deeming as the apotheosis to Germany’s tradition as a land of *Dichter und Denker*, thinkers and poets.<sup>75</sup> Jazz music became identified with *Kulturbolschewismus* (cultural bolshevism), and, as one historian

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<sup>71</sup> P. Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (Harmondsworth, 1968); D.J.K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic* (Harmondsworth, 1991); W. Laqueur, *Weimar: A Cultural History, 1918-1933* (London, 1974)

<sup>72</sup> See M.H. Kater, “The Revenge of the Fathers: The Demise of Modern Music at the End of the Weimar Republic”, *German Studies Review*, May, Volume 15, 1992; E. Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (Basingstoke, 1992), chapter 1

<sup>73</sup> C. Partsch, “Hannibal ante portas: Jazz in Weimar”, in T.W. Kniesche and S. Brockmann (eds.), *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic* (Columbia, S.C., 1994), p.105

<sup>74</sup> Partsch, “Hannibal ante portas: Jazz in Weimar”, p.115

<sup>75</sup> E. John, *Musikbolschewismus. Die Politisierung der Musik im Deutschland 1918-1933* (Stuttgart/Weimar, 1994), pp.284-285; M.H. Kater, “The Jazz Experience in Weimar Germany”, *German History* (ii-July), Volume 6, 1988, pp.153-154

relates, the reaction of the 'serious music' fraternity can be seen as a cry for help as the feared invasion of black music and "American machine music". The primitive rhythm of Jazz was believed to provoke a primitive sexuality in people, a form of hypnotic suggestion.<sup>76</sup> Blacks were portrayed with a sexual magnetism that reduced whites, particularly white women, to automatons,<sup>77</sup> with the saxophone having a phallic aspect that produced castration anxieties amongst German males.<sup>78</sup>

Conservative concerns about the quality of 'cultural' works also extended into the realm of literature. 1926 saw the introduction of the *Gesetz zur Bewahrung der Jugend vor Schund- und Schmutzschriften*, described as a "classic example of moral censorship", which, as Margaret Stieg points out, "further politicised the already controversial issue of culture in Germany".<sup>79</sup> This "sub literature" was held up as a convenient scapegoat, responsible for Germany's ills. The fight against 'trash' literature had begun in the early 1890s when prices were low and could, therefore, be

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<sup>76</sup> John, *Musikbolschewismus*, pp.288-289

<sup>77</sup> Partsch, "Hannibal ante portas: Jazz in Weimar", p.113

<sup>78</sup> John, *Musikbolschewismus*, p.286

<sup>79</sup> M.F. Stieg, "The 1926 Law to protect Youth against Trash and Dirt: Moral Protectionism in a Democracy", *Central European History*, March, Volume 23, 1990, p.22

afforded by the 'lowest' elements of German society, i.e. the working class. Many condemned 'trash' literature for the alleged effects that it had on its readers, often undermining respect for authority and appealing to "the lowest human instincts",<sup>80</sup> and as a "corrupter of an implied German purity, the source of urban decadence in contrast to rural wholesomeness and a symbol, of soulless modern materialism".<sup>81</sup> Following Germany's defeat in the First World War, the campaign against 'trash' literature intensified, with many groups engaged in the campaign believing, quite sincerely, that Germany was being flooded by such material. "The need for moral renewal, a concern that is frequently found in defeated nations, was emphasised".<sup>82</sup> Like Jazz music, 'trash' literature was also seen as contrary to Germany's cultural reputation. The campaign was conducted by "agitation and hysteria", stimulating a debate on freedom, order, culture, and democracy. The effect of the law was minimal<sup>83</sup>: In 1928, 45 titles were banned. The following year only

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<sup>80</sup> Stieg, "The 1926 Law to protect Youth against Trash and Dirt, p.30

<sup>81</sup> Stieg, "The 1926 Law to protect Youth against Trash and Dirt, p.37

<sup>82</sup> Stieg, "The 1926 Law to protect Youth against Trash and Dirt, p.35

<sup>83</sup> K. Petersen, "The Harmful Publications (Young Persons) Act of 1926: Literary Censorship and the Politics of Morality in the Weimar Republic", *German Studies Review*, October, Volume 15, 1992, p.305

32 titled were banned, with a further decline during 1930, to only 20.<sup>84</sup>

The new medium of radio had a similar experience during the Weimar Republic. For although radio was not state controlled in Germany, there was the attempt to grant licences only to those companies that would nominally be 'above politics', with the Reichpost influencing such a degree of control, via the granting of licences to companies and the creation of a listener's fee paying licence scheme, that one historian has recently argued that radio was "more clearly dominated and strictly controlled by public authorities than any other mass media in Weimar Germany".<sup>85</sup> Broadcasting in Weimar Germany was designed to help Germany maintain its cultural heritage, and "nurture the *Volksgemeinschaft*" by concentrating its output on cultural and educational broadcasts, and avoiding any move towards mass culture, modernisation, and the 'lowest common denominator'.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> M.F. Stieg, "The 1926 Law to protect Youth against Trash and Dirt: Moral Protectionism in a Democracy", *Central European History*, March, Volume 23, 1990, p53

<sup>85</sup> K.C. Führer, "A Medium of Modernity? Broadcasting in Weimar Germany 1923-1932", *Journal of Modern History*, December, Volume 69, 1997, p.728

<sup>86</sup> Führer, "A Medium of Modernity?", pp.728-730, 746-747, 753

## The Chapters

Chapter Two considers the development of the Nazi Party in Thuringia from 1922 to 1930 by examining its organisational development, the personalities involved, and its relation to other radical or extra-parliamentary groups. Second, it looks at how the Nazi Party joined the government of Thuringia in January 1930 by looking at the actual course of the negotiations, the factors brought into play, and Hitler's personal involvement. Lastly, the chapter reveals why Hitler chose Frick as his ministerial candidate, and then reveals the reasons why Hitler had decided to embark upon the historic step of Nazi participation in government.

Chapter Three is the first of two chapters dealing with Frick's activity as Thuringia's Interior Minister. It investigates his impact upon the administration and government of Thuringia in terms of both structure and personnel policy. Attention will also be paid to particular measures, including Frick's attempt to grant Hitler Thuringian citizenship by appointing him the Gendarme commissioner in the town of Hildburghausen. The subject of Frick's administration of the police shall be dealt with in the following chapter. The historiography of Frick's period in power has mentioned the Enabling Act in such a

manner as to suggest that it led to an extensive reorganisation of Thuringia's administration, with a distinctive Nazi slant. Certainly, Hitler's comments that Frick was to carry out "a slow purge of the administration and of the civil service from the manifestations of the red revolution", and that Frick was "to introduce ... with ruthless determination a nationalisation (*Nationalisierung*)",<sup>87</sup> have done much to foster this view. The reality, however, is different

In contrast to the Enabling Act dispute, the crux of the 'police subsidies conflict', examined in Chapter Four, was not the retirement of officials, but rather their appointment. The Reich Ministry of the Interior feared that Frick was abusing his ministerial right to make appointments to the Thuringian police through a deliberate policy of recruiting and promoting Nazis in order to turn the police into an arm of the Nazi Party. This alleged practice was interpreted by the Reich Ministry of the Interior as a violation of Number 6 of the Principles, which stated:

"The Länder have to take appropriate measures that the non-political

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<sup>87</sup> F. Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen als Modell der Machtergreifung: ein Brief Hitlers aus dem Jahre 1930", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (iv-October), 14. Jahrgang, 1966, pp.462-463

character of the police [Schutzpolizei] as a whole, *like the non-political behaviour of the individual civil servant in office, is guaranteed unconditionally.*"<sup>88</sup>

The chapter considers Frick's plans for Thuringia's police by studying the dispute between his government and the Reich Ministry of the Interior over payment of the Reich subsidy designed for police forces in the Länder. Payment of the subsidy was regulated by the "Principles for the Granting of a Reich Subsidy for Police Purposes" (1928) which determined the responsibilities of the Länder towards their police forces, the Reich's obligation to assist the Länder with payment of a subsidy, and that the Länder would place their police forces at the Reich's disposal should the need arise.<sup>89</sup> There was also an additional Reich-Länder agreement governing the entry of candidates, as well as the employment, training, and retirement of police officers.<sup>90</sup> The Thuringian government had agreed to these arrangements in March 1928,<sup>91</sup> and Reich Interior Minister Carl Severing made their acceptance

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<sup>88</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.195 "Grundsätze für die Gewährung eines Reichszuschusses für polizeiliche Zwecke", original emphasis

<sup>89</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.195-196 "Grundsätze für die Gewährung eines Reichszuschusses für polizeiliche Zwecke"

<sup>90</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.197-198 "Vereinbarungen der Länder unter sich und mit dem Reich über die Gewährung eines Reichszuschusses für polizeiliche Zwecke"

<sup>91</sup> ThHStAW, Thüringische Oberverwaltungsgericht/A XI Nr.5 Bl.175 ThMdl to RIM, 17



by the Länder a precondition for the receipt of the subsidy.<sup>92</sup>

The dissertation then focuses upon Frick's activities as Thuringia's Education Minister in Chapter Five. Shortly after Frick came to power Hitler outlined his ideas on what Frick was to achieve in office. Hitler envisaged that Frick would carry out a nationalisation (*Nationalisierung*) of the Education Ministry through the appointment of "fanatical German nationalists", the removal of Marxist and pro-Republic teachers, and the re-orientation of school curricula along the lines of Nazi Party ideology.<sup>93</sup> The purpose of Chapter Five, then, is to examine the extent to which Frick turned Hitler's ideas into coherent government policies. Three areas shall be looked at: Frick's appointment policies; his interference in cultural affairs; and Thuringian school life and curricula, in particular Frick's conflict with the Reich government over the 'recommendation' of anti-Semitic school prayers. It has recently been argued that Frick "acted [*agierte*] ... as a radical pace-maker [*Schrittmacher*] of future National Socialist cultural policy. Frick vigorously published orders which had decisive effects for Thuringia's

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March 1928

<sup>92</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 BL194 Severing to the Länder, 5 January 1929

<sup>93</sup> See chapter 2, pp.

art, culture and education”.<sup>94</sup>

Chapter Six attempts to examine how the Nazi Party evaluated and portrayed Frick's ministerial activities in Thuringia, and the nature of Frick's relationship with his coalition partners is also analysed. This latter aspect occupies most of the chapter since Frick left office only after his coalition allies - the DVP - defected to the SPD-KPD-DDP opposition in support of the Spud's fourth, and ultimately final, motion of no-confidence in Frick by the Landtag.

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<sup>94</sup> B. Stenzel, " 'Tradition, Volkstum, Heimat und Rasse'. Grundzüge der regionalen Kultur- und Kunstpolitik im nationalsozialistischen Thüringen (1932-1945), in A. Dornheim, B. Post and B. Stenzel (eds.), *Thüringen 1933-1945. Aspekte nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft* (Erfurt, 1997), p.60

## Chapter Two:

### *Background*

## The Development of the NSDAP in Thuringia

Like many of branches of the NSDAP in Germany's other Länder, the origins and early history of the party in Thuringia are almost wholly obscure due to the paucity of documentation. The archives do reveal that in late January 1922 a group in Weida contemplated joining the NSDAP,<sup>1</sup> and that an *Ortsgruppe* was founded in Gotha in July the same year.<sup>2</sup> The development and growth of these two groups was quickly ended when the Thuringian government, following the murder of Walther Rathenau by right-wing extremists, declared the NSDAP illegal in mid-July 1922.<sup>3</sup> The membership of the Weida *Ortsgruppe* 'transferred' to the Munich branch for the duration of the prohibition,<sup>4</sup> and Thuringia's Nazis were allowed to join the *Deutsch-Völkische Freiheitspartei* (DVFP) in order to continue their activities.<sup>5</sup> The Thuringian

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<sup>1</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/166 Bl.4 Amann (Munich NSDAP) to Hans Gnath, 21 January 1922. It is not known when the Weida group joined the NSDAP.

<sup>2</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/160 Bl.22 ThMdl to R. Schäfer (Regierungskommissar Gotha), 1 July 1922. See also NSDAP-HA, reel 14a, folder 1623 Kreisdirektion Gera

<sup>3</sup> *Gesetzsammlung für Thüringen*, 1922, (Weimar, n.d.), nr.5, 15 July 1922, p.255

<sup>4</sup> ThHStAW. ThMdl P/166 Bl.22, 25 Amann (Munich NSDAP) to Hans Gnath, 6 December 1922 and 29 December 1922. The Weida *Ortsgruppe* was eventually transferred to that in Hof, Bavaria, see ThMdl P/166 Bl.35 Fritsch (Hof NSDAP) to Gnath, 27 February 1923.

<sup>5</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/160 Bl.12 Amann (Munich NSDAP) to Schutze (Erfurt), 12 March 1923

government knew that the DVFP had offered sanctuary to Nazis,<sup>6</sup> and that it had been instrumental in helping to set-up 'reading circles' (*Lesegesellschaften*) in which Nazis could read the banned *Völkische Beobachter*.<sup>7</sup> As a result of this assistance to the NSDAP, and because of its connections to the military,<sup>8</sup> the DVFP was banned in Thuringia in March 1923.<sup>9</sup> It soon became known, however, that both the DVFP and NSDAP were creating new organisations.<sup>10</sup> Many Nazis were arrested for illegal activities,<sup>11</sup> and a *Sturmabteilung* (SA) contingent was founded in Weimar. The number of SA men in Thuringia, according to an 'official history', was between 200 to 300 men.<sup>12</sup>

Circumstances dramatically improved for the NSDAP in early 1924. The Landtag election led to the return of 7 representatives for the

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<sup>6</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/160 Bl.6 Müller-Brandenburg to Regierungspräsident (Erfurt), 22 March 1923; ThMdl P/166 Bl.75 ThMdl to Thüringische Kreisdirektoren und Polizeiamter, 21 March 1923

<sup>7</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/166 Bl.38, 40 ThMdl notes, 15 February and 20 February 1923

<sup>8</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/166 Bl.42RS ThMdl to Herr Reichskommissar für Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung (Berlin), 21 March 1923

<sup>9</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/160 Bl.10 ThMdl to Thüringische Kreis- und Stadtdirektoren, 26 March 1923

<sup>10</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/160 Bl.140 ThMdl to Thüringische Kreis- und Stadtdirektoren, 28 May 1923

<sup>11</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/160 Bl.151-157, 190-197, 268-275, 289-290

<sup>12</sup> ThHStAW, RStH/205 Bl.10RS, 11RS SA-Gruppe Thüringen (ed.), *Thüringens SA im Kampfe um Deutschland* (Weimar, 1937). (Hereafter, RStH/205 *Thüringens SA*)

*Völkisch-Soziale Block* (V-SB), an alliance of ex-members of the DVFP and NSDAP, led by the anti-Semitic writer Artur Dinter.<sup>13</sup> Fortunately for the NSDAP and the DVFP, the right-wing *Ordnungsbund* had only managed to win 35 of the 72 seats available, and therefore had to rely upon the V-SB to maintain its majority. The price exacted by the V-SB for its support was the legalisation of the NSDAP and DVFP in March 1924.<sup>14</sup> Following this Dinter visited Hitler in Landesberg Prison and succeeded in becoming Landesleiter of the NSDAP in Thuringia,<sup>15</sup> although Dinter's advancement to this post led to difficulties within the V-SB and NSDAP. Not only was Dinter's personality said to be a problem,<sup>16</sup> but also Paul Hennicke, a fellow member of the V-SB Landtag faction and a previous NSDAP member, believed that he should be Landesleiter.<sup>17</sup> Conflict quickly developed between the two when they both competed to be the *Nationalsozialistische Freiheitspartei* 's (NSFP)

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<sup>13</sup> For biographical details on the seven V-SB members see ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/39 Verzeichnis der Mitglieder des III. Landtages von Thüringen 1924

<sup>14</sup> *Gesetzsammlung für Thüringen*, 1924, (Weimar, n.d.), nr.15, 3 March 1924, p.150

<sup>15</sup> NA, RG 242, T-81, roll 116, Weber to Fritz Sauckel, 1 July 1924, fr.136947

<sup>16</sup> D.R. Tracey, "The Development of the National Socialist Party in Thuringia, 1924-1930", *Central European History* (1-March), Volume 8, 1975, pp.28, 30

<sup>17</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/46-1 Bl.186RS Personal File Paul Hennicke. Hennicke had first joined the NSDAP in April 1921. Hennicke's file claimed that he had been a Landesverbandführer, "a post which today corresponds to the rank of a Gauleiter". No NSDAP

candidate in the Reichstag elections of May 1924.<sup>18</sup> Dinter managed to secure Hitler's support as the main candidate, but Hennicke circumvented this by appealing to Rosenberg, who led the NSFP whilst Hitler was in prison. In the end, neither Dinter nor Hennicke secured nomination. Dinter was not satisfied with second place, so members of the DVFP dominated the list.<sup>19</sup> In July Dinter was deposed as the V-SB's Landtag faction leader due to the "bolshevist actions brought about by the agitation [Wühlerei] of Herren Hennicke and Pölkow",<sup>20</sup> Some V-SB members had also felt uneasy about Dinter's personal vendetta against the Jewish president of the Thuringian State Bank.<sup>21</sup> Dinter tried to secure Ludendorff's backing to reverse the V-SB's decision, but failed.<sup>22</sup> At the NSFP's conference in Weimar,<sup>23</sup> Dinter and other Thuringian

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Membership File exists for Hennicke. See also *Wer ist's?* 10. Auflage (Berlin, 1935), p.463

<sup>18</sup> See the short sketch on Dinter's life and career in NA, RG 242, T-81, roll 116, *Der Völkischer Spiegel. Die völkische Führer in Bild und Wort* (1924), fr.136436

<sup>19</sup> Franz Stöhr became the NSFP Reichstag member for Thuringia. See Reichsministerium des Innern (ed.), *Handbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1924* (Berlin, 1924), p.9

<sup>20</sup> NA, RG 242, T-81, roll 116, Dinter to the Nationalsozialistische Freiheitsbewegung (NSFB) Ortsgruppen of Altenberg, Arnstadt, Auma, Greussen, Ilmenau, Saalfeld, Sonderhausen, Weimar, and Jena, 6 August 1924, fr.136995. Pölkow was a member of the DVFP.

<sup>21</sup> Tracey, "Der Aufstieg der NSDAP bis 1930", in D. Heiden and G. Mai (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus in Thüringen* (Weimar/Cologne/Vienna, 1995), pp.56-57. Pölkow replaced Dinter as leader of the Landtag faction.

<sup>22</sup> Tracey, "The Development", p.29

<sup>23</sup> See NSDAP-HA, reel 50, folder 1517; ThHStAW, NSDAP-GL/1-2 *Erster Tagung der*

Nazis rejected the idea of the NSFP amalgamating with Julius Streicher's *Großdeutsche Volksgemeinschaft* (GVG),<sup>24</sup> and Dinter formally placed his Gau under the GVG's Reichsleitung.<sup>25</sup> Dinter's support within Thuringia's *völkisch* milieu continued to decline even further during the remainder of 1924 to the point where he was expelled from the V-SB Landtag faction in December.

Nevertheless, Dinter was still fortunate to enjoy Hitler's continued support. After the re-founding of the NSDAP in February 1925, Hitler re-confirmed Dinter as Gauleiter.<sup>26</sup> Even so, Dinter still faced an uphill task in establishing and consolidating control over the *Ortsgruppen*, with the purpose of erecting a centralised Gau. The SA, which had been active as a "camouflaged organisation" (*getarnte Vereinigung*)<sup>27</sup> during the period of illegality, now came into the open. By March 1925 the SA was said to have 800 members in Thuringia, with 100

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*Nationalsozialistischen Freiheitsbewegung Großdeutschlands in Weimar vom 15. bis 17. August 1924*, pp.3-26 (This was previously BABL, NS D 38 Th/1)

<sup>24</sup> Tracey, "Der Aufstieg", p.57

<sup>25</sup> R. Hambrecht, *Der Aufstieg der NSDAP in Mittel- und Oberfranken (1925-1933)*, (Munich, 1976), p.81; NSDAP-HA, reel 7, folder 160 Dinter to Ortsgruppenvorstände Gossnitz and Schmölln, 12 December 1924

<sup>26</sup> NA, RG 242, T-81, roll 116, *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschland*, "Nationalsozialistische Führerdemonstrationen in Weimar", 23 March 1925, fr.136967

<sup>27</sup> ThHStAW, RStH/205 Bl.31RS *Thüringens SA*



SA men in the Weimar area alone.<sup>28</sup> At the beginning of March the Landesausschuß was reorganised into a Gau,<sup>29</sup> and Dinter managed to score a coup by bringing Fritz Sauckel, a Nazi activist from Ilmenau into the Gau organisation.<sup>30</sup> Dinter also added the *völkisch* writer Hans Severus Ziegler to his staff.<sup>31</sup> Ziegler's newspaper *Der Völkische* was renamed as *Der Nationalsozialist* and established as the official Gau newspaper. But problems still remained. Hennicke's *Ortsgruppe* in Gotha still refused to accept Dinter as the leader in Thuringia. Nazi disaffection in Gotha was such that its *Ortsgruppe* ceased to exist because its members "no longer wish to submit to Dinter's leadership."<sup>32</sup> Instead, the *Völkische Wehrbund* was set up and the organisation quickly spread to other towns. Pößneck was a centre of anti-Dinter dissent with 100

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<sup>28</sup> ThHStAW, RStH/205 Bl.36RS, 37 *Thüringens SA*

<sup>29</sup> F. Sauckel (ed.), *Kampf und Sieg in Thüringen* (Weimar, 1934), p.39

<sup>30</sup> See NA, RG 242, T-8I, roll 116, fr.136948-136949, 136954-136958 on Sauckel's activity in the Bezirksgruppe Ilmenau. For general biographical details see BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Fritz Sauckel. (27.10.1894), SA and PK folders; *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon 1934/1935* (Berlin, 1934), pp.402-403; P. Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right* (London, 1990), p. 345; C. Zentner and F. Bedürftig, *Das grosse Lexikon des dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1985), p.513

<sup>31</sup> *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon*, p.546

<sup>32</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/176 Bl.24RS Stadtdirektor (Gotha) report, 16 May 1925; ThMdl P/208 Bl.8 Thüringische Kreisdirektor (Gotha) to ThMdl, 17 October 1925. On the Gotha NSDAP see H. Matthiesen, "Das Gothaer Bürgertum und der Nationalsozialismus 1918-1930", in Heiden and Mai (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus*, pp.97-118

members in the *Völkische Wehrbund*.<sup>33</sup> The towns of Erfurt, Jena, and Eisenach also had branches of the *Völkische Wehrbund*.<sup>34</sup> The NSDAP's Reichsleitung formally dissolved Gotha's *Ortsgruppe*, and founded an official one, but this met with indifference. By mid-May Dinter could claim to rely upon the support of 82 *Ortsgruppen*. This was something of a dramatic turn around, given that in January Dinter enjoyed the backing of just 30 *Ortsgruppen*.<sup>35</sup> Dinter tried to threaten the expulsion of those *Ortsgruppen*, which did not attend a Gau meeting in August 1925, but despite the low turn-out, Dinter appears not to have carried out his threat.<sup>36</sup> Most of the *Ortsgruppen* slowly drifted back to the Gau throughout 1925, and by the end of the year a *Bezirksgruppe* was established in northern Thuringia. Dinter also managed to end his isolation in the Landtag when Willy Marschler<sup>37</sup> and Karl Spiller<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/208 Bl.11 Thüringische Kreisdirektor (Saalfeld) to ThMdl, 2 February 1926; ThMdl P/459 Bl.54 ThMdl note 31 May 1926

<sup>34</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/208 Bl.13 Rausch (Kriminalsekretär Weimar) note, 31 May 1926. On the NSDAP in Jena see R. Stutz, "Im Schatten vor Zeiss. Die NSDAP in Jena", in Heiden and Mai (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus*, pp.119-142

<sup>35</sup> Tracey, "The Development", pp.31, 32

<sup>36</sup> Tracey, "Der Aufstieg", p.60

<sup>37</sup> BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Willy Marschler (12.8.1893), SA folder. Marschler had first joined the NSDAP in November 1922, and then rejoined in December 1925, membership number 24,216. See also *Das Deutsche Fahrerlexikon*, p.299; W.S. Allen (ed.), *The Infancy of Nazism: The*

defected from the V-SB to the NSDAP, so forming a three-man faction.<sup>39</sup> Hennicke remained with the DVFP.

The DVFP was the only serious challenge to the expansion of the NSDAP in Thuringia at this time. Shortly after Hitler's re-founding of the NSDAP, the Thuringian NSFP decided to dissolve its organisation and join the DVFP almost *en-masse*. For a time it looked as if the DVFP would prove to be a serious competitor with the NSDAP for the radical-völkisch vote in Thuringia, but as events turned out, the DVFP was to experience a slow and irreversible decline.

Within the NSDAP's first year of legality the number of *Ortsgruppen* had risen to 48 after Fritz Sauckel had managed to bring over 12 from Ilmenau.<sup>40</sup> The NSDAP's Weimar *Ortsgruppe* had 260 members,<sup>41</sup> and 100 SA men<sup>42</sup> at the beginning of 1925. No comparable figures exist for the DVFP in 1925, but by February 1926 its Weimar *Ortsgruppe* had

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*Memoirs of ex-Gauleiter Albert Krebs, 1923-1933* (New York, 1976), pp.277-279

<sup>38</sup> BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Karl Spiller (9.8.1892), PK file. Spiller's membership number was 20,652.

<sup>39</sup> For a selective overview of the faction's activity see ThHStAW, NSDAP-GL/1-3 W. Marschler (ed.), *Denkschrift über die Tätigkeit der National-Sozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiter-Partei im Thüringer Landtage 1924/1927*. (This was previously BABL, NS D 38 Th/2)

<sup>40</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/266 Bl.145 Lagebericht for February 1925

<sup>41</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/161 Bl.217 Stadtdirektor (Weimar) to ThMdl, 25 January 1925

<sup>42</sup> ThHStAW, RStH/205 Bl.37 *Thüringens SA*

only 30 members,<sup>43</sup> though this was balanced somewhat by the DVFP's 360 members in Gera.<sup>44</sup> Problems within the DVFP leadership<sup>45</sup> led to defections to the NSDAP. Dinter was successful in winning back Hennicke,<sup>46</sup> which undoubtedly exacerbated the DVFP's slide towards political extinction.<sup>47</sup> Hennicke's defection to the NSDAP also led to a sharp decline in the support and activity for the *Völkische Wehrbund*.<sup>48</sup> However, as Donald Tracey has correctly pointed out, the true measure of the NSDAP's and the DVFP's political vitality lies not in the membership of the respective parties, but in their political activity.<sup>49</sup> From April 1925 the NSDAP's Weimar *Ortsgruppe* held one meeting a week, and from the autumn, began to accelerate its activity. The possession of *Der Nationalsozialist* as the Gau newspaper also played an important role in the dissemination of the party message. In addition, from October 1925 onwards Hitler began a series of public appearances

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<sup>43</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/176 Bl.57 Stadtpolizeiamt (Weimar) to ThMdl, 2 February 1926

<sup>44</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/176 Bl.54 Stadtdirektor (Gera) to ThMdl, 2 February 1926

<sup>45</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/161 Bl.6 Stadtdirektor (Gera) to ThMdl, 2 March 1925

<sup>46</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/46-1 Bl.186RS Personal File Paul Hennicke. Hennicke rejoined the NSDAP on 20 May 1926.

<sup>47</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/176 Bl.87 Lagebericht, 15 May 1926; ThMdl P/176 Bl.105 Stadtvorstand (Gotha) to ThMdl, 4 October 1926

<sup>48</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/208 Bl.15, 19 ThMdl to Herr Reichskommissar für Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung (Berlin), 23 October 1926, and 18 November 1926

in Thuringia.<sup>50</sup> The DVFP could only respond by producing their Reichstag representatives who were no match for Hitler in terms of a high profile amongst the public or the far-right in Germany. In simple terms, the NSDAP was steadily out-performing the DVFP in the public arena.<sup>51</sup> A further blow to the DVFP was the location of Weimar in July 1926 for the first NSDAP Reich conference since re-founding.<sup>52</sup> Even though there was still some degree of tension within the NSDAP despite Hitler's reconciliation of the north and south German factions earlier that year, the image portrayed to the public was one of a movement united under Hitler.

1926 brought a further opportunity for the NSDAP to expand its influence. The scheduling of the next Landtag elections for January 1927 meant the party would have the first chance of testing its organisation, and of relegating the DVFP to the sidelines of Thuringian politics. The NSDAP's chance to achieve this lay in concluding an electoral pact with the ex-servicemen's organisations, principally the *Stahlhelm* and the

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<sup>49</sup> Tracey, "Der Aufstieg", p.61

<sup>50</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/167 *passim*

<sup>51</sup> J. Noakes, "Conflict and Development in the NSDAP, 1924-1927", *Journal of Contemporary History* (iv-October), Volume 1, 1966, p.8 argues that the DVFP's leadership "lacked the strength to assert themselves with the brutal ruthlessness which was often required".

<sup>52</sup> NSDAP-HA, reel 21, folder 389, and reel 70, folder 1517

*Wehrbünde*, both of which had their national offices in Thuringia. Although the *Stahlhelm* only sought alliances with conservative and nationalist groupings, the *Wehrbünde* was much more disposed to consider working with the NSDAP. The *Völkische Führerring Thüringen* (VFTh) was set up to co-ordinate this, yet the VFTh erroneously believed that this could be achieved with both the DVFP and the NSDAP. Hitler recognised that working with the VFTh would significantly increase the number of voters for the NSDAP, and that his party would also secure access to both the *Stahlhelm*'s and the *Wehrbünde*'s organisational framework to assist spreading the Nazi message. Hitler, however, had no intention of being a mere committee man and he sought to have the VFTh accept his claim to undisputed leadership. Dinter simply had no desire to work with the DVFP, especially as it displayed an "uncertain attitude"<sup>53</sup> towards collaboration with the VFTh and the NSDAP. Dinter was reported to have said that the DVFP ought to ally itself with the mainstream right-wing parties, whilst the NSDAP would remain alone.<sup>54</sup> The political leverage of the NSDAP vis-à-vis the VFTh was strengthened when Bernard Schauen, one

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<sup>53</sup> Tracey, "Der Aufstieg", p.65

<sup>54</sup> NSDAP-HA, reel 7, folder 160 Müller-Brandenberg (VFTh) to Hitler, 6 October 1926

of the DVFP's Landtag representatives, was ready to join the NSDAP due to his party's stance. Dinter, sensing an opportunity to further weaken his rivals, offered Schauen first place on the candidate list for the Weimar constituency and second place on the Land list. Dinter offered Graf von Görtz of the VFTh second place on the Weimar list also. However, von Görtz changed his mind. He offered his place back to the NSDAP without consulting the VFTh, and attempted to bring back the DVFP into the negotiations. Dinter refused outright to accept this. He re-arranged the list of candidates so that priority was given to Marschler and Hennicke. Schauen was relegated to fourth place on the list, a move interpreted by the VFTh as nothing other than a promise broken by Dinter.<sup>55</sup> This ability of the NSDAP to dominate the negotiations, which it had been invited to join, can be taken as a clear sign of the increasing strength and self-confidence of the party, which stemmed from the consolidation and development of the Gau in 18 months following legalisation.

In the Landtag election, only Dinter and Marschler were elected. The poor showing of 3.4% for the NSDAP arose from the failure of the party to secure the votes of the *Stahlhelm* and the *Wehrbünde*. As a direct

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<sup>55</sup> NSDAP-HA, reel 7, folder 160 Müller-Brandenburg (VFTh) to Dinter, 28 December 1926,

result of this, Dinter demanded that all NSDAP members had to renounce membership in all of the *Wehrbünde's* constituent organisations.<sup>56</sup> Although the VFTh complained, Hitler gave his critics in the VFTh short shrift in view of the electoral snub it had given to his party. Hitler realised that the decline of the DVFP, which had only received 9115 votes (1.1%) in the election, together with his party's increasing organisational sophistication, meant that the *Wehrbünde* - or in fact any other non- or extra-parliamentary right wing organisation within Thuringia - had little choice but to work with the NSDAP, and on the NSDAP's own terms.

Within 3 years Dinter, with the assistance of Sauckel and Ziegler, had managed to make the NSDAP the premier organisation on Thuringia's far-right.<sup>57</sup> At this point Dinter increasingly began to turn his back upon the party to concentrate upon his *völkisch* religious activities. Sauckel, who had been Gau business manager (*Gaugeschäftsführer*) since 1926,<sup>58</sup> was made deputy Gauleiter in March

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and 30 December 1926

<sup>56</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/162 Bl.264 Lagebericht, 15 March 1927

<sup>57</sup> By this time the Gau possessed 19 *Bezirke* throughout Thuringia. See ThHStAW, ThMdl P/268 Bl.77 Appendix to the Lagebericht for April-May 1927

<sup>58</sup> BABL, NS 26/1364 Personal File Fritz Sauckel



1927,<sup>59</sup> and he began to take on more and more duties as a consequence of Dinter's absences. Dinter eventually resigned his post within the party due to "professional [*berufliche*] reasons",<sup>60</sup> and in October Sauckel succeeded him as Gauleiter.<sup>61</sup> Dinter still retained his seat in the Landtag and membership within the party. His attacks upon organised religion, together with his attempts to form a Nazi senate to advise Hitler and to orientate the party towards a more *völkisch*-Christian direction enraged Hitler. Even though Dinter had no power base in Thuringia other than Hitler's personal support, Hitler moved cautiously against Dinter. Hitler solicited the support of other Gauleiter,<sup>62</sup> and Gregor Strasser sent out a letter to all Gauleiter asking them to sign a declaration renouncing Dinter's views and confirming their loyalty in Hitler.<sup>63</sup> Only once these had been received was Dinter expelled from the party.

Hitler's replacement of Dinter with Sauckel as Gauleiter proved to be a shrewd move. Sauckel, seen as "a dull organiser [*ein trockener*

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<sup>59</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/162 Bl.258 Lagebericht, 19 March 1927

<sup>60</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl P/268 Bl.131 Lagebericht for September 1927

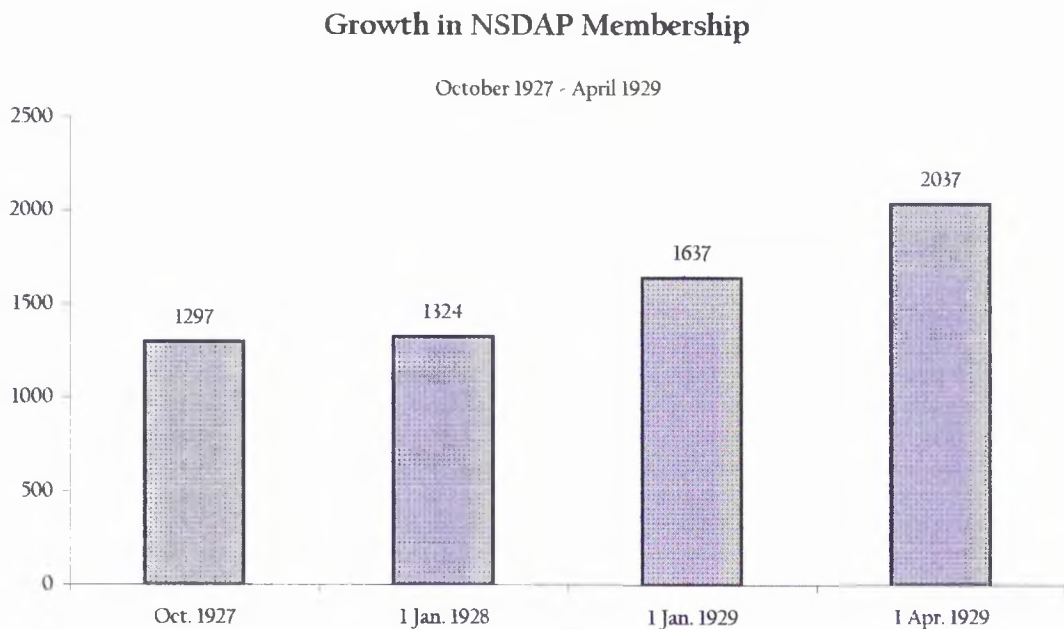
<sup>61</sup> BABL, NS 26/1364 Personal File Fritz Sauckel;

<sup>62</sup> P. Hüttenberger, *Die Gauleiter. Eine Studie zum Wandel des Machtgefüges in der NSDAP* (Stuttgart, 1969), pp.45-46

<sup>63</sup> NSDAP-HA, reel 23, folder 487 Gregor Strasser letter, 8 October 1928

Organisator]" by some,<sup>64</sup> immediately brought his experience as *Gaugeschäftsführer* to his new post. Until the end of 1929 this period was one of continued growth for the NSDAP at all levels.

Sauckel's first quarterly report of 1929 to the Reichsleitung provides a valuable insight into the Gau at this time. Membership figures alone reveal a significant increase.



(Source: NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, p.1)

Sauckel identified the *Bezirke* of Gotha, Weimar-Nord, Sonneberg, Suhl,

<sup>64</sup> The phrase is Peter Hüttenberger's. See *Die Gauleiter*, p.46

Apolda, Altenberg and Nordhausen as the main catchment areas.<sup>65</sup> Most of the *Wikinggruppen* in Thuringia had gone over to the NSDAP by late 1928.<sup>66</sup> This growth in the NSDAP's numerical strength appears to have originated in its public activity, which had been "an extremely active one [*eine äusserst rege*]". Sauckel recorded that despite the atrocious winter weather, most of the *Ortsgruppen* had held their weekly meetings, and that 150 large public meetings had held in towns and villages of all sizes, with speakers from within the Gau and without. Attendance was said to have been "surprisingly distinguished", with many local newspapers giving "very thorough" accounts.<sup>67</sup>

Sauckel's appointment, however, had not led to any immediate cessation of difficulties and conflicts within the Gau. During 1928 there appears to have been a conflict of personalities within the SA leadership,<sup>68</sup> which came to a head in early 1929 and threatened to put collaboration between the Gauleitung and the SA leadership "seriously

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<sup>65</sup> National Archives (NA), RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, p.1

<sup>66</sup> See NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 January [1929], p.1. Sauckel mistakenly dated this letter as 1928, but internal evidence shows that it does date from 1929.

<sup>67</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, p.1

<sup>68</sup> NA, RG 242, T-81, roll 116, Sauckel to Donnerhack, 9 June 1928, fr136970-136971

in question”.<sup>69</sup> Sauckel resolved this by relieving Arno Donnerhack of the SA leadership and appointing Gustav Zunkel, leader of the NSDAP’s Weimar Stadtrat faction.<sup>70</sup> The growth of the SA in this period appears to have reflected the dispute.



(Source: ThHStAW, RStH/205 BlI.60RS, 64RS, 69, 76 *Thüringens SA*)

Leadership problems also existed within four *Ortsgruppen*. The Gauleitung had remained aloof as far as possible, though it had been

<sup>69</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, “Gau Thüringen”, Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, p.3

<sup>70</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, “Gau Thüringen”, Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, pp.4-5; ThHStAW, RStH/205 Bl.74 *Thüringens SA*

necessary to impose Paul Papenbroock (from Gotha) upon the Eisenach Ortsgruppe,<sup>71</sup> since the conflict there had led to a haemorrhaging of voters and new members.<sup>72</sup> Fortunately for the Gau, Dinter's exclusion had not affected the party "in any way", but Sauckel foresaw that his predecessor may well continue to peddle "his scandalous assertions ... with tenacity". To Sauckel's consternation Dinter still remained in the Landtag and was using his vote to prop up the government.<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless, Sauckel was confident enough to report that his Gau constituted "a unified and complete whole, and furnishes a useful instrument for the approaching electoral campaign."<sup>74</sup> He believed that the Landtag election would return a minimum of three NSDAP representatives, and his view of the political situation gave him good cause to be optimistic. The government was in "an incessant political crisis" and had to rely upon the single vote of Dinter to maintain its majority. Sauckel noted, however, that the SPD and the KPD, the main opposition parties, were no longer interested in

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<sup>71</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, p.3

<sup>72</sup> See NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 January [1929], p.1

<sup>73</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, pp.3, 5

<sup>74</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, p.4

calling for an early dissolution of the Landtag, a view that the other parties were beginning to share. "[T]here can be no doubt", wrote Sauckel, "that with a premature dissolution of the Landtag the National Socialists would register the strongest gain". The NSDAP's breakthrough in the *Kreis-* and *Gemeinderat* elections of December 1928 was seen by Sauckel and others as a sign of the NSDAP's increasing electoral power.<sup>75</sup> Fears that these newly elected representatives would prove to be a disaster for the party were unfounded since their activity had resulted in a "significant strengthening of our [NSDAP] public influence and appearance. In a great number of towns this advantage has become evident towards the local police and administration authorities." Ties to other political parties or economic groups were not tolerated by the NSDAP in order to allow it the greatest room for manoeuvre.<sup>76</sup>

Financial problems had given Sauckel cause for concern, particularly since the Gau had still not cleared the 4000 RM debt accrued from the Landtag election of 1927 and the Reichstag election of

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<sup>75</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, p.5

<sup>76</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, p.6

1928, though the Gauleiter was confident that the debt could be completely paid off. In addition, the Gau's financing of the *Kreis-* and *Gemeinderat* elections, together with the purchase of a car and a printing press had led to "commitments" of an additional 3000 RM, but Sauckel was confident that this could be settled by the end of the year.<sup>77</sup>

Concluding his report, Sauckel stated that the Gau was to continue with its high profile activity. The towns of Weimar, Erfurt, Gotha, Suhl, Sonneberg, Gera and Altenberg were to be *Schwerpunkte* of the party's campaigns. The last four towns were "particular strongholds of Marxism", but party would put "the greatest emphasis" upon recruiting members and voters from the rural population and the professional middle class. The party, Sauckel reassured the Reichsleitung, would not be caught unawares by any surprise Landtag election.<sup>78</sup>

Sauckel's confidence in the 'war footing' of his Gau was such that he believed it was not presumptuous to tell Hitler that "in the very near

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<sup>77</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, pp.6-7

<sup>78</sup> NA, RG 242, T-580, roll 26, "Gau Thüringen", Sauckel to Organisationsabteilung der Reichsleitung der NSDAP, 3 April 1929, pp.8-9

future in Thuringia an excellent progress of the movement shall be recorded.”<sup>79</sup> The Gau was staffed by “valuable men”, and Zunkel was continuing to guarantee “the fortunate and harmonious co-operation” between the SA and the Gau.<sup>80</sup> Certainly Sauckel took pride in his claim that the Thuringian Gau was “not exclusively restricted to definite and social classes, rather that valuable people from all social classes come to us.” By this Sauckel meant a “strong increase” of those from the left of the political spectrum in the previous recruiting grounds of Gotha, Suhl, Apolda, Altenberg, and the new areas of Steinbach-Hallenberg and the Thuringian Wald. There had also been a “very strong increase” amongst the rural population. In addition, the NSDAP in Weimar could point to “the best circles of society amongst our members and followers.” Dinter’s expulsion had still not produced any noticeable side effects for the party. On the contrary, Sauckel believed that the NSDAP was all the more stronger for it as many, who would have not joined the party under Dinter, had now done so.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Fritz Sauckel (27.10.1894), PK folder, Sauckel to Hitler, 20 August 1929, pp.1-2

<sup>80</sup> BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Fritz Sauckel (27.10.1894), PK folder, Sauckel to Hitler, 20 August 1929, p.2

<sup>81</sup> BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Fritz Sauckel (27.10.1894), PK folder, Sauckel to Hitler, 20 August 1929, p.2. Unfortunately Sauckel did not supply any data to substantiate his claims.



Sauckel pointed out, however, that news about the Gau was not always good. “[O]ur struggle is, and must become, more and more serious and difficult”; the expansion of the NSDAP would make the work of party officials more difficult. Nevertheless, Sauckel sought to assure Hitler that the Thuringian Gau had developed “naturally and organically. Inflationary gains, like earlier, need not be feared”.<sup>82</sup> These remarks suggest that the rapid expansion of the NSDAP in the first quarter of 1929, when membership rose by 25%, had caused internal problems for the Gau, with Sauckel hinting that there were always difficulties and trivial matters threatening the Gau’s efficiency.<sup>83</sup> This concern was prompted by the approach of three crucial election campaigns. The NSDAP wanted to establish itself in the *Gemeinderat* elections in the Prussian government areas, and lead the campaign against the Young Plan “with emphasis”. The most important, however, was the Landtag election: “It must and shall assure us a strong position in Thuringia.”<sup>84</sup>

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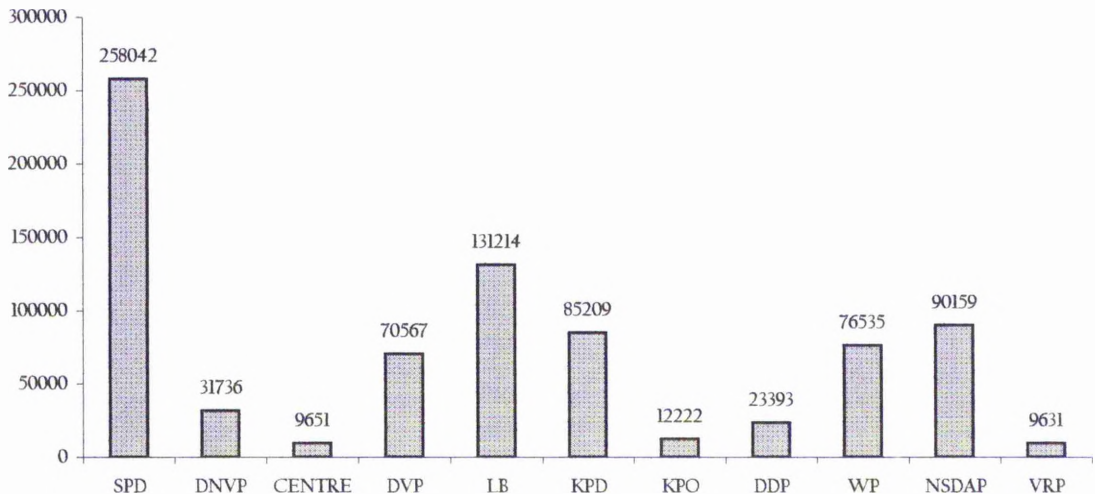
<sup>82</sup> BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Fritz Sauckel (27.10.1894), PK folder, Sauckel to Hitler, 20 August 1929, p.2

<sup>83</sup> BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Fritz Sauckel (27.10.1894), PK folder, Sauckel to Hitler, 20 August 1929, p.3

<sup>84</sup> BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Fritz Sauckel (27.10.1894), PK folder, Sauckel to Hitler, 20 August 1929, pp.3-4

## The Landtag Election and the NSDAP's Breakthrough

### Thuringian Landtag Election 8 December 1929



(Source: G. Dressel (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte Thüringens*. Band IV. *Wahlen und Abstimmungsergebnisse 1920-1995* (Erfurt, 1995), pp.88-89)

The Landtag's 53 seats were distributed:

SPD 18	Landbund 9
KPD 6	Wirtschaftspartei (WP) 6
NSDAP 6	DVP 6
DNVP 2	DDP 1

The NSDAP had tripled its vote from 27,946 in 1927 to 90,159, and had tripled its representation in the Landtag from 2 to 6. Sauckel, Marschler, Hennicke and Fritz Wachtler<sup>85</sup> were elected from constituencies (*Kreiswahlvorschläge*),<sup>86</sup> whilst Kurt Ludwig<sup>87</sup> and Paul Papenbroock were elected from the Land list (*Landeswahlvorschlag*).<sup>88</sup>

The DNVP, DVP, LB and the Centre Party had polled only 243,168 votes - a drop of 27,400 - compared to their joint performance in 1927 as the *Einheitsliste*. These votes had not transferred to the other bourgeois parties. The DDP had lost 3,439 votes, and the *Volksrechtspartei* (VRP) had undergone a serious decline with the loss 12,446 votes. Only the WP had increased its vote, albeit by 45. All in all, the bourgeois parties had lost some 43,285 votes.

The left's electoral fortunes had been mixed. The KPD had experienced a significant slump in support from 113,295 votes in 1927 to 85,209 - its loss of 28,086 votes was more than equal to the combined losses of the DNVP, DVP, LB and the Centre Party. The KPD's

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<sup>85</sup> Wachtler had joined the NSDAP on 26 April 1926, see BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Fritz Wachtler (7.1.1891), PK folder. See also *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon*, p.510; *Wer ist's?*, pp.1665-1666

<sup>86</sup> *Vorlagen, Anträge, Große Anfragen des Fünften Landtags 1930-1932* (Weimar, n.d.), nr.2, p.4

<sup>87</sup> No NSDAP Membership File exists for Ludwig, but see *Wer ist's?*, p.1003

opponents, the *Kommunistische Partei-Opposition* (KPO) had won 12,222 votes, and the SPD had increased its vote by 4,000 to 258,042. Altogether, the left had polled 11,864 votes less than in 1927.

Since the NSDAP's increase in votes - 62,213<sup>89</sup> - was roughly equal to the total number of votes lost by the bourgeois parties and the KPD, it would be easy to argue that the NSDAP's breakthrough had come about because every voter, who had abandoned the bourgeois parties and the KPD, had automatically defected to the NSDAP. The near parity of turnout between the 1927 and 1929 elections (810,935 and 806,986 respectively)<sup>90</sup> would appear to substantiate the idea of voters reshuffling themselves along ideological lines *en masse*.

This monocausal view, however, is too simplistic to be an accurate explanation of the swing to the NSDAP. Between 1927 and 1929 the electorate in Thuringia had grown from 1,035,859 to 1,078,129 - a rise

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<sup>88</sup> *Vorlagen, Anträge, Große Anfragen*, nr.2, p.4

<sup>89</sup> This assumes that the DVFP voters in the 1927 election had transferred their allegiance *en masse* to the NSDAP following the DVFP's demise.

<sup>90</sup> See J. Falter, T. Lindenberger, and S. Schumann (eds.), *Wahlen und Abstimmungen in der Weimarer Republik. Materialien und Wahlverhalten 1919-1933* (Munich, 1986), p.111. Dressel's work does not contain data on size of electorate, spoilt papers, etc.

of 42,270,<sup>91</sup> and the vast majority were undoubtedly first time voters. It is quite possible that the NSDAP's breakthrough was not just due to the defection of voters away from the bourgeois parties and the KPD, but also to the fact that many of these parties' voters had stayed away from the election, thus allowing the first time voters to have an influence far beyond their actual numbers.

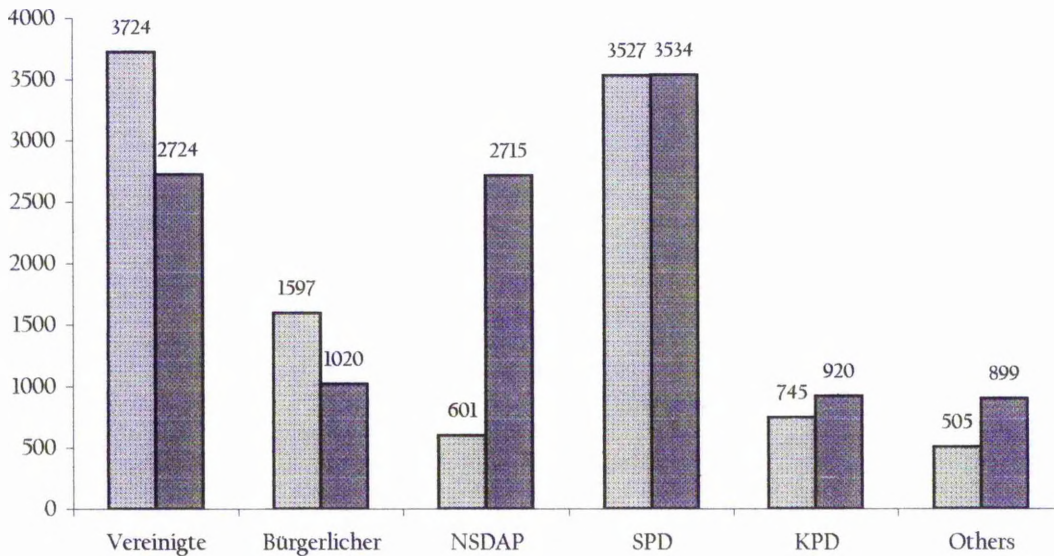
Nevertheless, the NSDAP's success in attracting voters from other parties should not be underrated. An indication that the NSDAP would perform well against the bourgeois parties in the Landtag election had been illustrated in Apolda's town council election of 20 October 1929. In the previous election of 2 December 1928 the NSDAP had polled only 601 votes and gained just 1 seat on the council. Ten months later, in the election of 20 October 1929, the NSDAP's vote more than quadrupled to 2715, and its representation on the council increased from 1 to 6.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Falter *et al*, p.111

<sup>92</sup> Dressel, *Quellen zur Geschichte Thüringens*. Band IV, pp.79, 83

**Town Council Elections in Apolda,**  
December 1928 and October 1929



(Source: Dressel, *Quellen zur Geschichte Thüringens*. Band IV, pp.79, 83)

The NSDAP's breakthrough was derived the defection of voters from the *Vereinigte bürgerliche Parteien und Wirtschaftsgruppen*, and the *Bürgerlicher Wahlverein/Haus- und Grundbesitzer*, the two main bourgeois groups in Apolda. These two groups' losses provided the NSDAP with almost all of its extra votes and all of its extra 5 seats.

Certainly, the NSDAP's ability to tempt voters away from its opponents owes something to the development of the Gau under Sauckel. The extent of the NSDAP's organisational framework in

Thuringia has been seen as second only to the SPD in terms of its presence in all centres of population.<sup>93</sup> Without an extensive organisation throughout Thuringia the NSDAP would not have been able to disseminate its message comprehensively to the electorate in Apolda, let alone throughout Thuringia. The NSDAP's success in the Landtag election must also take account of its participation in the anti-Young Plan campaign, which ended a fortnight after the Landtag election. The prestige and respectability which the NSDAP derived from collaboration with the bourgeois parties in 1929 helped deliver what the VFTh had not in 1927 - votes away from the NSDAP's confederates.

## The Negotiations for Entry into Government

The NSDAP's breakthrough had caused a change on the balance of power in the Landtag. The NSDAP's 6 seats meant that neither the left, nor the right could form majority governments by excluding the NSDAP. There was little chance of a 'Great Coalition' being formed in Thuringia since the bourgeois parties had mistrusted the SPD<sup>94</sup> ever since it had let the KPD join its government in mid October 1923, a move that led to the

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<sup>93</sup> Tracey, "The Development", pp.41-42

<sup>94</sup> G. Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933. Erinnerungen eines Politikers* (Meisenheim am Glan,

Reichswehr intervening in Thuringia to disband the SPD-KPD paramilitary 'Proletarian Hundreds'.<sup>95</sup>

However, the bourgeois parties, led by the LB, were much more inclined to consider an alliance with the NSDAP.<sup>96</sup> Hitler quickly recognised the opportunity, which had been presented to him, and he began to ruthlessly exploit it.

It is difficult to say when the negotiations concerning the NSDAP's entry into any coalition government began exactly.<sup>97</sup> Goebbels' diary entry of Wednesday 8 January 1930 is the first definite date known. He recorded that the NSDAP was to receive the Interior and Education Ministries, and that Frick had been selected as Hitler's candidate.<sup>98</sup> The negotiations, however, appear to have been in progress a little earlier than this. Sometime earlier that week Hitler had empowered Otto Wagener, a senior SA leader, to travel to Weimar as a

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1958), p.153

<sup>95</sup> See B. Häupel, *Die Gründung des Landes Thüringen. Staatsbildung und Reformpolitik 1918-1923* (Weimar/Cologne/Vienna, 1995), pp.156-170; E. Kolb, *The Weimar Republic* (London, 1988), p.48

<sup>96</sup> H. Patze and W. Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringens. Teil 5(ii)* (Cologne and Vienna, 1978), p.507

<sup>97</sup> Tracey, "Der Aufstieg", p.71 claims that the negotiations began on 17 December 1929, but cites no source for this.

<sup>98</sup> E. Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941 Teil 1, Band I. 27. Juni 1924-30. Dezember 1930* (Munich, 1987), p.480, entry of 8 January 1930 This is the earliest known mention of Frick as the ministerial candidate.



goodwill ambassador. His brief was to accelerate the negotiations then being conducted by Sauckel. Only when a settlement was in view would Hitler to travel to Weimar and conclude the negotiations in person.<sup>99</sup>

Wagener traveled to Weimar. Sauckel had already made appointments for him to speak with the chairmen of the DVP, DNVP, LB, and the DDP.<sup>100</sup> Wagener also conferred with the chairmen of the Thuringian Industrial Association, the President of the Reich Railway Board of Directors (Erfurt), the Director of the Reich Bank (Weimar), and the government ministers.<sup>101</sup> The meetings progressed well enough for Wagener to telephone Hitler that everything was ready for him to travel to Weimar and make the appearances necessary to sway opinion in favour of admitting the NSDAP into government.<sup>102</sup>

Hitler's first appearance in Weimar was at a private tea party organised by Sauckel. Accompanied by Rudolf Hess, Frick, Wagener and Sauckel, Hitler met twenty influential figures from Thuringia's business, industry, bureaucracy, and the right-wing political parties.

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<sup>99</sup> O. Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe. Aufzeichnungen eines Vertrauens 1929-1932*, edited by H.A. Turner Jr., (Frankfurt am Main, 1978), p.309

<sup>100</sup> Patze and Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringens*, p.507, claim that the DDP was not considered possible coalition partners because of its hostility to the NSDAP.

<sup>101</sup> Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, pp.310-311

<sup>102</sup> Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, p.309

Hitler soon became the centre of attention and made all the right noises concerning the introduction of strong government in Germany, with the need to ensure that it rested upon the sound foundation of the German people.<sup>103</sup> At the end of the meeting Wagener relates that Sauckel, after he had escorted some guests out, returned and “reported that the choice of minister, and hence our entry into the government has been secured.”<sup>104</sup>

That evening Hitler continued to press his case before 300 private guests from the elite of Thuringia’s public life, politics, business, administration, art, and science. According to one historian, Hitler “carried off something of a tour de force”.<sup>105</sup> In the two hour speech Hitler skillfully avoided mentioning any concept, e.g., ‘National Socialism’ or ‘National Socialist’, which would offend the sensibilities of his listeners and jeopardise the NSDAP’s chances of joining the government.<sup>106</sup> Hitler stuck to the traditional themes of Germany’s decline in the world market, and her slide toward civil war through the

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<sup>103</sup> Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, p.313

<sup>104</sup> “berichete, daß die Ministerwahl und damit unser Eintritt in die Regierung gesichert sei”, Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, p.313

<sup>105</sup> H. A. Turner Jr., *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (New York, 1985), p.193

<sup>106</sup> *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, “Eine politische Rede Adolf Hitlers in Weimar”, 12 January 1930

corrosive effects of pacifism, democracy, and internationalism. Recovery, Hitler argued, lay in the concept and personality of the 'Führer', and in the Volk's urgent priority to recover confidence in itself and its abilities. Only at the close of the speech did Hitler touch upon the situation in Thuringia. He argued that if the NSDAP had decided to enter government, it did not mean that the party had renounced its programme. Rather, Hitler argued, it was the NSDAP's "iron will to introduce our fundamental ideas" into Thuringia, and in the process "surrender not one centimetre of our creed." The NSDAP's struggle placed priority upon the people and Germany, and whoever, Hitler continued, was opposed to the people, became the NSDAP's "deadly enemy." The speech ended dramatically when Hitler said: "Reconciliation is not for us! There is only one thing: The salvation of our Volk, and, if it has to be, through the annihilation of our enemies."<sup>107</sup>

According to observers, the audience responded enthusiastically to Hitler and his statements.<sup>108</sup> Doubtless they had been expecting a tirade of criticism over the slow progress of the negotiations. Instead

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<sup>107</sup> *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Eine politische Rede Adolf Hitlers in Weimar", 12 January 1930

<sup>108</sup> Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, p.313; Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, p.481, entry of 11 January 1930; Turner, *German Big Business*, p.193

they were treated to a speech in which Hitler cleverly and subtly identified himself and his party (albeit not actually by name) with a non-partisan, non-political effort for the renewal of Germany, and surreptitiously avoided any reference to the real reason why he was in Weimar.

What happened over the weekend of 11-12 January until Monday 13 January, the day scheduled for the expiry of Hitler's ultimatum, is not known. Hitler certainly appears to have won over Thuringia's influential figures with his two appearances on the Friday, and the newspaper accounts published over the weekend and beyond<sup>109</sup> no doubt helped influence opinion. The DVP, however, remained opposed to the NSDAP joining the government.

Frick's nomination was the stumbling block. Although Frick had not served his prison sentence for participating in Hitler's 1923 Putsch, his reputation was sufficient to alarm the DVP, whose 5 seats in the Landtag were also needed to make any right-wing coalition government fully feasible. The DVP in Thuringia came under great pressure from Thuringian business interests alarmed at the idea of co-operation with a

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<sup>109</sup> See C. Hartmann, *Adolf Hitler. Reden, Schriften, Anordnungen. Februar 1925 bis Januar 1933*. Band III. *Zwischen den Reichstagswahlen Juli 1928 - September 1930* (Munich, 1995) p.8, n.3

'socialist' party,<sup>110</sup> as well as from the DVP throughout Germany, not just because of Frick's past, but also because of the NSDAP's attitude towards the DVP itself.<sup>111</sup> Hitler was particularly angry that he was going to be cheated of entry into government because of the DVP's reluctance. It appears that the other parties expected the NSDAP to nominate minor party figures to occupy some administrative backwaters in the Thuringian government.<sup>112</sup> So, on Friday 10 January, Hitler issued an ultimatum stating that if Frick was not accepted by Monday 13 January, the Thuringian NSDAP would call for a dissolution of the Landtag on the Tuesday, and the party would then begin campaigning for the new elections on the Wednesday.<sup>113</sup>

Hitler's threat of calling for new elections was a clear attempt to bully Frick's prospective coalition partners into submission by playing on their fears that any new election would confirm even more strongly

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<sup>110</sup> Turner, *German Big Business*, p.193

<sup>111</sup> Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933*, pp.153-154

<sup>112</sup> F. Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen als Modell der Machtergreifung: ein Brief Hitlers aus dem Jahre 1930," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (iv-October), 14. Jahrgang, 1966, p.461. This may have been a reference to position of the Staatsräte in the Thuringian cabinet. Under article 71 of Thuringia's Constitution (1921) any of the former states which made up Thuringia were entitled to be represented by a Staatsrat, who was essentially a minister without portfolio, i.e. real power.

<sup>113</sup> Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung", pp.461-462; Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, p.481, entry of 11 January 1930

that voters were defecting from their parties to the NSDAP. This tactic, however, was possibly part of a two pronged strategy.

There is evidence to suggest that Hitler worked behind the scenes. As the DVP was managing to resist frontal attacks, Hitler chose the indirect method: he went straight to the financial backers of the DVP. Not only were Wagener's pre-arranged meetings with representatives of industry, finance and transport to this end,<sup>114</sup> but those of Hitler were also. Hitler bragged that at one of his first meetings in Weimar, he had presented the NSDAP's ideas so well "that all at once ... a very sharp pressure was brought to bear on the deutsche [sic] Volkspartei". The result, claimed Hitler, was that Frick's candidacy and the demand of the interior and education ministries received "prompt agreement" on the Monday evening.<sup>115</sup>

In a 1963 account of the German cement industry, an East German Marxist historian reproduced part of a letter written in late March 1930 by Heinrich Bichmann, manager of the Thuringian Business Association and NSDAP member. Bichmann claimed Thuringia's financial and

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<sup>114</sup> Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, pp.310-311. Perhaps this is what Wagener meant in 1931 when he claimed that he had been "quietly working" (*stille Arbeit*) for the NSDAP since 1926. See BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Otto Wagener (20.4.1888), SA folder.

<sup>115</sup> Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung", p.462; Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party*, p.181

parliamentary situation caused him to intervene "in a discreet manner" to create "a suitable cabinet".<sup>116</sup>

Ludloff believes that if Bichmann "considered it fitting" to inform others that he had helped to create the new government, it gives credence to the view that other industrialists would not be offended by Nazi participation in a government for the first time.<sup>117</sup> The promises of a sharp curtailment in government expenditure, of tax cuts, and of the 'irrelevance' of the NSDAP's official programme helped expedite matters.<sup>118</sup> This appears to have been successful since Rudolf Hess, who had been present during the negotiations, later corroborated the claims of Hitler and Bichmann. In May 1930, Hess wrote: "Industry in Thuringia had threatened to cut off contributions to the DVP if they did not do business with us."<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> R. Ludloff, *Kasernen statt Wohnungen. Zur Geschichte der deutschen Zementindustrie im Imperialismus bis 1945* ([East] Berlin, 1963), p.182; Turner, *German Big Business*, p.193. Bichmann joined the NSDAP on 1 January 1930 shortly after resigning from a masonic lodge; see BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Heinrich Bichmann (6.1.1884), NSDAP Personalamt to Reichsleitung NSDAP, 5 April 1934, OPG File. *Wer ist's?*, p.120

<sup>117</sup> Ludloff, *Kasernen statt Wohnungen*, p.183. It is interesting that Bichmann became one of the NSDAP's twenty-six representatives returned to the Landtag in July 1932 and remained there until its dissolution in 1934. See ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/39 *Verzeichnis der Mitglieder des VI. Landtags von Thüringen 1932*.

<sup>118</sup> Turner, *German Big Business*, pp.193-194

<sup>119</sup> W.R. Hess (ed.), *Rudolf Heß. Briefe 1908-1933*, D. Bavendamm Introduction and Commentary

No independent, i.e. non-Nazi, verification has been found revealing whether Hitler had exerted such covert pressure. However, it is noteworthy that the DVP did quickly capitulate to Hitler's demands. On 14 January, Goebbels wrote: "Dr. Frick is Thuringia's Interior Minister. It has worked out".<sup>120</sup>

This was somewhat premature since the Landtag needed to approve the coalition government. On Thursday 23 January, the Landtag voted 28 in favour, 22 against, with three abstentions. The government comprised of: Erwin Baum (LB) as Minister-President and Finance Minister; Frick as Interior and Education Minister; and Dr. Willy Kästner (WP) as the Justice and Economics Minister. Willy Marschler became the NSDAP's *Staatsrat* for Weimar.<sup>121</sup> In addition to becoming Thuringia's Interior and Education minister, Frick became deputy Minister-President and was also one of the Thuringian government's two chief plenipotentiaries (*Hauptbevollmächtigte*) to the Reichsrat.<sup>122</sup>

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(Munich, 1987), nr.396, p.403. See also M. Broszat, *Hitler and the Collapse of Weimar Germany* (Leamington Spa/Hamburg/ New York, 1987), p.77

<sup>120</sup> "Dr. Frick ist Innenminister von Thüringen. Es hat also geklappt", Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, p.484, entry of 14 January 1930; Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, p.313

<sup>121</sup> *Beschlüsse des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen 1930-1932* (Weimar, n.d.), nr.11, p.3. Karl Kien (DNVP), Theodor Bauer (DVP), Erich Port (LB), and Franz Fürth (WP) were appointed the *Staatsräte* for Meiningen, Sondershausen, Reuß, and Rudolstadt respectively.

<sup>122</sup> ThStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.125 1st cabinet sitting, 23 January 1930; Thüringisches



In view of the coalition's notional three vote majority, Frick's accession to office was mere a formality. Nevertheless, Goebbels undoubtedly expressed Hitler's relief when he wrote: "Frick is now Minister in Weimar. That took some doing".<sup>123</sup> Frick now had the honour of being the first National Socialist to reach ministerial rank in Germany before 1933. But why was Frick, above all others, chosen as Hitler's candidate? And what was Frick to achieve in office?

### Frick's Life and Career until 1930

Even though Frick was the first Nazi minister in a state government (Thuringia), and the only Nazi in Hitler's Reich cabinet of 30 January 1933 to enjoy full ministerial rank,<sup>124</sup> no scholarly biography of Frick existed until 1992.<sup>125</sup> The reason for Frick languishing in this 'obscurity' is that after he had helped Hitler accomplish the so-called 'legal revolution' of 1933-1934, whereby the NSDAP established its

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Staatsministerium (ed.), *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt für Thüringen*, I. Teil. *Regierungsblatt*, 10. Jahrgang, (Weimar, n.d.), nr.8, 25 January 1930, p.17

<sup>123</sup> "Frick ist nun Minister in Weimar. Das war eine schwere Geburt", Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, p.489, entry of 24 January 1930

<sup>124</sup> Hermann Göring was minister-without-portfolio.

<sup>125</sup> See G. Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick. Der Legalist des Unrechtstaates. Eine Politische Biographie* (Paderborn, 1992)

control over Germany, Frick's power in both party and state soon suffered an irreversible decline. To all extents and purposes, Frick was outmanoeuvred by the more radical and aggressive competing factions with the Nazi polycracy, in particular by Himmler and the SS. Frick also had to suffer the disappointment that many of his plans for the reform of the civil service and the constitutional framework between party and state met with Hitler's express disapproval because they would have curtailed his personal power.<sup>126</sup> But, as Neliba has pointed out, in the period from the re-founding of the NSDAP to Hitler becoming Reich Chancellor, Frick was often seen close to the centre of activity and power within the party. What was it that made Frick such an invaluable ally during the NSDAP's rise to power and made him the candidate for ministerial power in Thuringia? The answer to these questions can only lie in Frick's extensive experience of government and administration prior to 1930.

Frick was born on 12 March 1877, in the town of Alsenz in the Palatinate. Following attendance at *Volksschule* and *Gymnasium* in Kaiserslautern, Frick studied law at the universities of Munich, Göttingen and Berlin, before eventually taking his doctorate in law from

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<sup>126</sup> See M. Broszat, *The Hitler State* (Harlow, 1981)

the University of Heidelberg.<sup>127</sup>

From 1900 to 1903 Frick was a lawyer in Munich, and then a *Regierungsassistent* to the Upper Bavarian government and also an *Amtsanwalt* to the Munich police between 1904 and 1907. For the next ten years (until 1917) Frick was employed as a *Bezirksamtassessor* in the Pirmasens district,<sup>128</sup> where again he served with the police, this time to prevent and punish infringements of the wartime rationing regulations. Frick was also a member of Bavaria's war profiteering office (*Kriegswucheramt*). By this stage of his career, Frick appears to have earned "a reputation for stern conduct."<sup>129</sup> He did not serve in the First World War due to chest problems.<sup>130</sup>

In 1917 Frick was re-employed by the Munich police as a *Regierungsassessor* and an *Oberamtmann*.<sup>131</sup> Frick witnessed the November

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<sup>127</sup> For general biographical details see *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon*, pp.17-18; *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Band V (Berlin, 1961), pp.432-433; L.L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of the Third Reich* (New York, 1976), p.100; Zentner and Bedürftig, *Das grosse Lexikon des dritten Reiches*, p.194; W. Benz and H. Graml (eds.), *Biographisches Lexikon zur Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1988), p.95

<sup>128</sup> *Wer ist's?*, p.444

<sup>129</sup> NA, RG 165 Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick by the Shuster Historical Mission, 20 July 1945. I would like to thank Robert Wolfe of the National Archives for sending me a *gratis* copy.

<sup>130</sup> P.D. Stachura, *Political Leaders in Weimar Germany: A Biographical Study* (Hemel Hempstead, 1993), p.50; E. Davidson, *The Trial of the Germans* (New York, 1967), p.262

<sup>131</sup> *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon*, p.17

Revolution, and the ‘republic of soviets’ (*Räterrepublik*) in Munich had “a profound influence” on him. He blamed the presence of the Jewish revolutionaries Kurt Eisner and Paul Levine in the *Räterrepublik* as the reason why he was “strongly anti-Semitic”.<sup>132</sup> Frick was said to have been placed on a black list by communists during this time.<sup>133</sup>

In May 1919 Frick also became departmental leader of Munich’s political police.<sup>134</sup> Frick’s duty of dispensing police permission for political meetings and posters led to his first encounter with Hitler when he sought approval for the NSDAP’s public meetings.<sup>135</sup> Frick would later recall that he had been won over by Hitler’s “energetic and active appearance”,<sup>136</sup> and his anti-Communist standpoint: “I agreed with the mission of the party, because it was the only means to act against communism”.<sup>137</sup> In addition to contact with Hitler, Frick was said to have been in “close contact” with other far-right ‘patriotic

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<sup>132</sup> NA, RG 165 Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick by the Shuster Historical Mission, 20 July 1945

<sup>133</sup> BABL, R 18/5051 Bl.81 Notes on Frick’s life and career by Hans Fabricius, 11 November 1941

<sup>134</sup> BABL, NS 26/1221 Personal File Wilhelm Frick

<sup>135</sup> NA, RG 238, M1270, roll 4, Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick, 25 September 1945, fr.547, 659

<sup>136</sup> NA, RG 238, M1270, roll 4, Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick, 1 October 1945, fr.684, 659

<sup>137</sup> NA, RG 238, M1270, roll 4, Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick, 2 October 1945, fr.710

organisations' active in Bavaria at that time such as the Organisation Escherisch.<sup>138</sup> It has also been claimed that Frick allowed the murderers of Matthias Erzberger and the perpetrators of the *Feme Murders* to escape justice by issuing them with false passes and identity cards whilst employed by the Munich Police.<sup>139</sup> The gratitude Hitler felt towards Frick for his 'fifth column' activity inside Munich's police was revealed on 29 March 1942:

"As adjutant to the Chief of Police, he was able to supply us with all kinds of information, which enabled the Party to expand its activity. He never missed an opportunity to help us and protect us. I can even add that without him I'd never have got out of prison".<sup>140</sup>

In his post-war testimony to the Americans, Frick tried to claim that at this stage of his career he was not "a direct associate of

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<sup>138</sup> NA, RG 165 Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick by the Shuster Historical Mission, 20 July 1945

<sup>139</sup> See R. Wistrich, *Who's who in Nazi Germany* (London, 1982), p.81; E.N. Peterson, *The Limits of Hitler's Power* (Princeton, N.J., 1969), p.79, n.6; O. Dutch, *Hitler's Twelve Apostles* (London, 1939), p.207

<sup>140</sup> A. Hitler, *Table-Talk, 1941-1944*, H.R. Trevor-Roper Introduction (Oxford, 1953), p.377. Although Hitler's claim seems somewhat exaggerated it must be remembered that by this time Frick was considered far out of step with the directions the Nazi State and its ideology had taken during the War. Only seventeen days earlier Hitler had presented Frick with a cheque for 250,000 RM for his 65th birthday, see BABL, R 43 II/985a Bl.37-41 "Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick"

Hitler",<sup>141</sup> even though he had been designated Munich's new police president by the Putschists.<sup>142</sup> Frick claimed to have been in complete ignorance of the Putsch until it actually began, and his nomination as police president was the first he had known about it.<sup>143</sup> This was wholly untrue. "Frick played his role to perfection" by exploiting his presence as the only senior official available to prevent counter-measures by those police officers remaining loyal to the administration.<sup>144</sup> Quickly arrested before he could really act, Frick nevertheless earned Hitler's praise. In the first volume of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler said of Frick and his superior, Ernst Pöhner:

"They were the only higher state officials who even then had the courage to be Germans first and then officials ... he [Pöhner] and his collaborator, Dr. Frick, are in my eyes the only men in a state position who possess the right to be called co-creators of a National Bavaria".<sup>145</sup>

Frick was found guilty as an accessory to high treason and was

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<sup>141</sup> NA, RG 238, M1270, roll 4, Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick, 25 September 1945, fr.659

<sup>142</sup> H.J. Gordon Jr., *Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch* (Princeton, N.J., 1972), pp.214, 261

<sup>143</sup> NA, RG 238, M1270, roll 4, Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick, 1 October 1945, fr.690-703

<sup>144</sup> Gordon, *Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch*, pp.303, 315

<sup>145</sup> A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, D.C. Watt Introduction (London, 1969), pp.333, 334. Frick was one of the few Nazis to be mentioned in *Mein Kampf*.

sentenced to 15 months imprisonment, which was later commuted to probation and a 1000 RM fine.<sup>146</sup> In addition, he was subject to disciplinary action by the Bavarian Civil Service over his participation in the Putsch. Frick appealed, and was acquitted by the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Bavarian Court because it deliberately ignored the evidence incriminating him.<sup>147</sup> Consequently, Frick remained in Munich's police department.<sup>148</sup> In April 1924, Frick was elected as a Reichstag representative for the NSFP,<sup>149</sup> and in February 1925 he helped refound the NSDAP.<sup>150</sup> From 1926 to his appointment as Thuringia's Interior and Education Minister, Frick was employed by Munich's Higher Insurance Office (*Oberversicherungsamt*).<sup>151</sup>

Frick was ideally suited, therefore, to be Hitler's candidate for the

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<sup>146</sup> BABL, NS 26/1221 Personal File Wilhelm Frick

<sup>147</sup> BABL, NS 26/1221 Personal File Wilhelm Frick. See R. Weber, " 'Ein tüchtiger Beamter von makelloser Vergangenheit'. Das Disziplinverfahren gegen den Hochverräter Wilhelm Frick 1924", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, Volume 42, 1994; Gordon, *Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch*, p.526, n.526

<sup>148</sup> NA, RG 238, M1270, roll 4, Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick, 6 September 1945, fr.618; *Wer ist's?*, p.444; Wistrich, *Who's who*, p.81

<sup>149</sup> M. Schumacher (ed.), *M.d.R. Die Reichstagsabgeordneten der Weimarer Republik in der Zeit der Nationalsozialismus* (Düsseldorf, 1994), p.224

<sup>150</sup> Benz and Graml, *Biographisches Lexikon*, p.95

<sup>151</sup> BABL, NS 26/1221 Personal File Wilhelm Frick; *Wer ist's?*, p.444; *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, p.432; Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right*, p.138

post of Thuringian Interior and Education Minister. He was one of the few senior Nazis to hold a PhD, and his thirty years experience within the legal system and Bavaria's government and administration, including the police, were distinct advantages, which no other Nazi then possessed.

After Frick became Minister, Hitler rationalised his choice by claiming that "the important prerequisite is the correct personality." His dismissive remark that "small time parliamentarians" were not equal to the task can be interpreted as a refusal to consider any of the NSDAP's 6 Landtag representatives as suitable candidates. Hitler maintained that he needed a "thorough going [*durchgekochter*] National Socialist of just as great technical expertise [*Fachkenntnis*] as of unconditional national socialist conviction". Frick, Hitler insisted, would "do justice to the situation" since he was "[a]n energetic, bold and responsible civil servant of the highest ability, and a fanatical National Socialist!"<sup>152</sup>

Frick faced only one rival as Hitler's candidate - Gregor Strasser. In May 1929, Strasser had tried to put himself forward as the Saxon NSDAP's candidate when, for a short time, it looked as if Saxony would

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<sup>152</sup> Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung", p.461



be the first Land to have a Nazi government minister.<sup>153</sup> When the opportunity for participation arose in Thuringia Strasser again tried to secure nomination. Hitler rejected Strasser on the grounds that he was “too strong a personality for Thuringia” and far too invaluable in the party bureaucracy.<sup>154</sup> No doubt Hitler feared that Strasser would prove to be too independent and would seek to create an independent power base from which he could implement his ‘left wing’ Nazi ideas. There was, however, no question of Frick’s loyalty to Hitler. Frick could be relied upon to do as he was told without close supervision from the party whilst in office.

## Hitler’s Decision and Justification for Nazi Participation in Government

Otto Wagener claims that Hitler legitimised participation in any government since it would enhance the NSDAP’s legal image, and so

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<sup>153</sup> See C.C.-W. Szejnmann, “The Rise of the Nazi Party in Saxony between 1921 and 1933”, Ph.D thesis, *University of London*, 1994, pp.99, 119, 120. Szejnmann also points out the Saxon NSDAP considered Frick, instead of Strasser, as their candidate, as did Hitler. See Szejnmann, op.cit., pp.120-121, and p.121, n.453

<sup>154</sup> Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, p.310; P.D. Stachura, *Gregor Strasser and the Rise of Nazism* (London, 1983), p. 145, n.67

make any attempt to outlaw the party more difficult.<sup>155</sup> This is an interesting explanation, but not the true reason. On 2 February 1930, less than a fortnight after Frick joined the Thuringian government, Hitler wrote to a South American industrialist and NSDAP supporter called Eichhorn.<sup>156</sup> Hitler's letter is of immense significance since he clearly revealed how he ruthlessly exploited the opportunity presented by NSDAP's breakthrough in the election, and how Frick (by then in government) was to take advantage of his position.

As will be remembered the result of the Landtag election was such that neither the left nor the right held a sufficient number of seats to form a coalition government without having to take into account the 6 held by the NSDAP. Hitler was quite aware of the fact that his party now enjoyed sufficient power in the Landtag to force the other parties to accept his demands for "active participation [*aktive Beteiligung*]" in government as and when negotiations began. Should the other parties, however, have attempted to ignore the NSDAP, Hitler revealed that he had been quite prepared to withdraw from the negotiations and then demand a dissolution of the Landtag to force a new election. Hitler

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<sup>155</sup> Wagener, *Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, p.309

<sup>156</sup> See Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung", pp.460-464. A copy from 1943 can be found in BABL, NS 19/233 "Fotokopie eines Briefes des Führers an einen Großindustriellen in Sudamerika"

hoped that such a move would have brought the NSDAP more votes, and therefore increased its bargaining power further. The conditions Hitler laid down for "active participation" were the interior and education ministries. They were, in Hitler's words, "the most important ministries for us." The interior ministry controlled Thuringia's administration, including the appointment and dismissal of its civil servants, and the police. The education ministry controlled the entire system of education from the primary schools to the University of Jena. *"Whoever ruthlessly and tenaciously controls the power of these two ministries",* wrote Hitler, *"will have an extraordinary effect on their fortunes".*<sup>157</sup>

What Hitler meant by this rather dramatic statement was elaborated upon when he outlined his initial plans. He expected Frick to effect "a gradual purge of the administration and the civil service from the manifestations of the red revolution", and introduce "with ruthless determination, a nationalisation [*Nationalisierung*] which shall show to the other bourgeois governments what we National Socialists understand by this word." On the subject of Frick's policy towards the police, Hitler cryptically remarked: "there is much to do." As Education Minister, Frick was to carry out another nationalisation

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<sup>157</sup> Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung", p.461, emphasis added

[*Nationalisierung*] by appointing “fanatical German nationalists” within Thuringia’s schools and the Ministry. He was to purge the teaching body of “Marxist-democratic manifestations”, and adapt the curriculum in tune with “National Socialist ways and thinking.”<sup>158</sup>

### Hitler’s Concept of “active participation”

Hitler’s statements, though initially revealing, are vague in terms of actual policy details, and they do not divulge why Hitler felt he could speak with such authority. These points are particularly significant since any evaluation of Frick’s ministerial activities must, to some degree, take into account how Hitler conceptualised what Frick was to do in office. Is there any evidence to suggest that the concept of “active participation” was a coherent strategy, i.e. more than the sum of Hitler’s statements?

On 8 January, in his first diary entry on the negotiations for admittance into government, Goebbels wrote: “There we shall put it to the first test.”<sup>159</sup> Excluding the possibility that Goebbels may have been over exuberant, his remark could suggest that some form of plan or

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<sup>158</sup> Dickmann, op.cit., pp.462-463

<sup>159</sup> “Da wir werden die erste Probe aufs Exempel liefern”, Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph*

strategy was already in existence, merely waiting Frick's assumption of office to be put into effect. If Goebbels' statement is accurate, then Hitler's ideas on "active participation" were not just some post-facto rationalisations devised after Frick became minister. No documentation, however, has come to light revealing how Hitler developed his ideas, or from which sources - if any - he drew upon for information or inspiration. Certainly, the time available to Hitler was limited. During the month between the NSDAP's breakthrough and Goebbels' suggestion of a plan, Hitler was busy with the anti-Young Plan campaign until the referendum of 22 December 1929, and by his own admission, he was occupied over the Christmas and New Year period.<sup>160</sup> It is not unreasonable to suggest, therefore, that when Goebbels indicates the plan's existence on 8 January 1930, it may have been little more than a framework of ideas requiring or awaiting further refinement. This is perhaps where Frick played an interactive role in the formulation of "active participation", not just by advising Hitler on the bureaucratic realities of government, but also by taking Hitler's ideas and turning them into a coherent policy. This, of course, does not omit the possibility that there was a continual development of Hitler's ideas

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*Goebbels*, p.480, entry of 8 January 1930

up to Frick's accession to office on 23 January, and it cannot be ruled out that "active participation" was still evolving as a concept when Hitler wrote to Herr Eichhorn on 2 February 1930. This would mean that Hitler's statements were not a *précis* or an abstract of a more detailed or sophisticated theory, but actually constituted "active participation" itself. In the final analysis, Hitler's statements are all that exists, and however inadequate they seem, they constitute the minimum criteria against which Frick's activities must be assessed.

Two days before Frick became Minister, Goebbels wrote: "Hopefully he [Frick] shall keep that which he has promised".<sup>161</sup> Although Goebbels did not specify the nature of Frick's promises, it is perhaps a reference to Frick vowing to do everything possible within his power for the advancement of the NSDAP, and avoid anything that would be a public relations disaster. The following four research chapters will now attempt to examine whether Frick and "active participation" justified the confidence Hitler that had placed in both.

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<sup>160</sup> See Hitler's comments to Eichhorn, in Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung", p.460

<sup>161</sup> "Hoffentlich, hält er das, was er versprochen hat", Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, p.486, entry of 21 January 1930

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how the Nazi Party in Thuringia grew from its initial beginnings in Thuringia in 1922 to become a well-organised machine by late 1929, enabling it to successfully compete with Thuringia's longer established political parties in the Landtag election of December 1929. Attention then focused on how Hitler, by exploiting the Thuringian NSDAP's organisational strength and its electoral success, overcame the reluctance of the other parties in admitting the NSDAP into a coalition government, and how Hitler surpassed the opposition towards his candidate for office, Wilhelm Frick, by exerting pressure upon the DVP. Finally, the chapter considered Frick's suitability for office in Thuringia, and what was Frick expected to achieve in office.

# Chapter Three:

## *Frick as Interior Minister I*



## The Thuringian Enabling Act, March 1930

This chapter is the first of two dealing with Frick's activity as Thuringia's Interior Minister. It investigates his impact upon the administration and government of Thuringia in terms of both structure and personnel policy. Attention will also be paid to particular measures, including Frick's attempt to grant Hitler Thuringian citizenship by appointing him the Gendarme commissioner in the town of Hildburghausen. The subject of Frick's administration of the police shall be dealt with in the following chapter. The historiography of Frick's period in power has mentioned the Enabling Act in such a manner as to suggest that it led to an extensive reorganisation of Thuringia's administration, with a distinctive Nazi slant. Certainly, Hitler's comments that Frick was to carry out "a slow purge of the administration and of the civil service from the manifestations of the red revolution", and that Frick was "to introduce ... with ruthless determination a nationalisation (*Nationalisierung*)",<sup>1</sup> have done much to foster this view. The reality, however, is different.

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<sup>1</sup> F. Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen als Modell der Machtergreifung: ein Brief Hitlers aus dem Jahre 1930", *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (iv-October), 14. Jahrgang, 1966, pp.462-463

Prior to Germany's military collapse of 1918, Thuringia comprised 7 different territories ruled by various German royal houses. The abdication of these rulers and the founding of the Weimar Republic allowed these territories to be unified into a single, self-governing Land.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to Germany's other Länder there had not been any tradition of a single, established apparatus of government and administration in Thuringia, it had to construct a uniform system. Article 63 of Thuringia's constitution (1921) recognised this administrative diversity. During a "transitional period" (*Übergangszeit*) of unspecified duration each of the former 7 territories became a "communal association of higher order" (*Kommunalverband höherer Ordnung*) with the right of self-administration. In exchange for this status, however, these *Kommunalverbände* were expected to fulfill administrative duties laid down by the government or the relevant ministries, and prepare for the transition of other administrative duties to central government. Laws and decrees of these former areas were to remain in force only so long as central government

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<sup>2</sup> On the early years of Thuringia see: B. Häupel, *Die Gründung des Landes Thüringen. Staatsbildung und Reformpolitik 1918-1923* (Weimar/Cologne/Vienna, 1995), and D.R. Tracey, "Reform in the Early Weimar Republic: The Thuringian Example", *Journal of Modern History* (ii-June), Volume 44, 1972, pp.195-196

had not issued new regulations.<sup>3</sup> In the early 1920s many measures were enacted to create a unified administration,<sup>4</sup> but by the close of the decade Thuringia was unable to balance its budget as expenditure upon administration began to exceed revenue. It was feared that failure to remedy the situation threatened bankruptcy and possible territorial incorporation into Prussia. Neither the population of Thuringia, nor had politicians accepted this as a viable option.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the only possible means of securing Thuringia's continued existence was a policy of retrenchment. This was the remedy prescribed by *Reichssparkommissar* Dr. Saemisch who examined Thuringia's 'accounts'. He identified four areas, which needed financial overhaul: government and administration, finance, education, and justice.<sup>6</sup> The need to reform was cited as the motivation for the publication of a draft Enabling Act on 12 March 1930.

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<sup>3</sup> Landeszentrale für politische Bildung und Thüringische Hauptstaatsarchiv (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte*. Band 5. *Verfassungen und Gesetze 1920-1995* (Erfurt, 1995), p. 41

<sup>4</sup> Tracey, "Early Reform", esp. pp. 205-208

<sup>5</sup> D. R. Tracey, "The Development of the National Socialist Party in Thuringia, 1924-1930", *Central European History* (1-March), Volume 8, 1975, pp. 40, 43

<sup>6</sup> *Gutachten über die Landesverwaltungs Thüringen*. Erstattet am 4. Oktober 1929 vom Reichssparkommissar Staatsminister a.D. Dr. Saemisch (n.p., n.d.); See also Schieck, "Das Gutachten des Reichssparkommissars über die Landesverwaltung Thüringen", *Reich und Länder*, 4. Jahrgang, 1930, pp. 25-30; W. Sommer, "Das Gutachten des Reichssparkommissars über die thüringischen Verwaltung von 1929 und die thüringischen Verwaltungsreform 1930", *Reich und Länder*, 4. Jahrgang, 1930, pp. 234-240

The purpose of the Enabling Act was to simplify and reduce the costs of government and administration in Thuringia. Until the act's expiry on 30 September 1930, the government could alter existing laws by decree (*Verordnung*), abolish existing authorities, construct new ones, transfer their responsibilities to the Reich, and simplify administrative procedure and the administration courts. The government could also revoke existing legislation in a whole range of areas and establish new uniform regulations. The individual ministries would enact *Ausführungsverordnungen* to complement the decrees, and all decrees issued were to be submitted for the Landtag's approval. The Landtag was entitled to annul or alter any decree.

The Enabling Act's most contentious aspect was the planned retirement of civil servants under article 3, paragraph 1. This determined that until the act's expiry, the regulation of article 29, paragraph 1, number 1 of Thuringia's state civil servants' law was deemed to be valid for all *nichtrichterlichen* civil servants, i.e. that any civil servant could provisionally retire (*in Ruhestand versetzen*) if the office administered by him was reorganised.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Vorlagen, Anträge, Große Anfragen des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen, 1930-1932* (Weimar, n.d.), nr.41, pp.31-32. See BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.190 W.T.B. "Sparmaßnahmen in Thüringen", 15 March 1930;

## The Controversy in Thuringia concerning the Enabling Act

Opening the Landtag debate, Frick contrasted the Weimar Republic with Thuringia by arguing that the Republic's repeated recourse to extra- and anti-parliamentary measures to see it through critical times was "not exactly a good sign" of its "excellence". Whilst the proposed Enabling Act was in much the same vein, this was merely "up to a certain point", Frick claimed, since the Thuringian government intended to stray from the legislative norm only "for weighty reasons".<sup>8</sup> The Enabling Act's chief aim was the reorganisation of the administration. Under normal circumstances, this would be effected through due process and consideration of legislation by the Landtag, but, as Frick stressed, this was "technically impossible ... according to the completely clumsy apparatus with which parliament works". It was "urgently necessary" to bring about the "significant economies" needed to maintain Thuringia's sovereignty. He recognised that these measures would hit government employees (*Angestellten*) and civil servants particularly hard, but believed the reorganisation "must not be determined by personal considerations", and he argued that Thuringia's

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R 43 I/2315 Bl.191 "Thüringens Ermächtigungsgesetzes", *Hannoverscher Kurier*, 16 March 1930

<sup>8</sup> *Stenographische Berichte über die Sitzungen des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen*. Band I. 1. bis 35.

straightened circumstances dictated that the government had to have *carte blanche* to accomplish the reorganisation - article 3, paragraph 1 was the means to achieve this. Any civil servant and any office could be affected by the reorganisation, stated Frick. With this in mind, he drew attention to the remaining provisions of article 3 which further regulated the retirement of civil servants. He viewed the voluntary early retirement of older civil servants as "very desirable" if it led to the reduction of civil service numbers as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

Second, article 2, paragraph 1 was designed to bring about a shift of executive power from the individual ministries of central government to field agencies ("external authorities"). The government, said Frick, valued strengthening the competencies of the field agencies as this would permit ministries to cut back on expenditure, merge sections, and make civil servants "superfluous". This shift in power would be achieved through the alteration of the *Landesverwaltungsordnung*, and the *Gemeinde- und Kreisordnung*, as well as other lesser regulations. Frick accepted a communist objection that alteration of these regulations necessitated legislation, but he again reminded the Landtag that this traditional

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*Sitzung (7. Januar bis 23. Mai 1930)*, (Weimar, n.d.), 11th sitting, 18 March 1930, p.219, col.I

<sup>9</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.219, col.II - p.221, col.I

method was “too protracted”. Decrees published under the aegis of article 2 were to accomplish this.<sup>10</sup>

Thuringia’s Social Democrats, lead by Hermann Brill, immediately rejected the act, and on behalf of his party, he declared the “hardest fight” against it. Brill believed the act was an attack against the entire system of parliamentary government, and warned that no means would “remain untried” to check the “ominous beginnings becoming evident” in Thuringia’s political development. Brill characterised Frick’s attempts to justify the Enabling Act from constitutional and legal perspectives were either “politically askew” or “legally incorrect”.<sup>11</sup> Article 33 of Thuringia’s constitution permitted an empowerment (*eine Ermächtigung*) of a government,<sup>12</sup> but Brill pointed out that this was restricted to the legal sphere and allowed little more than provisional measures. Every measure of the Enabling Act, Brill maintained, was a “clear violation” of article 28, paragraph 2 of the Thuringian Constitution which stipulated that laws were to be decided by either the Landtag, or by plebiscite.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Brill pointed out that the *Landesverwaltungsordnung*, as well

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<sup>10</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.221, col.II - p.222, col.I

<sup>11</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.222, col. I-II

<sup>12</sup> See Landeszentrale *Quellen zur Geschichte*, p.33

<sup>13</sup> See Landeszentrale, *Quellen zur Geschichte*, p.33

as the *Gemeinde- and Kreisverwaltungsordnung* also provided established means for the alteration of legislation. Brill asked why the government needed an Enabling Act, or needed to submit proposed decrees to the Landtag, when the government's majority was enough to secure the successful passage of legislation. He believed the Landtag was "cowardly shunning a very serious obligation and ... its responsibility toward the population" if it surrendered its legislative powers to the government. He further wondered why the *Landesverwaltungsordnung*, which had been created by the Enabling Act of 1926, had to be scrapped. He asked the government why it had not said clearly what the Enabling Act "actually intended" and demanded that the full facts be placed before the Landtag.

Brill then tackled the matter of the personnel policy as envisaged under article 3. The Enabling Act was "thoroughly unsatisfactory" with regard to the rights of civil servants and *Angestellten*, particularly as Frick had earlier said that even if some government offices and authorities were not affected by the re-organisation, they would still experience a *Beamtenabbau*.<sup>14</sup> Brill doubted very much that such an application of article 29, paragraph 1, number 1 of Thuringia's civil service law was permissible. He claimed that judges could only decide this, and whether

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<sup>14</sup> See *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.220, col.II



there was an “organic”, i.e. an actual reorganisation of the authority concerned. Assertions made by legislators, he argued, were not sufficient criteria.<sup>15</sup>

As a constitutional lawyer, Brill considered the most important issue to be the Enabling Act's constitutional significance. He did not accept Frick's assertion that the act was not a law altering the constitution (*verfassungsändernde Gesetz*).<sup>16</sup> Brill pointed to article 5 of the Reich Constitution, which stipulated that state authority in the Länder was exercised, on the basis of their constitutions, by the Landtage.<sup>17</sup> Any law, which affected, or did away with, “this organic position of the Landtag” was a violation of both the Thuringian and Reich Constitutions. Brill identified articles 13, 15, 19 of the Reich Constitution as providing some of the “constitutionally valid means” he threatened to employ against the act.<sup>18</sup>

The discussions in the Landtag's legislation committee on 25 March followed much the same course. The SPD continued to doubt the

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<sup>15</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.223, col.I-p.224, col.II

<sup>16</sup> See *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.219, col.I, p.222, col.II

<sup>17</sup> See E. M. Hucko (ed.), *The Democratic Tradition: Four German Constitutions* (Oxford, 1987), p.149

<sup>18</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.225, col.I; Hucko, *The Democratic Tradition*, pp.152, 154. The SPD attempted to have the State Supreme Court for the German Reich rule articles 2 and 4

government's claim of the act's legality, as well as the legality of the measures to be carried out under it.<sup>19</sup> Reference was made to the apparent contradiction between article 3, paragraph 1 and Frick's statement in the Landtag that any civil servant could be retired even if their office was not affected by the reorganisation. The SPD pointed out that civil servants could well be in a position to sue the government for violation of their rights, as set out under article 129 of the Reich Constitution. A government representative replied that both article 1 and article 3, paragraph 1 of the Enabling Act stood in "close connection" to each other. Thuringia's entire administration was to be reorganised, therefore, article 29, paragraph 1, number 1 of the state civil servants' law was valid for *all* of Thuringia's authorities. The government's representative stated, in response to a question from the SPD, that only state authorities were affected by the planned reduction in authorities and civil servants (*Behörden- und Beamtenabbau*), but self-administrating authorities (*Selbstverwaltungsbehörden*) were excluded. The government had not yet decided how many of its *Angestellten* and civil servants would

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unconstitutional, but the attempt failed; see Landtag von Thüringen/30

<sup>19</sup> *Ausschußberichte des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen 1930-1932* (Weimar, n.d.), nr.5, p.12, col.I-p.13, col.II

be subject to 'retirement'.<sup>20</sup> The SPD asked if a regulation could be introduced so that provisionally retired civil servants could be re-employed since the SPD feared that re-employment would be used "improperly" to re-instate "suitable" (*geeignete*) civil servants only. The WP, DVP, and NSDAP all said that such a regulation was not necessary.<sup>21</sup>

The committee voted in favour of the act. The SPD alone protested that the vote was not legally valid since the assent did not possess the two-thirds majority necessary.<sup>22</sup>

Opposition to the act also manifested itself outside the Landtag, and was again chiefly concerned with the rights of civil servants. Before the publication of the draft act, the Thüringer Beamtenbund expressed its concern saying a general *Personalabbau* was "misplaced" and would cause "grave shocks" if brought about by extra-ordinary measures.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, senior civil servants' councils within the government were concerned about the preservation of their 'duly acquired rights' (*wohlerworbene Rechte*), with particular reference to retirement. They

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.14, col.I-II, p.16, col.I

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.16, col.II

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.17, col.I

<sup>23</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/6 Bll.11-12 Thüringer Beamtenbund to ThStMin und die Herren

believed that the linking of article 3, paragraph 1 to article 29, paragraph 1, number 1 of the state civil servants' law would establish a "legal pretence", since under the latter act civil servants could only be retired if the office administered by them ceased to exist as a result of a reorganisation.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the Allgemeiner Deutscher Beamtenbund, led by Brill in Thuringia, repeated detailed concerns about various personnel aspects resulting from the Enabling Act.<sup>25</sup>

The battle over the Enabling Act returned to the Landtag on 29 March 1930. Georg Witzmann, leader of the DVP, was the only member of a government coalition party to make any statement. He said that the original doubts which he had expressed about the act,<sup>26</sup> had now been resolved "through our co-operation and influence". Witzmann hoped that, through "intelligent and sober use", the government would achieve its aims.<sup>27</sup>

Hermann Brill again denounced the act warning that it would not

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Mitglieder, 11 March 1930

<sup>24</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.9 Die Hauptbeamtenräte to ThStMin, 18 March 1930

<sup>25</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/6 Bl.18-19 Allgemeiner Deutscher Beamtenbund (Landesausschuß Großthüringen) to the Thuringian Landtag, 20 March 1930; *ibid.*, Bl.21-22 25 March 1930; ThFiMin/6 Bl.24-25 AGDB (LaGTh) to ThStMin, 31 March 1930

<sup>26</sup> See *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, 11th sitting, 18 March 1930, p.229, col.II

deliver the planned reform, but instead lead to “increased bureaucratisation” and “the reduction of state activity to a purely bourgeois-capitalist system.” He repeated that the law altered the constitution, and that a simple majority (*einfache Mehrheit*) was not sufficient for constitutional and legal validity. The act, he believed, was conceived out of “hate towards social democracy”.<sup>28</sup> The KPD viewed the Enabling Act as “a further step towards the elimination of today’s ... democracy, a step towards the by-passing of parliament, and the introduction of fascist, dictatorial government methods.”<sup>29</sup>

Despite this outright opposition, the Landtag assented to the Enabling Act, 28 votes to 25. Brill again argued that a 3 vote majority meant the law had not been legally passed since it did not constitute the two-thirds necessary (as demanded by the constitution<sup>30</sup>), and argued that the government could not claim otherwise. Nevertheless, despite Brill’s strenuous objections the Landtag president declared that the

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<sup>27</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, 17th sitting, 29 March 1930, p.379, col.I-II

<sup>28</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.379, col.II-p.380, col.I; See M. Overesch, *Hermann Brill in Thüringen 1895-1946. Ein Kämpfer gegen Hitler und Ulbricht* (Bonn, 1992), p.202; J. John, “Grundzüge der Landesverfassungsgeschichte Thüringen 1918 bis 1952”, *Schriften zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus in Thüringen*, Heft 3, 1993, *Thüringische Verfassungsgeschichte im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, pp.64-65

<sup>29</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.380, col.I

<sup>30</sup> *Landeszentrale, Quellen zur Geschichte*, p.30

Enabling Act had indeed become law.<sup>31</sup>

Frick's opponents now feared that he would use the Enabling Act to sweep Thuringia's administration clean and realise those "ominous beginnings" believed to be developing within the Land. But to what extent were his critics justified in believing? Did Frick hijack the reforms for his own ends, or was the true picture more mundane?

### Frick's Use of the Enabling Act

A memorandum of 14 February reveals that it was Frick's wish that "the Enabling Act gives *the opportunity* to subject the entire Land legislation to an inspection and to improve [it], *where it is necessary*."<sup>32</sup> Study of the ministerial files and government publications confirms this picture. Measures were enacted, such as new versions of the *Landesverwaltungsordnung* and the *Gemeinde- und Kreisverwaltungsordnung*,<sup>33</sup> but there was no great flurry of activity. One contemporary view of the Enabling Act believed that despite claims made about it leading to a

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<sup>31</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.380, col. II; See BABL, R 43 I/2315 BL192 W.T.B. "Annahme des Ermächtigungsgesetzes in Thüringens Landtag", 29 March 1930; Overesch, *Hermann Brill*, p.202

<sup>32</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI D/60 ThMdI note to Oberregierungsrat Ebeling, 14 February 1930, emphasis added

<sup>33</sup> *Gesetzsammlung für Thüringen*, nr.26, 22 July 1930, pp.123-170

reduction (*Verringerung*) in state activity, “the draft of the Enabling Act restricts itself to a mere *reshuffle of the existing duties*, [as] proposed by article 2, paragraph 2.”<sup>34</sup>

Very early on into his term of office Frick issued two memoranda, which can be interpreted as an attempt to stamp his authority upon his ministries. On 28 January he announced his intention that in all matters of “fundamental and political significance” he reserved his right to personal decision and asked that they were put before him. The request also extended to applicants to the civil service and the police.<sup>35</sup> Frick also reserved his right to personal decision “in every individual case” regarding the dismissal of civil servants, *Angestellten* and *Arbeitern* resulting from economy measures.<sup>36</sup> Although article 3, paragraph 1 is not found in the earlier drafts of the Enabling Act,<sup>37</sup> it could be argued that its inclusion stemmed from not only Frick’s desire to strengthen further his control over civil servants not only in the formal ‘hire and fire’

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<sup>34</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.9 Die Hauptbeamtenrate to ThStMin, 18 March 1930, original emphasis

<sup>35</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI A/28 Bl.25 Frick to Geschäftsabteilungen und den Leiter der Landespolizei, 28 January 1930

<sup>36</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/72 Bl.137 Frick to Ministerialdirektoren und Abteilungsleiter der MdI und VbMin, 21 February 1930

<sup>37</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/6 Bl.2, 3

sense, but also in the sense of instilling fear into them by emphasising that now, more than ever, their future career development lay in his hands. In the first reading of the Enabling Act in the Landtag, Frick himself had said that every civil servant fell under the jurisdiction of article 3, paragraph 1 even if their office was not affected by the reorganisation.<sup>38</sup> This statement can only have heightened suspicion about Frick's motives for the act's provision clearly offered the opportunity to remove officials under the guise of a financially induced reorganisation. Although opponents of article 3, paragraph 1 had not expressly stated such concerns, it is difficult to see what else they could have mistaken the provision as signifying. So how exactly did Frick wield the power now vested within his office, and who were the targets of his *Beamtenabbau*?

With effect from 1 April, 1 Ministerialdirektor, 5 Ministerialräte, 6 Oberregierungsräte, 3 Regierungsräte were to retire on half-pay (*gesetzliche Wartestand*). In addition, 2 Ministerialdirektor, 6 Ministerialräte, 8 Oberregierungsräte, and 1 Regierungsrat were to commence provisional retirement (*Wartestand versetzen*).<sup>39</sup> One further

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<sup>38</sup> See *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, 11th sitting, 18 March 1930, p.220, col.II

<sup>39</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bll.165-169 15 sitting of the State Ministry, 29 March 1930



Oberregierungsrat and a further 2 Regierungsräte were to be retired from 1 July.<sup>40</sup> In sum, 35 civil servants were to retire from the ministries of education, interior, finance, and economics. Of these 35 civil servants, personal files exist for 20. Analysis reveals that just 1 official claimed to belong to any party (the DVP) before 1933,<sup>41</sup> whilst only 1 official joined the NSDAP on 1 April, the same day as his retirement was to take effect.<sup>42</sup> The remainder of the files record no party affiliation at the time of their retirement, though 4 civil servants did eventually join the NSDAP, albeit between 1933 and 1937.<sup>43</sup> On the basis of these findings, yet taking into account the absence of personnel files for the other 15 retired officials, it is difficult to see any explicit evidence suggesting that these retirements were initiated due to the political machinations of Frick. In all but one case,<sup>44</sup> the documentation reveals no divergence

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<sup>40</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.212 24 sitting of the State Ministry, 23-24 June 1930

<sup>41</sup> ThVbMin Personal File 14728 Ernst Kluge Bl.152RS "Military Government of Germany - Personnel Questionnaire", 3 October 1945

<sup>42</sup> ThMdl Personal File 3405 Georg Hellwig, Akten des Landesfinanzamts Thüringen folder Bl.81 "Military Government of Germany - Personnel Questionnaire", 20 September 1945

<sup>43</sup> See ThVbMin Personal File 17726 Dr. K.A.G. Kummer, "Personalbogen"; ThVbMin Personal File 33740 Richard Wicke "Military Government of Germany - Personnel Questionnaire", 18 July 1945; ThFiMin Personal File Karl Dittmar Bl.128 NSDAP (Kreis Weimar) to RStH Büro, 26 September 1933; ThMdl Personal File 4853 Martin Krause Bl.103 NSDAP (Kreis Weimar) to ThMdl, 28 April 1938

<sup>44</sup> ThVbMin Personal File A. Bock contains no retirement documentation

from the reasons advanced by the Enabling Act, viz. the retirements had taken effect because the offices administered by the civil servants had ceased to exist; there is certainly no suggestion that any of the officials were retired because they may have held anti-nazi opinions. The candidates' age also appears to have been a factor. The average age of the candidates was 54 years, though this ranged from a 21 year old,<sup>45</sup> to two 63 year olds.<sup>46</sup> It could be argued that these retirements were not so important in themselves, but rather that their importance lay in which civil servants were left in employment. In other words, those who remained were much more in favour of Frick and his policies, rather than those retired were against him.

## **Conflict with the Reich Government**

The day before the Enabling Act became law, Reich Interior Minister Carl Severing wrote to the Thuringian government saying he did not believe that article 3, paragraph 1 was compatible with article 129 of the Reich Constitution, which protected civil servants' rights. He

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<sup>45</sup> ThVbMin Personal File 17726 Dr. K.A.G. Kummer, born 10 August 1908

<sup>46</sup> ThFiMin Personal File E. Zaubitzer, born 2 April 1866; ThVbMin Personal File A. Bock, born 1 October 1867

argued that article 3, paragraph 1 allowed article 29, paragraph 1, number 1 of Thuringia's civil servants' law to become "a fiction ... without reference to the actual conditions". In other words, the protection, which civil servants enjoyed against arbitrary dismissal and the right to be left alone in office, had been done away with in "a trenchant manner". As support for his view, Severing quoted several judgments of the Reichsgericht, which supported the view that the Reich Constitution protected a civil servant's security of tenure in office.<sup>47</sup>

Severing's letter received no answer as both the Reich and the Thuringian government's were both involved in a dispute concerning the payment of a Reich subsidy for the upkeep of Thuringia's police.<sup>48</sup> Reconciliation of the Enabling Act with the Reich Constitution only began with Severing's successor in office, Reich Interior Minister Joseph Wirth.

Wirth met Hermann Münzel, the Thuringian government's representative with the Reich government, on 2 April. Wirth said that the constitutional validity of article 3, paragraph 1 was a "very important

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<sup>47</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bll.30-30RS Severing to ThStMin, 28 March 1930. Severing had been contacted by the Berlin branch of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Beamtenbund. See ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bll.31-32 AGDB (Berlin) to Severing, 26 March 1930

question", and asked for further talks to resolve this since civil service interest groups had objected to the act's provision.<sup>49</sup> After Münzel had reported back to the Thuringian government, he told Wirth that a discussion of the matter was "thoroughly desirable" and that a member of the Thuringian cabinet might attend.<sup>50</sup>

On 10 April, Wirth met with Erwin Baum, Thuringia's Minister-President, to repeat the Reich's government's concern. State Secretary Pünder (Reich Chancellery), State Secretary Zweigert and Ministerialrat Kniep (both Reich Ministry of the Interior) all agreed that the compatibility of article 3, paragraph 1 of the Enabling Act with article 129, paragraph 1 of the Reich Constitution was "a pretence" (*eine Fiktion*). Suspicion about this "pretence" was heightened further when Baum said that article 3 was "not necessary at all" (*gar nicht erforderlich*) since those civil servants who had taken provisional retirement had done so because their offices had been reorganised. When Wirth asked why, in view of this, article 3 had been considered necessary in the first place, Baum could not supply a satisfactory answer.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See chapter 4 of the dissertation.

<sup>49</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bll.255-256 Reich Ministry of the Interior note, 2 April 1930

<sup>50</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.34 Münzel to Wirth, 4 April 1930

<sup>51</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bll.262-263 Reich Chancellery note, 12 April 1930 *emphasis added*. See

The Thuringian government insisted that article 3, paragraph 1 was “entirely compatible” with Reich law, but the government was willing to invoke the Reichsgericht to secure a settlement, and do so in co-operation with the Reich government. Collaboration over this step was to be discussed during a visit by Zweigert to Weimar.<sup>52</sup> The Thuringian government further pledged to suspend all provisional retirements under article 3, paragraph 1 until the Reichsgericht had reached a decision.<sup>53</sup> In a “searching conference” with the Thuringian government on 29 April, Zweigert discussed the constitutional problems. No agreement was produced, but both sides agreed to initiate the planned appeal to the Reichsgericht.<sup>54</sup> Wirth invoked the Reichsgericht the following day.<sup>55</sup>

On 20 June, the Third Civil Senate of the Reichsgericht met to deliver its verdict.<sup>56</sup> The Reichsgericht confirmed Severing’s view that civil servants who were in office when the Enabling Act became law,

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*The Times*, “The Dispute with Thuringia”, 19 April 1930

<sup>52</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.264 W.T.B. “Die Antwort Thüringens an das Reich”, 17 April 1930

<sup>53</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.265 W.T.B. “Die Beilegung der Meinungsverschiedenheit mit Thüringen”, 17 April 1930. This promise was not kept, see p. 19 above

<sup>54</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.269 W.T.B. “Der Besuch des Staatssekretär Zweigert in Weimar”, 30 April 1930

<sup>55</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.72 Wirth to President of the Reichsgericht, 30 April 1930

<sup>56</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.86-90 Decision of the Reichsgericht, 20 June 1930

had the right to be retired only if the office administered by them was abolished as a result of a governmental re-organisation. This right could only be restricted by a change in the Reich Constitution, not by “a simple Land law”; any such provision by a Land would be void due to its incompatibility with the Reich Constitution.<sup>57</sup>

The wording of the act, according to the Reichsgericht, had simply not given the Thuringian government the right to retire civil servants since article 29, paragraph 1, number 1 of Thuringia's civil servants' law was valid for all civil servants. Severing was again deemed correct in identifying a “legal pretence” in article 3, paragraph 1. The Reichsgericht pointed out that the Thuringian government had denied this and had claimed that the clause “signified nothing other than what was already pronounced in article 29, paragraph 1, number 1”. However, the Thuringian government had claimed that under article 1 of the Enabling Act there would be a complete re-organisation of the Land's administration and authorities, and that article 2 granted the powers and the mandate necessary to achieve this. But “these conditions do not justify the conclusion which the Thuringian government makes”, because, said the Reichsgericht, in any re-organisation - for one reason

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<sup>57</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.88 Decision of the Reichsgericht, 20 June 1930

or another - there would be offices unaffected. Therefore, any alteration would not involve the necessary re-organisation of all offices, but only provide the opportunity to do so. Therefore, it did not follow that civil servants would retire because their offices would automatically cease to exist. In other words, “[a]bstractly as well as practically”, article 3, paragraph 1 did not coincide with article 29, paragraph 1, number 1 of Thuringia’s civil servants’ law, but went “beyond it”.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, the Reichsgericht ruled that article 3 of the Enabling Act had further violated civil servants’ rights since it maintained the “pretence” of a complete re-organisation, so denying civil servants the right to call for a judicial examination of the re-organisation to see whether their offices would be affected. This too was a violation of civil servants’ rights protected under article 129 of the Reich Constitution.<sup>59</sup>

The Thuringian government accepted the Reichsgericht’s verdict without dissent.<sup>60</sup> If there was opposition, none was recorded in either the cabinet files, or in the many copies of the Reichsgericht’s decision

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<sup>58</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.88 Decision of the Reichsgericht, 20 June 1930

<sup>59</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.89 Decision of the Reichsgericht, 20 June 1930

<sup>60</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.215-216 25th sitting of the State Ministry, 30 June 1930

circulated around the government.<sup>61</sup> The Thuringian government's announcement of the Reichsgericht's decision stated that article 3, paragraph 1 was to be regarded as illegal (*rechtsungültig*), but that the rest of the act would remain in force.<sup>62</sup> The Finance Ministry wrote: "the opportunity for its use has been omitted (*ist fortgefallen*)".<sup>63</sup>

If it can be argued that Frick did not use article 3, paragraph 1 of the Enabling Act to dismiss non- or anti-Nazi civil servants, did he use any other means to dismiss those lukewarm or hostile to him? On a general level, the answer is no. Files relating to civil servants and *Angestellten* reveal no evidence of any discernible change in their conditions. Office life appears to have carried on as much the same as it did prior to Frick's appointment, though whilst some civil servants may have welcomed Frick, others must have dreaded him. However, on an entirely different level, Frick did resort to a more obvious means of purging administrators. He banned all civil servants from membership in any communist organisation. At first glance, that a Nazi minister should enact such a decree appears obvious, without the need for any further

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<sup>61</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/6 Bl.44-48; ThMdI A/633 Bl.1-5; ThMdI D/20 Bl.38-42; ThMdI, G/50 Bl.249-253; Landtag von Thüringen/30

<sup>62</sup> *Gesetzsammlung für Thüringen*, nr.20, 1 July 1930, p.103

<sup>63</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/6 Bl.43 ThFiMin memorandum to all ministries, 1 July 1930



explanation. However, the decree was not issued until Frick had been in office a full nine months. Given the NSDAP's pronounced anti-Communist stance, why had this taken so long? It could be argued that the conflict with the Reich Ministry of the Interior over the Enabling Act (and also over the police subsidies) had forced Frick to play a more cautious hand lest his actions provoke the Reich Ministry of the Interior into initiating stronger measures against his government. The most likely explanation, however, is that the matter were put on hold after the Reichsgericht's decision. Certainly, it appears that abolition of article 3, paragraph 1 forced Frick to turn to anti-Communist legislation. Frick's own ministry claimed that the decree was necessary to avoid communist intrigues. "In the long run it had become intolerable that members of the communist parties make use of public functions as civil servants. If the state and its components, the *Gemeinden*, are not to come to severe grief, it is a pressing order [*Gebot*] to remove all communist civil servants from their offices with haste."<sup>64</sup> The cabinet agreed with Frick's proposal for banning membership and then initiating disciplinary proceedings against any transgressors with the aim of

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<sup>64</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/99 Bl.3 ThMdl to ThFiMin, 24 September 1930

removing them from office.<sup>65</sup> However, the cabinet did point out that the prohibition ought to be spread out in the widest sense.<sup>66</sup> The decree was issued two days later.<sup>67</sup>

If judged from Frick's perspective, the decree was both a failure and a success. There were no communists employed in either of Frick's ministries.<sup>68</sup> In fact, all of the disciplinary cases would be initiated outside central government. The archives reveal that from 8 *Bürgermeister*, 6 were dismissed from office,<sup>69</sup> and 1 *Bürgermeister* was initially acquitted then dismissed.<sup>70</sup> The remaining *Bürgermeister* were sentenced to loss of *Amtsbeziehung*, together with loss of pension rights and dependants' support.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, the cases regarding the 23 *Beigeordneten* were not uniform. There were 13 dismissals,<sup>72</sup> 2 *Beigeordneten* were acquitted,<sup>73</sup> and 3 resigned, so proceedings were

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<sup>65</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.232-233 29th sitting of the State Ministry, 25 September 1930

<sup>66</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/99 Bl.4 ThStMin note, 26 September 1930

<sup>67</sup> *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt für Thüringen*, 1930, nr.78, p.281

<sup>68</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/15, Bl.164-170,172 early January 1931; ThMdl G/99 Bl.58, 59  
ThMdl internal memoranda, 9 January 1931

<sup>69</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/726, /733, /740, /748, /764, /767

<sup>70</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/752

<sup>71</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/770

<sup>72</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/721, /734, /737, /744, /753, /758, /762, /763, /775, /778, /784, /791

<sup>73</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/759, /788

dropped.<sup>74</sup> The fate of the remaining 5 has not been recorded.<sup>75</sup> Apart from these 5 ‘unknowns’, all the judgments of the Dienststrafkammer were delivered between August 1931 and June 1932. The Ministry of the Interior did warn those responsible for judging the cases that they would have a lot of cases to deal with,<sup>76</sup> but to what extent Frick was expecting such a large number of cases from one tier of Thuringia’s administration is not known.

### Frick’s Attempt to secure Thuringian Citizenship for Hitler

In July 1930 an incident occurred, something, which did not come to light until February 1932: Frick attempted to grant Hitler Thuringian citizenship. In 1924 the Austrian authorities had stripped Hitler of his Austrian citizenship following his trial over Munich *Putsch*, since they feared that Hitler could be deported back to Austria. German citizenship was essential, since without it Hitler could not become Reich President. Frick’s solution was to appoint Hitler as the Gendarme commissioner for the Thuringian town of Hildburghausen, thereby

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<sup>74</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/762, /789, /791

<sup>75</sup> ThHStAW. ThMdl G/711, /712, /716, /726

<sup>76</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/99 Bl.141 ThMdl to Dienststrafkammer Weimar, Dienststrahhof

automatically granting Hitler Thuringian citizenship, and therefore German citizenship, since this was a civil service post.<sup>77</sup>

Nevertheless, despite Frick's attempts to ride roughshod over his officials' concerns by swearing them to secrecy, Hitler refused the appointment since he feared public ridicule.<sup>78</sup> Something, which Goebbels agreed with in 1932:

"The journalistic clique have found out that in 1930 Frick made the suggestion that the Fuhrer was to be entrusted with a subordinate post in Hildburghausen in order to procure citizenship for him. An opportunity handed on a plate for caricaturists."<sup>79</sup>

After the matter became public, Hermann Brill chaired a Landtag committee to investigate the "legality and integrity" of Frick attempt to appoint Hitler as the Gendarme commissioner of Hildburghausen.<sup>80</sup>

Frick appeared at the Committee's hearings as a witness. Frick

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Jena, 21 January 1931

<sup>77</sup> J. C. Fest, *Hitler* (London, 1974), p.784, n.25

<sup>78</sup> Fest, loc.cit.; G. Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick. Der Legalist des Unrechtsstaates. Eine Politische Biographie* (Paderborn, 1992), pp.60, 61. There is also another reason not advanced by other historians. Since Frick was the Thuringian Interior Minister, and therefore head of the Thuringian police, Hitler, had he accepted this post, would have been Frick's subordinate, a relationship, which Hitler would have refused to accept.

<sup>79</sup> Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941. Teil I, Band II. 1. Januar 1931-31. Dezember 1936* (Munich, 1987), entry of 4 February 1932, p.122

said that when he became Minister he was convinced that the question of Hitler's citizenship should be settled once and for all, so far as it lay within his power of authority, "in order to finally confer on this Front Soldier Adolf Hitler, who, for 4½ years fought and bled for Germany, the rights of citizenship which, until then, had been withheld from him".<sup>81</sup> Frick had earlier made an attempt to acquire German citizenship for Hitler in Bavaria in early 1929,<sup>82</sup> but had been unsuccessful. Frick told the Landtag Committee that after this failure he was resolved to use other means, and he argued that if thousands of *Ostjuden* had been allowed to enter Germany after 1918 then it wasn't "right and fair" that Hitler had German citizenship withheld from him.

Earlier that year, Kallenbach, the DDP's Landtag representative, directed a *Kleine Anfrage* to the Thuringian cabinet. He said that the press alleged that the Thuringian government was going to grant Hitler Thuringian citizenship "in any suitable manner", even though the Bavarian government had told the Thuringian government the "weighty

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<sup>80</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197

<sup>81</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.25 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March 1932. I have used the page notation added to the whole file by the ThHStAW for the sake of clarity since each of the Landtag Committee's six meetings were numbered individually.

<sup>82</sup> See R. Morsey, "Hitler als Braunschweiger Regierungsrat," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (iv), Volume 8, 1960

reasons" why it refused Hitler citizenship in Bavaria. Kallenbach alleged that the latest press reports believed that Hitler would acquire Thuringian citizenship by being appointed as a Thuringian civil servant. The same report, allegedly based on official sources, said that the decision to appoint Hitler had not yet been taken.

Kallenbach asked the Thuringian government whether these reports were true, and whether it was compatible with its obligations to use its civil servants law to appoint Hitler, and show Hitler "personal preference in this manner".<sup>83</sup> Baum answered that the Thuringian government had no intention of letting Hitler acquire citizenship through such an appointment.<sup>84</sup> both Frick and Willy Marschler rejected the cabinet's decision.<sup>85</sup> Frick told the Landtag Committee: "I had, so far as I can remember, left absolutely no doubts on that matter in that cabinet session through a remark that I, so far as it lay within my power, would do everything ... in order to eventually bring about Hitler's citizenship through the means of his appointment as a civil servant."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/52 Bl.274 Kallenbach (DDP) Kleine Anfrage, 28 March 1930

<sup>84</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/57 Baum to Kallenbach, 15 April 1930

<sup>85</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.119 ThStMin to Chairman of the Landtag's Police Investigation Committee, 22 March 1932

<sup>86</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.25 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March 1932

Frick said he had once spoken to Baum on the matter of Hitler's citizenship, asking him whether a solution could be found. "I had firstly considered assigning Adolf Hitler to a post in the art department of the Staatliche Hochschule für Baukunst und Handwerk." Frick said that he had asked Baum whether the question of Hitler's citizenship would be solved via this appointment. Baum doubted this, but, claimed Frick, the Thuringian Minister-President had said implied that the matter could be dealt with during the summer if the political scene was quiet and the Landtag was in recess.<sup>87</sup> Frick said that he had thought the matter over without any agreement or contact with Hitler. Frick realised that there would be difficulties within the Thuringian cabinet, and that responsibility to head off any problems would fall upon Baum since there would have been a majority of the NSDAP, DNVP and Landbund members had remained united.

Frick told the Landtag Committee that he, as Minister, was competent to appoint lower civil servants in the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior, and he considered this the correct way in which to appoint Hitler. Frick believed that the main thing was not the post, which Hitler would be appointed to, but that the desired result, Hitler's

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<sup>87</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.27 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March

naturalisation, occurred as a result of entry into the civil service. Frick claimed that he had considered appointing Hitler to the vacant post of Gendarmerie Commissioner in Hildburghausen with immediate effect.<sup>88</sup> Frick wanted to make the document announcing Hitler's appointment immediately public, but Hitler asked him not to do so,<sup>89</sup> since "he [Hitler] had doubts about the whole matter because he did not consider the granting of the right of citizenship as urgent". Frick argued to the Landtag Committee that he had viewed the matter as urgent so that Hitler could stand for election to the Reichstag. Nevertheless, despite Hitler's doubts,<sup>90</sup> Frick said that Hitler had accepted the letter of appointment, but had immediately told Frick that he reserved the right to decide whether to accept the appointment. Frick said that he only realised that Hitler had no intention of really accepting the appointment when Hitler described himself as 'stateless' during the Ulm Officers trial at Leipzig in the September of that year. Frick described his attempt to grant Hitler citizenship as "a legal act of state, but which was not

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1932

<sup>88</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.30 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March

1932

<sup>89</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.31 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March

1932

<sup>90</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.32 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March

1932



perfect, and which was not effective”.

In order to prevent Hitler's proposed appointment from becoming public Frick had kept the matter secret, sharing it only with Oberregierungsrat Haueisen (Thuringian Ministry of the Interior), and since Hitler didn't take up the appointment, the matter remained secret. Ministerialrat Guyet told Frick that he doubted the legality of Hitler's letter of appointment and argued that it should be published in the government's official paper, though Frick told the Landtag Committee that this wasn't a formality. Frick argued that he did not consider Hitler's appointment “a matter of particular political significance with which the Cabinet must have concerned itself.”<sup>91</sup> Frick said both letters were destroyed after the appointment had failed to come about.<sup>92</sup>

From Frick's statements to the Committee it appears that Hitler would not have done any work as a Gendarme Commissioner since Frick said that Hitler would have taken an immediate leave of absence and then resigned after a short while, since alongside the letter of appointment, a further letter was drafted, in which Hitler renounced the

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<sup>91</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.39 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March 1932

execution of his duties and his salary. Frick admitted to the Landtag Committee that he made no secret of the fact that the aim of Hitler's appointment was not to employ Hitler within the Thuringian civil service, but to acquire German citizenship for Hitler.<sup>93</sup>

Hitler also appeared in front of the Committee. He claimed he was "flabbergasted and surprised" when Frick told him what he had done. Hitler told the Committee that he believed that he could not accept the letter of appointment and immediately told Frick.<sup>94</sup> Hitler denied accepting the letter of appointment or the letter concerning the renouncement of duty and salary, claiming that he had destroyed the letters a few days later; Hitler further denied speaking to Frick on the matter afterwards.

Hitler argued that he had allowed the 1929 attempt to grant him citizenship in Bavaria to proceed since political parties occasionally suggested that German citizenship had been withheld from Hitler on party political grounds, when, "in reality no opposition would have been raised against such a naturalisation". Hitler claimed that it was in his

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<sup>92</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.36 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March 1932

<sup>93</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bll.39-41 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March 1932

interest to prove publicly that it was the Bavarian Volkspartei, the SPD and the Centre party who would have opposed any attempt to grant Hitler German citizenship. Hitler denied speaking to Frick on the subject of his citizenship between the failed Bavarian attempt and the attempt in Thuringia.<sup>95</sup> "I personally have absolutely no cause to petition the present System, and perhaps the parties, to naturalise me. It is my belief that I earned my naturalisation on the battlefield and that I really do not have to ask the parties, who, at the time, sabotaged the war and have brought us the consequences of our sacrifices, that they are really not ready to naturalise anyone."<sup>96</sup>

Oberregierungsrat Haueisen told the Landtag Committee that he had been asked by Frick to visit him, bringing some appointment documents. Upon Frick's dictation, Haueisen wrote out the letter appointing Hitler to the post of Gendarme Commissioner in Hildburghausen, with Frick saying he alone would take full

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<sup>94</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bll.51-52 Witness Examination of Hitler, 15 March 1932

<sup>95</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bll.55, 58 Witness Examination of Hitler, 15 March 1932

<sup>96</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bll.55-56 Witness Examination of Hitler, 15 March 1932

responsibility.<sup>97</sup> Haueisen also recalled writing out the second letter, which stated that Hitler would renounce his salary when he began the appointment.<sup>98</sup> Haueisen said he had told Frick of his doubts regarding the appointment, saying that the Finance Minister and the State Ministry ought to be informed, but Frick told Haueisen that he represented the Finance Minister, and that he was responsible for seeing the matter through.<sup>99</sup>

Haueisen informed the Landtag Committee that several days prior to this meeting Frick had asked him how Gendarme officials were appointed, but without revealing why he was interested.<sup>100</sup> (Frick had alleged in his statements to the Landtag Committee that Haueisen had said that Hitler's appointment would not contradict any legal or civil service regulations).<sup>101</sup> Haueisen said his doubts concerning the appointment arose from misgivings over civil service regulations, not

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<sup>97</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.187 Witness Examination of Oberregierungsrat Haueisen, 11 April 1932

<sup>98</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.188 Witness Examination of Oberregierungsrat Haueisen, 11 April 1932

<sup>99</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.188 Witness Examination of Oberregierungsrat Haueisen, 11 April 1932

<sup>100</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.190 Witness Examination of Oberregierungsrat Haueisen, 11 April 1932

<sup>101</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.30 Witness Examination of Frick, 15 March 1932

from “political-moral” doubts,<sup>102</sup> though he did not consider Frick’s act illegal.<sup>103</sup>

Ministerial Guyet said that Haueisen had approached him saying that Frick had asked in to assist in a matter of “extraordinary significance”, and swore Haueisen to secrecy. Guyet said that Haueisen felt pressured by the matter and asked him about it. Haueisen revealed that it was a police matter; though Guyet didn’t pursue the questioning further to avoid Haueisen coming into conflict with his oath of confidence.<sup>104</sup>

Guyet discovered the source of Haueisen’s concern when, a week later, Frick asked to see him on a matter which concerned his section. After swearing Guyet to the strictest secrecy, Frick handed Guyet a document, in Haueisen’s handwriting, which appointed Hitler to the post of Gendarme Commissioner in Hildburghausen. Guyet claimed to the Landtag Committee that immediately after he had read the document he told Frick that the appointment was not in order; the post in Hildburghausen was indeed vacant, but due to current regulations,

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<sup>102</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.193 Witness Examination of Oberregierungsrat Haueisen, 11 April 1932

<sup>103</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.202 Witness Examination of Oberregierungsrat Haueisen, 11 April 1932

the Finance Minister, who was in fact Baum, had to be informed of all appointments. “Dr. Frick retorted somewhat sharply that he represented the Finance Minister and acted in a dual position as Interior Minister”. Guyet told Frick that he was unhappy about becoming involved in the matter, and he doubted that the document was valid as a letter of appointment for a civil servant,<sup>105</sup> although Guyet did confess that he couldn’t understand why German citizenship was begrudged to Hitler when he had won the Iron Cross, 1<sup>st</sup> class in the First World War.<sup>106</sup>

Following this, Guyet spoke with Haueisen. They both agreed that they felt extremely pressured that they both knew about Frick’s attempt to grant Hitler citizenship. After Frick left the Thuringian government Guyet and Haueisen both discussed whether they should inform Frick’s successor (Dr. Kästner, the Justice Minister) but the pair still felt bound by their oaths to Frick not to speak on the matter.

Guyet and Haueisen both held the view that the appointment of Hitler as a civil servant would not have happened, irrespective of whether Frick’s letter was handed to Hitler or not. The whole series of

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<sup>104</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.180 Witness Examination of Ministerialrat Guyet, 11 April 1932

<sup>105</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bll.180, 184, 185 Witness Examination of Ministerialrat Guyet, 11 April 1932

events according to Guyet was not “routine” (*Geschäftsgang*): Hitler would have neither assumed office, nor would he have received any of the rights and duties associated with the post.<sup>107</sup>

## Conclusion

The view that Frick used the Enabling Act to radically recast the Thuringian government along Nazi lines cannot be sustained. The reforms enacted under the Enabling Act within central government, and specifically within Frick’s ministries, conform to a ‘reshuffle’ interpretation. Even Frick’s attempt to remove communist or pro-communist officials, cannot be seen an example of Nazi ideology in action, for the SPD dominated Prussian government had enacted a similar measure earlier that year, and the success of Frick’s measure, despite action against *Bürgermeister* and *Beigeordneten*, is open to doubt. Similarly, Frick’s attempt to gain citizenship for Hitler failed, though this was due to Hitler himself, but, nonetheless, it is another example of Frick being unable to successfully pursue his mandate.

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<sup>106</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.180 Witness Examination of Ministerialrat Guyet, 11 April 1932

<sup>107</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.180 Witness Examination of Ministerialrat Guyet, 11 April 1932

## Chapter Four:

*Frick as Interior Minister II*



## **The Reich-Thuringia Police Subsidy Conflict**

On 18 March, Severing told the Thuringian government that information had given him “well founded doubts” as to whether it was complying with the Principles. As a result, Severing said he could not authorise further payments if the Land could not produce “conclusive proof” that it was indeed following the Principles.<sup>1</sup>

In response to Severing’s vague statement, the Thuringian government said that if Severing wished to suspend the subsidy, it was his duty to furnish the “conclusive proof” that the Principles were being ignored. The government pointed out that Severing had not specified what these supposed infringements were, and that he had not once exercised his right (allowed by the Principles) to ask for information. The Thuringian government stated that no new police officials had been employed since it had come to power, contrary to lurid headlines in social democratic newspapers alleging that Frick had recruited ‘Putschists’. The only changes within its police force had been scheduled transfers and several redundancies, all of which were “entirely in the realms of normalcy”, and the Thuringian government claimed that the

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<sup>1</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.201 W.T.B. “Ein Brief Severings an das thüringische Staatsministerium”, 19 March 1930

appointment and employment of its police officials was regulated by its *Gemeindeordnung Selbstverwaltungsangelegenheit der Städte*.<sup>2</sup>

Severing replied saying he favoured initiating an inquiry to clarify whether the Thuringian government was adhering to the Principles. To assist the inquiry, Severing said he would appoint Ministerialdirektor Menzel, who would await an invitation from the Thuringian government. However, Severing insisted that until the conclusion of the inquiry, the suspension of the subsidy would remain.<sup>3</sup>

The Thuringian government remained astonished that Severing had still not specified what he demanding information about, and that he wished to send an agent to Thuringia without saying why there should be an inquiry. The Thuringian government considered Severing's behaviour to be an "arbitrary and unjustified violation" of the Principles, and once again reminded him that he had a duty to state his accusations, and then ask for information. The Thuringian government claimed its police force had nothing to hide and had no intention of avoiding an inquiry, but rejected any such step until Severing specified those facts,

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<sup>2</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.228-229 ThStMin to Severing, 20 March 1930. This was not strictly true since Frick appointed Rühle von Lilienstern as *Korreferent* in the section for police matters, including the surveillance of public order and security, just after the conflict began. See ThHStAW, ThMdI G/II Frick to departments, 22 March 1930.

<sup>3</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.232 Severing to ThStMin, 21 March 1930

which he believed, made an investigation necessary.<sup>4</sup> Strictly speaking, the Thuringian government was quite entitled, under Number 7 of the Principles, to refuse Severing's offer. It is evident that the Thuringian government considered the Reich Minister's repeated failures to specify his accusations as the "weighty reasons" which permitted a refusal.<sup>5</sup> There is no evidence to substantiate the claim that the Thuringian government had deliberated whether it should comply.<sup>6</sup>

Severing response was that he had no reason to add anything to his previous letter (21 March) or to alter his standpoint.<sup>7</sup> This was Severing's last involvement in the dispute since Hermann Müller's coalition Reich government resigned on 27 March, and Severing ceased to be Reich Interior Minister. On 30 March, Heinrich Brüning formed the new Reich government, and Joseph Wirth of the Centre Party became the new Reich Interior Minister. A new phase in the dispute began almost immediately.

On 1 April Frick wrote to Thuringia's Oberverwaltungsgericht

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<sup>4</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.242-243 ThStMin to Severing, 26 March 1930

<sup>5</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.196 "Grundsätze für die Gewährung eines Reichszuschusses für polizeiliche Zwecke". Although number 7 of the Principles allowed a Reich Interior Minister to demand information it did not stipulate that he had to identify those details about which he wanted to know more, although it is obvious that exercising this right would cause him to be more specific.

<sup>6</sup> See BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.233 Reich Chancellery note "Meinungsverschiedenheiten des Reichsministers des Innern mit Thüringen", 26 March 1930

asking whether Severing had been justified in banning the subsidy, and whether the State Supreme Court for the German Reich (*Staatsgerichtshof für das Deutsche Reich*) or the ordinary courts were competent enough to decide the subsidy question.<sup>7</sup> The *Oberverwaltungsgericht* did not reply until 17 April, by which time repayment of the subsidy had begun, but the answers are important in helping to understand the opaque nature of the dispute's early stages.

Dr Otto Koellreutter prefaced his answers by reviewing the legal significance of the Principles. He believed it was possible to see the Principles as an expression of the Reich government's willingness to bear the costs without wanting to assume a binding commitment to the Länder. However, Koellreutter argued that the Principles were an agreement [*Abkommen*] by which the Reich and Länder accepted reciprocal obligations, especially since the agreements were in the mutual interests of both parties. "This mutual interest of the Reich and the Länder has found an *agreed* outcome in the Principles". The Länder were committed to the maintenance of an effective police force (which lay in the Reich's interests), and in return the Reich promised to help

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<sup>7</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl. 241 Severing to ThStMin, 27 March 1930

<sup>8</sup> ThHStAW, Thüringische Oberverwaltungsgericht/A XI Nr.5 Bl.168 Frick to Thüringische Oberverwaltungsgericht, 1 April 1930

with the costs.<sup>9</sup> That the obligations for both the Reich and Länder were binding was solely a consequence of the regulations within the Principles.<sup>10</sup>

Koellreutter answered Frick's first question by saying that Severing had not been justified in banning the subsidy. Koellreutter pointed out that if the pre-requisites were not observed, the Reich Ministry of the Interior was entitled to suspend payment. However, the Reich Ministry of the Interior had to demand information, and "it is obvious that it must substantiate exactly this demand for information". It was clear to Koellreutter that Severing had not done so. Severing had "failed to recognise" that it was not the Thuringian government which had to supply the information, but the Reich Ministry of the Interior responsibility to "specify the reasons in the particular and that not until then must the Land prove the non-existence of propriety (*Anstände*)."<sup>11</sup>

Koellreutter answered Frick's second question by saying that

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<sup>9</sup> O. Koellreutter, "Der Konflikt Reich-Thüringen in der Frage der Polizeikostenzuschüsse", *Archiv des öffentlichen Rechts* (i-March), 20. Jahrgang, 1930, pp.77-78. Koellreutter would be one of many after 1933 who tried to create a "bespoke Nazi jurisprudence". See M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (Basingstoke, 2000), p.161

<sup>10</sup> Koellreutter, "Der Konflikt Reich-Thüringen", p.79

<sup>11</sup> Koellreutter, "Der Konflikt Reich-Thüringen", p.80. See ThHStAW, Thüringische Oberverwaltungsgericht/A XI Nr.5 Bll.192-195RS "Gutachten betrifft Reichszuschuß für polizeiliche Zwecke", 17 April 1930

ordinary courts were not competent to decide in public-legal disputes without special legislative provisions.<sup>12</sup> The State Supreme Court was competent, under article 19 of the Reich Constitution, to decide in the matter since it was a legal dispute between the Reich Ministry of the Interior and the Thuringian government. It did not matter that the dispute had a political aspect since the dispute was a legal one.<sup>13</sup>

At first glance, Koellreutter's conclusion that Severing had not been entitled to ban the subsidy appeared to vindicate the Thuringian government's stand during the dispute. However, Koellreutter's commentary on the significance of the Principles puts this into a different context. Koellreutter's view that the Principles involved reciprocal obligations for both the Reich and Länder, strongly suggests that he believed the Thuringian government's position in the dispute to be mistaken.<sup>14</sup> In other words, even though Severing had acted incorrectly, he was nevertheless legally entitled, under Number 7 of the Principles, to request information, and Koellreutter appears to be arguing that Severing would only have done so if he legitimately believed

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<sup>12</sup> Koellreutter, "Der Konflikt Reich-Thüringen", p.81

<sup>13</sup> Koellreutter, "Der Konflikt Reich-Thüringen", p.82

<sup>14</sup> See ThHStAW, Thüringische Oberverwaltungsgericht/A XI Nr.2 Bd.4 Bl. 69RS Guyet to

that the Thuringian government was not observing the Principles. This certainly appears to be the case. On 21 March Severing's Oberregierungsrat disclosed to the Reich Chancellery that Severing had justified the subsidy's suspension with reference to Number 6 of the Principles,<sup>15</sup> i.e. the Thuringian government was not taking the "appropriate measures" necessary to "guarantee unconditionally" the non-political behaviour of its police force.<sup>16</sup>

Yet if Severing believed this, why should he have been so vague in his accusations? This can only have been due to the nature of the information, which had given him his "well founded doubts". Was it a leak from within the Thuringian government, gossip, rumour, or merely the talk of NSDAP and SA members expecting rewards because a fellow party member was in government? When, how, and through which means did it reach him? In fact, did Severing possess *any* information, or was he perhaps hoping to bluff the Thuringian government into an admission of wrongdoing? Unfortunately the Reich government sources contain no record of any information passed to Severing, and the

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Koellreutter, 16 December 1930

<sup>15</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.193 Reich Chancellery memorandum "Einstellung der Reichszuschußzahlungen für Polizeizwecke an das Land Thüringen", 21 March 1930

<sup>16</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.195 "Grundsätze für die Gewährung eines Reichszuschusses für polizeiliche Zwecke"

Thuringian Ministry of the Interior's files relating to policing matters have been so comprehensively weeded back to before Frick's appointment that there is no way of knowing if Severing's accusations were correct.

So what did motivate Severing into making his accusations against the Thuringian government? The answer may well lie in a story by the *Vossische Zeitung* newspaper, a clipping of which is in the Reich Chancellery files. The day after first Severing's letter (18 March) the *Vossische Zeitung* contained the text of an alleged interview between Dr. Janson, Oberbürgermeister of Eisenach (Thuringia), and a former Prussian police officer, named Machts, who had applied for the post of Eisenach's police commissioner.

Janson asked Machts what he would do if the NSDAP, and possibly the Stahlhelm, decided to attack (*losschlagen*) the state. Machts was alleged to have been evasive when he replied that he would follow the orders he received. Detecting this evasiveness, Janson then asked Machts what he would do on his own initiative, and Machts answered that he would act according to his civil servant's oath and duties. Janson was still not satisfied, and he pressed the question: "Would you take steps against the National Socialists?", and Machts confirmed he would.



When asked whether he could provide references regarding his suitability, Machts was told that his suggestion of Prussian police officers was not satisfactory. Janson claimed that almost all were “contaminated”, and asked if there were members of the NSDAP or the Stahlhelm who could vouch for him. Machts did not know any, but Janson was said to have replied: “it is absolutely necessary [*unbedingt nötig*] that you find National Socialists or Stahlhelmers [*sic*], who can fully and personally vouch for you and can ... intercede for you with Minister Frick ... [who] has announced that he has received very unfavourable information about you.” Following comments about his war record and his relationship with his brother, who was a Prussian police officer and a member of the Reichsbanner, Machts was told: “In these circumstances I cannot ... allow you to take up office in Eisenach. You would immediately encounter the strongest resistance of the National Socialists and the Stahlhelm”. However, if Machts could obtain references from National Socialists or members of the Stahlhelm “in the desired sense of Minister Frick”, Janson said he would receive the job.<sup>17</sup>

Both the Reich Chancellery and the *Vossische Zeitung* believed that

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<sup>17</sup> BABL, R 43 1/2315 Bl.204 *Vossische Zeitung* “Severing bricht Beziehungen zu Frick ab”, 19

this was the information to which Severing had referred. The Reich Chancellery unquestionably echoed Severing's viewpoint when it commented: "it could appear doubtful whether the non-political character of the police as a whole, as well as the non-political conduct of the candidate [Machts] ... is guaranteed."<sup>18</sup> But to what extent did the 'Eisenach Interview' reflect events within the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior?

The matter appears to have been ignored until Janson began legal action against Arno Schrooth, editor of the *Eisenacher Volkszeitung*, who was said to have reproduced the 'Interview' in a "distorted and insulting manner" and reproached Janson with "high treasonable intrigues". According to Janson's lawyer, Machts was to have been appointed, but the decision had been reversed when it emerged that Machts had a "bad reputation" and appeared "fully selfish". The discussion had not, as had been claimed, concerned politics, but personal matters and the accusations against Machts. Janson's lawyer asked for the testimony of Ministerialrat Guyet since he had suggested Machts "in good faith", but had subsequently warned Janson about Machts when his personal

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March 1930; See *The Times* "Fascist Activities in Thuringia: Reich subsidy suspended", 20 March 1930

<sup>18</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.193 Reich Chancellery memorandum "Einstellung der Reichszuschußzahlungen für Polizeizwecke an das Land Thüringen", 21 March 1930

characteristics had become known.<sup>19</sup>

Guyet said that Machts had visited him in July 1929 and had asked for an appointment in the Thuringian police, but had been told that this was impossible due to state regulations. However, Guyet believed that Machts could be appointed to the municipal police, possibly even to Eisenach, since he had been a Prussian police officer since the early 1920s and because of the “good and strict impression” he had made. Guyet informed Janson that he had a possible candidate for Eisenach, but warned that he did not know Machts so it was Janson’s responsibility to vet Machts himself. Janson was impressed with Machts and wanted to consider appointing him. Guyet agreed that Machts would first have to serve as a probationer elsewhere since Janson did not want to appoint Machts straight away. Machts subsequently worked without pay for 6 months in Jena’s police, with the intention that he would eventually be transferred to Eisenach.

Up to this point Guyet’s testimony appears honest and straightforward. Given that the details relate to 1929, there appears no straightforward reason why Guyet would lie, other than to cover up

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<sup>19</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl G/68 Oberstaatsanwalt (Eisenach) to ThMdl, 14 April 1930. Schrooth was fined 150 RM and sentenced to 15 days imprisonment, with the relevant sections of the court’s judgement to be published in his newspaper within one month. See ThHStAW, ThMdl G/72 Bl.71 Thüringisches Amtsgericht Strafbefehl, 10 June 1930

either incompetence or negligence. However, his testimony dealing with events in 1930 suggests something less innocent.

Guyet claimed to be surprised when, in February 1930, Frick said he had heard “bad things” about Machts. Guyet did not reveal how Frick knew this, but Guyet contacted Jena’s Oberbürgermeister and asked him to report on Machts. Guyet was told that Machts’ conduct was good “in every respect”; although the Oberbürgermeister said a teacher had alleged that Machts had sought to invalid himself out of the war by deliberately wounding himself. As far as the Oberbürgermeister knew, Machts had complained about the allegation. Then, on 2 March, two men visited Guyet, one of who had ‘connections’ with Jena’s police, and the other was a Landtag representative of unspecified party membership. Guyet asked the man from Jena to make enquiries about Machts “in order to be sure”. The information arrived the next day. Machts was said to have made a bad impression and not considered suitable for higher rank. Furthermore, Guyet was told that another individual had corroborated the allegation of Machts deliberately wounding himself during the war, and also that Machts’ brother had supposedly escaped redundancy from the Prussian police because of his membership in the SPD. Guyet passed all this information to Janson since he knew that Janson “put importance upon a politically neutral

personality ... and ... the composition of Eisenach's town council probably did not want a member of a left-wing party". Shortly afterwards, Janson told Guyet that he wished to be entirely open with Machts about this information. Janson then met Machts in Berlin, and the 'Interview' was published shortly afterwards.<sup>20</sup>

The fact that Janson and Guyet only told their story after the event is suspicious. Clearly, without Janson's lawsuit, there may not have been any attempt to deny that the 'Interview' was in any way accurate. Similarly, Guyet would not have recorded the background and context to the 'Interview'. Why should they not have done so? If they were initially reluctant, the only possible explanation is Frick's presence as Minister. It was claimed that the references to Frick in the 'Interview' were a fabrication,<sup>21</sup> yet Guyet's mention of Frick's disclosure about Machts, and of the visit by the two unidentified men offering to 'investigate' Machts does suggest that party politics had indeed begun to permeate the decision and policy making process within the Ministry quickly after Frick's appearance in office. On 28 January Frick informed his Ministry and the head of the police that in all matters of

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<sup>20</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI G/68 Guyet to ThMdI, 8 May 1930

<sup>21</sup> See BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bll.206-207 W.T.B. "Strafantrag des Oberbürgermeister von Eisenach", 20 March 1930

“fundamental and political significance ... I reserve my right to personal decision and ask that they are put before me”.<sup>22</sup> It was said, later in the year, that Frick had used this to pass lists of applicants for the police to the NSDAP so that it could investigate their political opinions and affiliations.<sup>23</sup>

The change in Reich government at the end of March saw the beginnings of a rapprochement between the Reich Ministry of the Interior, now led by Joseph Wirth, and the Thuringian government. On 2 April Wirth met Hermann Münzel, one of the Thuringian government's representatives to the Reichsrat. Münzel said his government did not want to continue the conflict with the new Reich government, and as a sign of his government's sincerity Münzel said that it had never supported Frick's provocative statements during the earlier *Bund Adler und Falken* dispute with Severing. Wirth was well disposed to such statements, and saw it as the basis for negotiations and made a settlement possible.<sup>24</sup> Münzel asked for a meeting with Brüning, and

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<sup>22</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI A/28 Bl.25 Frick to Geschäftsabteilungen and the Leiter der Landespolizei, 28 January 1930

<sup>23</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.33RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>24</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.255 Reich Ministry of the Interior note, 4 April 1930. The *Bund Adler* dispute had begun in February and had ended before Severing left office. See Chapter 5, pp.220-224

Wirth suggested that Münzel request it himself.<sup>25</sup>

Münzel met Brüning on 5 April. The Reich Chancellor also acknowledged the Thuringian government's statements as "a suitable foundation for an early settlement of the conflict", and suggested that Münzel contact Wirth in order to discuss the broader details. Münzel agreed, but asked for Brüning's "friendly influence" to be brought to bear upon Wirth to ensure that no further conditions were placed upon his government by the Reich Ministry of the Interior in the next round of talks.<sup>26</sup> On 10 April, Wirth met Erwin Baum, Thuringia's Minister-President. Baum said his government would discuss the question of the further payments of the subsidy in its cabinet meeting on 14 April. Proposals for settlement of the dispute would then be submitted to Wirth's ministry.<sup>27</sup>

A resolution to the dispute quickly followed. In the Reich cabinet meeting of 16 April, Wirth read out a letter from the Thuringian government. The letter referred to the Wirth-Baum meeting of 10 April in which Baum had "thoroughly explained" that there had never been

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<sup>25</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.254 Reich Chancellery note "Streit Thüringens mit dem Reich", April 1930

<sup>26</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.256 Reich Chancellery note, 5 April 1930

<sup>27</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.263 Reich Chancellery memorandum "Meinungsverschiedenheiten mit Thüringen", 12 April 1930

any violation of the Principles. Wirth had repeatedly asked Baum whether there had been any changes within the Thuringian police, especially the recruitment of Nazis. Baum had replied that the only changes had been those proposed before Frick had become Minister, and it was “particularly incorrect” that any Nazi had joined the police. The Thuringian government expected that these remarks would satisfy Wirth and that he immediately withdraw the “unfounded” suspension of the subsidy. There would also be an immediate agreement to the visit of Wirth’s State Secretary, Zweigert, who would talk with Frick.<sup>28</sup> After reading the letter to the Reich cabinet, Wirth said that there could no longer be any doubts about payment of the subsidy. However, Wirth stressed that “a ... careful surveillance of the ministerial activity of Herr Frick is urgently necessary” in light of reports about the establishment of a new ‘field’ police (*Flurpolizei*). The Reich cabinet noted Wirth’s remarks and agreed with his proposals,<sup>29</sup> and these assurances by the Thuringian government were given as the justification for Wirth removing the ban on payment of the subsidy.<sup>30</sup>

Zweigert arrived in Weimar on 29 April. He began by referring to

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<sup>28</sup> BABL, R 43/1442 Bl.316 W.T.B. “Die Antwort Thüringens an das Reich”, 17 April 1930

<sup>29</sup> BABL, R 43 I/1442 Bl.314 Ministerbesprechung, 16 April 1930

<sup>30</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.265 W.T.B. “Die Beilegung der Meinungsverschiedenheit mit



the many reports the Reich Ministry of the Interior had received concerning political tendencies within Thuringia's police. Particular cases were discussed, but no settlement was reached. The Thuringian government promised to examine the cases mentioned and report back to the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Nonetheless, the Thuringian government again issued its standard assurance that there had been no new appointments or dismissals within its police force since Frick had joined the government - save those planned beforehand.<sup>31</sup>

On 30 April, the *Vossische Zeitung* once again turned its attention to Thuringia. The newspaper argued that no-one doubted Baum's intention to keep his promises, but until evidence to the contrary came to light, there would be reservations as to whether Frick's coalition partners could keep him in check. The newspaper argued that the NSDAP in Thuringia was pursuing the same goals as the KPD had done in 1923: manipulating its governmental position to achieve anti-constitutional goals, and so eliminate opposition under the fig leaf of legality. The *Vossische Zeitung* knew that two Nazis - Gerichtsassessor Ortlepp and Staatsanwaltsschaft Floel - were contemplated as police directors for

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Thuringen", 17 April 1930

<sup>31</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.269 W.T.B. "Der Besuch des Staatssekretärs Zweigert in Weimar", 30 April 1930

Weimar and Gera.<sup>32</sup>

On 3 May, Wirth, prompted by the *Vossische Zeitung*'s article, asked Baum if the occupation of these posts had been considered in light of the talks with Zweigert.<sup>33</sup> Baum replied that his government had not yet discussed the matter. However, whilst claiming that he did not want to pre-empt any cabinet decision, Baum said:

“it cannot be practical, on the one hand ... to rule out fundamentally membership of the NSDAP with the occupation of offices, when on the other hand, as the case is now in Thuringia, that the highest leader of police matters, the Minister of the Interior, belongs to this party”.

Baum said he had had discussions about Floel and he would not be appointed, but the appointment of Ortlepp had still not been decided. Baum promised to inform Wirth about the cabinet's opinion as soon as it had discussed the matter on 14 May, and he asked for Wirth's opinion upon the “fundamental question” of NSDAP members in police posts.<sup>34</sup>

Baum's statement is significant since it represents the beginning

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<sup>32</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.269 *Vossische Zeitung*, “Nationalsozialistischen Polizeidirektoren?”, 30 April 1930

<sup>33</sup> BABL, R3007/241 Bl.17 Wirth to Baum, 3 May 1930

<sup>34</sup> BABL, R3007/241 Bl.17RS-18 Baum to Wirth, 9 May 1930

of a new direction in the policy of the Thuringian government *vis-à-vis* the Reich. From the conflict's beginning (18 March) to Wirth ending it (16 April) the Thuringian government had consistently denied all accusations made against it. From now on, the Thuringian government would ask what was exactly wrong with the appointment of Nazis, and resort to constitutional means to undermine the Reich Ministry of the Interior's argument. But why, when the policy of denial had successfully achieved repayment of the subsidy, was this change deemed necessary? The answer is that Baum could no longer deny the Reich's allegations since the *Vossische Zeitung's* report, and Wirth's letter of 3 May, were essentially correct: Nazis were being considered as senior police officials.

Responding to the Thuringian government's U-turn, Wirth hoped that Baum would be able to influence matters, so that a renewal of the conflict - which Wirth regarded as over - could be avoided. He reminded Baum that it had been his assurances, which had led to the raising of the ban, and Wirth hoped that these would also be valid for the future.

Wirth then dealt with the repercussions of appointing Floel and Ortlepp to the police directorships in Weimar and Gera. He argued that

these would place the Reich and Thuringian governments in a difficult position *vis-à-vis* the agreement reached only a month before. These appointments, so soon after repayment of the subsidy, created “an entirely new situation” which, Wirth felt, forced him to re-consider the subsidy’s continued payment. For Wirth the “fundamental question” was whether a National Socialist could be a civil servant. He pointed out that his predecessor (Severing) had decided that a civil servant could be a member of a *staatsfeindlich* (hostile to the state) party, but could not be ‘involved’ in its activities. Wirth, carefully avoiding whether he viewed the NSDAP as such, believed that even if the NSDAP was not considered *staatsfeindlich*, there would still be severe doubts with the appointment of a civil servant (and NSDAP member) to a leading position within the Thuringian police, since article 8 of Thuringia’s civil servants’ law placed particular obligations upon officials. Wirth imagined that this view would play a “decisive role” in the consideration of whether such an employment was compatible with the Principles.<sup>35</sup>

If the Thuringian government believed it could evade the issue until Wirth lost interest, it soon discovered that Wirth was as ready as Severing to take direct action. However, Wirth, unlike Severing, was

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<sup>35</sup> BABL, R 3007/241 Bll.19-20 Wirth to Baum, 12 May 1930

prepared to 'turn up the heat' gently, without ruining any chance of settling the dispute. Wirth took the opportunity, first recognised in April,<sup>36</sup> to demand that the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior refund part of the police subsidy for the financial year of 1929, a move permitted by Part II, Number 2 of the Principles.<sup>37</sup> Wirth informed the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior that it had been paid for 379 more officials than it actually had (1283). Therefore, the 1,126.54 Reichsmarks paid out for each of the 379 phantom officials be returned, i.e. RM 426,958.66.<sup>38</sup> The Thuringian Ministry of the Interior ignored the request.

On 19 May the Thuringian cabinet finally discussed the question of the police appointments. The towns of Weimar, Gera, Gotha and Jena were to receive police directors; Hildburghausen would be administered by a Landrat, but no decision had been made concerning Zella-Mehlis.<sup>39</sup> The appointments were to come into effect on 1 July.<sup>40</sup>

With the announcement of these appointments, the change within the Thuringian government, which had been subtly initialed by

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<sup>36</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.252 Wagner to Zweigert, 1 April 1930

<sup>37</sup> See BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.196RS "Grundsätze für die Gewährung eines Reichszuschusses für polizeiliche Zwecke"

<sup>38</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.23-24 Wirth to ThMdl, 13 May 1930

<sup>39</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.190-191 20th sitting of the State Ministry, 19 May 1930

<sup>40</sup> Thüringisches Staatsministerium (ed.), *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt für Thüringen*. I. Teil. *Regierungsblatt*, 10. Jahrgang, 1930 (Weimar, n.d.), nr.57, 16 July 1930, p.221

Baum's new stance towards the Reich Ministry of the Interior, had finally come to fruition. But was Wirth justified in believing that Nazis actually had received important police posts? Both he, and Severing before him, had assumed this to be the case, but no known appointments had, in fact, been made. So, how many appointees- if any at all - were Nazis?

It is certain that two Nazis were appointed on 19 May: Georg Hellwig and Walter Ortlepp. Hellwig, Weimar's new police director, was a retired Oberregierungsrat from Frick's ministry who had only recently joined the NSDAP on 1 April 1930,<sup>41</sup> although it was alleged that he had been "utterly in accord" with Frick's views for years.<sup>42</sup> Walter Ortlepp, Hellwig's deputy and leader of the state criminal police office (*Landeskriminalpolizeistelle*),<sup>43</sup> was by far the more senior NSDAP member of the two. Ortlepp had originally joined the NSDAP in 1923,<sup>44</sup> and then again in 1927 whilst employed as a *Hilfsrichter* in the *Landgericht* Weimar.<sup>45</sup> Of the other appointees, nothing definite can be ascertained.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl Personal File Georg Hellwig, "Military Government of Germany - Personnel Questionnaire", 20 September 1945, p.81. Hellwig had been one of the civil servants retired under article 3, paragraph 1 of the Enabling Act.

<sup>42</sup> BABL, R 18/5051 Bl.20 Brill to Wirth, 17 June 1930

<sup>43</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.190-191 20th Sitting, 19 May 1930

<sup>44</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl D/49 (NSDAP) "Personalbogen", n.d.

<sup>45</sup> BABL, NSDAP Membership File Walter Ortlepp (9.7.1900), SS file. See also *Das Deutsche*

Rohde, Gotha's police director, had previously been a *Fachreferent* in the Thuringian Economics Ministry, and it was alleged that he owed his appointment to his connection with the leader of Weimar's NSDAP.<sup>47</sup> It was also alleged that Polizeimajor Kehrl, the appointee to Gera, had "made no secret of his National Socialist conviction in front of his officials", although he was believed not to be a party member.<sup>48</sup> Thien, the Landrat appointed to Hildburghausen, was the only appointee said to be pro-Republic.<sup>49</sup> However, one appointee provides ground for speculation on the status of the 'unknowns'. Hellmuth Gommlich was the eventual appointee to Zella-Mehlis.<sup>50</sup> His personal file states that he did not join the NSDAP until 1 December 1931 because Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel would not let him.

"It lay in the interests of the Party that he [Gommlich], as the then leader of the police office in Zella-Mehlis, remained a non-party member."<sup>51</sup>

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*Führerlexikon 1934/1935* (Berlin, 1934), p.344

<sup>46</sup> The Thuringian DVP believed that none of the other appointees were Nazis. See BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.10 Bauer and Witzmann to von Kardoff, 27 June 1930

<sup>47</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.41 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>48</sup> ThHStAW, RStH/132 Bl.14 Brill to Menzel (RMdI), 26 May 1930

<sup>49</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.41RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>50</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI Personal File Hellmuth Gommlich Bl.86 decision of ThStMin, 24 May 1930

<sup>51</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI Personal File Hellmuth Gommlich, "Anlage zum Personalbogen", 1940.

Nevertheless, Gommlich became active for the NSDAP in June 1930.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps Frick and the NSDAP had realised that at this stage of the dispute more could be achieved by stealth, rather than by further provocation. Hellwig and Ortlepp were already NSDAP members, so any attempt by the NSDAP to annul their memberships would only have met with a cynical reaction about the motive, and allowing Gommlich to join the NSDAP would have only reinforced the belief that the Thuringian police was a hotbed of Nazism.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, it may well have been argued that it was better to let attention focus upon Hellwig and Ortlepp, so that Gommlich was ignored. Therefore, if Gommlich, as the head of the police in a small town like Zella-Mehlis, was not allowed to join the NSDAP because it served party interests, the same may well be true for those appointed to Gera, Gotha, Jena, and Hildburghausen. There is no certain way of knowing whether these appointees were Nazis, but given that Gommlich's application was turned down, yet was not dissuaded from being active for the party, suggests that what was valid for Gommlich, was also valid for the other appointees.

On 20 May, Baum defended the appointments by claiming that

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BABL, BDC NSDAP Membership File Hellmuth Gommlich (11.7.1891), OPG File.

<sup>52</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI Personal File Hellmuth Gommlich Bl.4RS "Lebenslauf", 22 May 1938; *ibid*, Bl.210 Gau Personnel Office note, 3 April 1941

<sup>53</sup> See BABL, R 18/5051 Bll.26-42 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930



cabinet opinion was unanimous. “[I]t cannot be feasible to exclude members of the NSDAP, according to capability and performance, in the occupation of state offices.” Such a policy, argued Baum, could well violate article 128, paragraph 1 of the Reich Constitution. It was “not logical” for a Nazi to be a minister of the interior, yet deny employment opportunities to suitably qualified and experienced members of the same party:

“I would like to admit that one can find, in the mere membership of the NSDAP, no reason for the objection of this appointment of a civil servant to the office of state police in Weimar.”<sup>54</sup>

Baum claimed that only Hellwig was a member of the NSDAP and that Hellwig had never been politically prominent except after his retirement. Nevertheless, Baum believed that Hellwig would exercise “the same restraint from a political point of view”.<sup>55</sup> Baum had been firmly against the appointment of both Floel and Ortlepp to the police directorships of Gera and Weimar since he believed that neither were capable of being police directors. Baum asked Wirth not to aggravate his position within the Thuringian cabinet again by objecting to the

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<sup>54</sup> BABL, R3007/241 Bll. 21-22 Baum to Wirth, 20 May 1930

<sup>55</sup> BABL, R3007/241 Bll.21-21RS Baum to Wirth, 20 May 1930

appointment of Hellwig, and especially to Ortlepp's since Ortlepp had not been appointed to a leading, but subordinate post in the directorship. Baum believed Ortlepp was qualified for the post and did not doubt that he, like his superior Hellwig, would carry out his duties in a non-political manner.<sup>56</sup>

Responding almost immediately, Wirth now believed it was the right time to comment upon these proposed appointments since he claimed that he had deliberately avoided any real discussion of the matter. Wirth regretted that he could not share Baum's view, and he stressed that the question - whether Nazis could be civil servants - was raised due to the guidelines relating to civil servants. As far as Wirth was concerned, the appointment of Nazis contradicted Number 6 of the Principles, and he repeated that this obliged the Länder to guarantee unconditionally the non-political character of the police in order to ensure that it was "an unconditionally, constitutionally loyal and reliable instrument of Republican executive power ... In this respect the conditions are no different from those with the Reichswehr". In view of the Thuringian government's divergent interpretation of the Principles, and because Wirth placed importance upon them being understood correctly, he informed Baum that all the Länder were invited to a

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<sup>56</sup> BABL, R3007/241 Bll.22-22RS Baum to Wirth, 20 May 1930

conference in the Reich Ministry of the Interior. The aim was to establish a uniform interpretation of the Principles, so that future disagreements would be prevented.<sup>57</sup>

The conference met on 28 May. All the relevant Länder ministers attended, though Frick did not.<sup>58</sup> Wirth referred to the “fundamental importance” of the question, which the appointments had provoked and reiterated his view that they were incompatible with Number 6 of the Principles. He stated that the Reich Ministry of the Interior would pay the subsidy only if the Principles were adhered to: if the Thuringian government persisted, payment would cease.

After discussing the NSDAP's revolutionary character, with the conference expressing the “unanimous view ... that the constitutionally hostile aspirations of this party must be resisted with all means”, Wirth asked Baum to revoke the appointments. If they went ahead, Wirth again reminded Baum that he would consider himself obliged to suspend the subsidy. Wirth's stand had the full backing of the conference. Baum evaded the challenge by answering that the final decision lay with the Thuringian Landtag, which would discuss the matter on 24 June. No doubt Wirth felt that he was being ‘strung along’ by Baum, although the

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<sup>57</sup> BABL, R3007/241 Bll.23-23RS Wirth to Baum, 23 May 1930

<sup>58</sup> See *The Times*, “Fascist Officials in Thuringia: Reich Request for Dismissal”, 30 May 1930

Reich Minister does not appear to have reached the end of his patience with Baum's evasiveness. He gave Baum one last chance by saying he would formally ask the Thuringian government to reverse its decision.<sup>59</sup> Wirth did so; again stressing that failure to comply would lead to suspension of the subsidy.<sup>60</sup>

To maintain the pressure upon the Thuringian government, Wirth distributed a paper entitled "Can a National Socialist be a police official?" to all the Lander, including Thuringia.<sup>61</sup> Through an analysis of statements by Hitler, Göring, Goebbels and Otto Strasser, the paper argued that the NSDAP regarded the card carrying civil servant only as "an exponent of his party" and its views within the realm of his official activity. This would not be all that important, argued the paper, if the NSDAP did not strive after "the radical change of the system of government" in a manner which was neither organic, nor gradual, but a complete reorganisation and reconstruction, so that the NSDAP would achieve "its final goal, the Third Reich". It was argued that since the NSDAP would be unable to achieve the necessary majority of votes needed to effect legal change, this complete overhaul would be brought

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<sup>59</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2694 Bl.255 W.T.B. "Konferenz der Innenminister der Länder über die Gewährung von Reichszuschüsse für Polizeizwecke", 28 May 1930

<sup>60</sup> BABL, R3007/241 Bl.26 Wirth to Baum, 30 May 1930

about through force. Therefore, it would be necessary for the NSDAP to have the instruments of state power - the police and the Reichswehr - on its side, or at the very least, neutral. In view of this, the paper concluded that was impossible for a police official to be a member of the NSDAP since membership would conflict "most gravely" with his official duties and create "indifference" towards the state's existence, welfare, and security in an official who was entrusted with the maintenance of its authority and security.<sup>62</sup>

On 2 June, the Thuringian cabinet rejected Wirth's request and decided it would to appeal to the State Supreme Court for the German Reich should Wirth carry out his threat.<sup>63</sup> Baum told Wirth that the cabinet had been unable to decide whether it should comply with the Reich Minister's request to revoke the appointments.<sup>64</sup> In retaliation, Wirth suspended payment by claiming that the Thuringian government had not observed the criteria for payment.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> BABL, R 134/90 Bl.55 Menzel to the Lander, 3 June 1930

<sup>62</sup> BABL, R 134/90 Bl.56-66 "Kann ein Nationalsozialist Polizeibeamter sein?", n.d.

<sup>63</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.193 22nd sitting of the State Ministry, 2-3 June 1930

<sup>64</sup> BABL, R 3007/241 Bl.26RS Baum to Wirth, 4 June 1930

<sup>65</sup> BABL, R 3007/241 Wirth to Baum, 6 June 1930; R 43 I/2315 Bl.303 W.T.B. "Einstellung der Zahlungen des Reich an Thuringen", 6 June 1930; See *The Times*, "Reich and Thuringia: Police subsidy stopped again", 10 June 1930

Throughout the dispute Frick had remained silent. In the Reichstag session of 17 June, he made a rare incursion into the dispute, and his speech is of some interest. Frick claimed that the suspension of the subsidy was “simply illegal and unconstitutional”, but conceded that Wirth, unlike Severing, had at least made an effort to understand the nature of the dispute. Nevertheless, Frick argued that neither Reich Minister had any evidence to suggest that Thuringia’s police had been “contaminated by National Socialism”. Turning to the May appointments, Frick claimed that the first was made on 1 April, *after* the conflict began. To what extent this is true is not known since there is no documentary evidence in support of Frick’s claim, and it is entirely feasible that Frick had said this merely to antagonise Wirth.<sup>66</sup> However, if the date of 1 April is correct, it raises the possibility that Baum and Münzel had deliberately lied to Wirth and Brüning in their repeated statements that no Nazis had been appointed. But to what extent Baum and Münzel had lied, were aware of lying and had consented to this is neither revealed in any Reich or Thuringian government documentation, nor in their personal files.<sup>67</sup> However, the change in Baum’s statements

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<sup>66</sup> In the *Bund Adler* dispute Frick had deliberately provoked Severing.

<sup>67</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/262 Personal File Erwin Baum; ThStMin/341 Personal File Herman Münzel

of May concerning appointments of Nazis, and his obvious lack of a problem with this, suggests that Baum was aware of something. Nevertheless, Frick misled the Reichstag when he denied that National Socialist principles were factors in determining the appointments.

“I did not start from the principles as they, for example in Prussia ... prevail, that one simply appoints deserving party comrades to politically important posts, ... solely because of their service to the party, [and] without the necessary education and training.”

Frick insisted that he was only concerned with appointing *Fachreferenten* (specialist advisors), and argued that this was the case with Hellwig's appointment as Weimar's police director. Frick argued it was automatically assumed that because Hellwig was a member of the NSDAP, the police in Thuringia was riddled with National Socialism. Frick blamed this assumption for leading to the re-suspension of the subsidy, whilst Prussia, which he claimed was operating an alleged *Parteibonzenwirtschaft* (spoils system for party members), was still in receipt of the Reich subsidy. Frick said that the belief that Nazis were unsuitable for police posts came from “the lie” that the NSDAP wished to overthrow the Republic by force. Frick tried to assure his listeners that this was untrue by claiming that he had given assurances to

previous Reich Interior Ministers to this effect. Wirth, Frick continued, could not exclude Nazis from office since it would have no constitutional foundation, and Nazis would become second-class citizens. Referring to his appointees, Frick claimed he had made them swear to serve in a non-political manner and to the best of their abilities, and he did not doubt otherwise. Once again, Frick uttered the Thuringian government's plea of mitigation:

"It is an absurdity ... [as] the Herr Reich Interior Minister demands - that a National Socialist may not be a police sergeant, or ... a police director also, whilst I, as a National Socialist, am the highest commander of Thuringia's police."<sup>68</sup>

Wirth, who was in the Reichstag, said little. Perhaps the pending case before the State Supreme Court urged him to be cautious lest he jeopardise the Reich's chances of winning. Rather, what Wirth did say appears to have been directed towards Frick's coalition partners in an attempt to cause dissension amongst them in the hope of isolating Frick, if not depriving him of his ministerial position. There were, Wirth argued, conservative forces within the Thuringian government who

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<sup>68</sup> *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, IV. Wahlperiode, Band 427, 177th sitting, 17 June 1930, p.5512, col.1-p.5515, col.II



were well aware of the “severity of the conflict and of the range of difficulties” which Frick’s actions had brought upon the Land. Nevertheless, Wirth said he had no intention of resuming payment of the subsidy because the pre-requisites were “invalid” due to the possibility of Nazi cells within the police and the appointment of a Nazi as a police director.<sup>69</sup>

The Thuringian government’s petition against Wirth’s suspension of the subsidy was brought before the State Supreme Court for the German Reich on 26 June. The Thuringian government argued that the administration of a police force was the sole business of a Land, just as the administration of a Land’s government was the business of no other authority, save the Land itself. The Thuringian government argued that non-payment of the subsidy could not be based upon the proposed candidates’ membership in the NSDAP. Referring to article 130 of the Reich Constitution which guaranteed freedom of political opinion and of association to all officials,<sup>70</sup> the Thuringian government argued that no disadvantage could result to a civil servant who belonged to the

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<sup>69</sup> *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, IV. Wahlperiode, Band 427, 177th sitting, 17 June 1930, pp.5518, col.I-II, p.5522, col.II

<sup>70</sup> See E.M. Hucko, *The Democratic Tradition: Four German Constitutions* (Oxford, 1987), p.178

NSDAP, and argued that Wirth's reasoning was "indefensible" and "biased".<sup>71</sup> There was no way, the Thuringian government claimed, in which two members of the NSDAP could influence its police force to the detriment of its apolitical ethos. Hence, the Land requested a temporary arrangement for payment of the subsidy. It argued that failure to secure payment would result in the quick depletion of funding for the police, and consequently the Land would have little choice but to find another way of maintaining the essential aspects of the police, e.g. ruthless cost-cutting. The only other alternative, the government suggested, would be to sack police officers and rely upon the personal service of private citizens, as permissible under article 133 of the Reich Constitution which stipulated that all citizens were obliged, according to the provisions of the legislation, to provide service for state and local authorities.<sup>72</sup>

On 17 July, the two sides met in the State Supreme Court. An attempt by Dr. Bumke, President of the Reichsgericht, to bring about a compromise between the two sides failed almost immediately. Zweigert (Reich Ministry of the Interior) "saw no political opportunity so long as the present conditions in Thuringia persisted", whilst Guyet

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<sup>71</sup> BABL, R. 43 I/2315 Bl.306 W.T.B. "Thüringens Klage beim Staatsgerichtshof", 26 June 1930

<sup>72</sup> See Hucko, *The Democratic Tradition*, p.178

(Thuringian Ministry of the Interior) referred to a prior statement that there could be no assurance of change in the future.<sup>73</sup>

Following a short statement on the Reich Ministry of the Interior's motivation for renewing the ban, the Thuringian government's argument was presented. The Land fully opposed the Reich Ministry of the Interior's view that both the Reich and the Länder were under a form of contractual obligation by being signatories to the Principles. The banning of the subsidy did not have a "legally valid" motive since its sole justification was that the civil servant appointed as police director (Hellwig) was a member of the NSDAP. This fact, it was argued, was deemed to be all the more relevant when the head of Thuringia's police (Frick) belonged to the same party. The Reich Ministry of the Interior had simply referred to membership in the NSDAP with the statement that the NSDAP sought the violent overthrow of the Republic. Guyet believed this interpretation to be "thoroughly unjustified". Therefore, the ban, if based upon these premises, was contrary to article 128 of the Reich Constitution, which said that all Germans were equal when considered for public office.<sup>74</sup> In addition to this, Number 6 of the

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<sup>73</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.8 W.T.B. "Die Sperre der Thüringer Polizeizuschüsse vor dem Staatsgerichtshof", 17 July 1930

<sup>74</sup> See Hucko, *The Democratic Tradition*, p.177

Principles was valid for uniformed police officials only; mere administration staff - implying police directors - were exempt.<sup>75</sup>

Turning to the financial costs of non-payment of the subsidy, it was claimed that if payment of the subsidy was not guaranteed the Thuringian government would be forced to abandon its claim to the maintenance of an armed state police, and instead establish a militia. Guyet argued that the suspension of the subsidy was designed to shake his government's financial stability, "perhaps even to ruin it". When the Court's decision was published in October, Guyet claimed that the Thuringian government would be 1.25 million Reichsmarks worse off. Guyet said the Reich considered the dispensation of a temporary settlement as improper since it would involve a decision by the Court, which, in the final analysis, was of a political nature. Since the constitution of this judicial body laid down that such decisions were not possible, the Thuringian government feared that this would lead to the Reich Ministry of the Interior appealing - under article 48 of the Reich Constitution - to the Reich President to issue decrees so that action could be taken against the Thuringian government, particularly with

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<sup>75</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.8-9 W.T.B. "Die Sperre der Thüringer Polizeizuschüsse vor dem Staatsgerichtshof", 17 July 1930

regard to the creation of a militia.<sup>76</sup>

The Thuringian government's other representative Dr. Koellreutter was not convinced by his government's case.<sup>77</sup> As far as he was concerned, the Court was authorised to dispense temporary settlements, and his government's proposal was to secure a temporary legal peace and secure its finances. He believed the Reich Ministry of the Interior's argument, that continued payment of the subsidy to Thuringia under the present conditions, as representing "a considerable endangering" of the Reich's finances and security, to be "doubtful", and could possibly lead to the enactment of decrees by the Reich President. If the Reich Ministry of the Interior considered the Thuringian police to be endangered, then the Reich Ministry of the Interior had to produce the evidence. Regarding whether the dispensation of a temporary settlement would involve a political decision, Koellreutter argued that all matters before the Court were political. The present issue involved the Reich Ministry of the Interior's obligation to pay the subsidy, and all the Thuringian government wanted was recognition of its right to be treated no worse than the other Länder whilst the dispute was in

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Bl.9

<sup>77</sup> This is undoubtedly a reference to his report of 17 April in which Koellreutter had told Frick that the Principles were a legally binding agreement for both sides. See above, pp.5-6

progress. The Reich Ministry of the Interior had an obligation to uphold the legal peace and normalcy in Reich-Länder relations until the Court's final decision, and so for this reason the Reich Ministry of the Interior had to recommence payment of the subsidy.<sup>78</sup>

The Reich Ministry of the Interior's argument was discussed by Zweigert. He doubted the Court's authority to dispense temporary settlements by claiming that previous settlements could not be quoted as precedents since they were issued with the consent of both parties. Furthermore, Zweigert argued that a temporary settlement would place an intolerable burden upon the Reich by forcing it to construct policy on the foundation of a settlement, which was neither definite, nor conclusive. Furthermore, all legal disputes of the Länder were political, and "[t]he prohibition of the police subsidy is a political act which is directed against *staatsfeindliche* aspirations."<sup>79</sup> Any temporary settlement concerning a political act would not decide the dispute, and Zweigert again stressed that any Reich-Thuringia rapprochement was out of the question so long as the present situation within Thuringia persisted. It was not the responsibility of the Court, he argued, to interfere in the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Bl.9

<sup>79</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.10 W.T.B. "Der Polizeirechtsstreit Thüringen-Reich vor dem Staatsgerichtshof", 17 July 1930

Reich's policies for the maintenance of security and order since this was the sole preserve of the Reich Interior Minister. If the Court could not decide whether a temporary settlement was permissible in the matter of political acts, then Zweigert believed that the Court ought to remain cautious in its judgments since "[t]he political significance is, for the Reich government, as for the Thuringian government, too great to be able to tolerate a provisional ruling."<sup>80</sup>

Wirth's Ministerialdirigent, Haentzschel, also doubted the existence of the essential criteria for a temporary settlement. He pointed out that the Thuringian government was not entitled to a monthly subsidy of 255,000 RM because the Reich was not obliged - as agreed in the Principles - to make fixed sum payments to the Länder.<sup>81</sup> Haentzschel said that the Reich's only obligation was to place 195 million RM in the Reich budget for the express purpose of police costs within the Länder.<sup>82</sup> However, Haentzschel argued that the Reich's obligation was not an individual one, but rather a collective

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., Bl.10

<sup>81</sup> This was correct. Part II, number 1 of the Principles stated that the subsidy' given to the Länder would be established by Reich-Länder discussions and the Reich budget. See BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.196 "Grundsätze für die Gewährung eines Reichszuschusses polizeiliche Zwecke"

<sup>82</sup> The subsidy was worth 203 million RM in 1927, 195 million RM in 1929, 1930, 1931, and 190 million RM in 1932. The Länder were prohibited from asking for more money whilst the agreement was in force. See BABL, R 43 I/2694 Bl.248 "Vereinbarung", appendix in, RIM to ThMdl, 15

responsibility to the Länder, which did not involve payment since it was subject to the decision of the Reichstag. Haentzschel argued that there had not been any intention to conclude a binding contract when the agreements were drafted.<sup>83</sup> Haentzschel said that under article 48 of the Reich Constitution, the Reich had the duty to place the police of each and every Land at the Reich President's disposal, so therefore the subsidy existed solely for the reason of providing the Reich President with a reliable instrument of executive power. Yet, "at no time can the Reich be expected to finance revolutionary intrigues in a Land. It is not the question of the occupation of two high police posts, but the question of *the methodical saturation of the Thuringian police with National Socialists*".<sup>84</sup>

The State Supreme Court gave its verdict the following day. Bumke argued that the Court was entitled to dispense a temporary settlement, and that such a settlement would not interfere with the working of the Reich executive in an improper manner. Article 19 of

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January 1928

<sup>83</sup> It was recognised at the time that any of the Länder might not sign the agreement. See BABL, R 43 I/2694 Bl.247 RIM to ThMdI, 15 January 1928; R 43 I/2315 Bl.194 Severing to the Länder, 5 January 1929

<sup>84</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.11 W.T.B. "Der Polizeirechtsstreit Thüringen-Reich vor dem Staatsgerichtshof", 17 July 1930, emphasis added.



the Reich Constitution allowed the Court to arbitrate in this dispute.<sup>85</sup>

However, Bumke stated that the Court could neither decide upon the Thuringian government's claim that the Reich Ministry of the Interior was obliged to pay the subsidy, nor upon the Reich's assertion that the Reich Interior Minister had a right to suspend payment. A possibility existed to order a provisional settlement, but, as Bumke pointed out, this could have occurred only if it was necessary to prevent disadvantages resulting to one party for want of a settlement. Bumke ruled that the Thuringian government's claims of financial hardship should the subsidy be suspended were "without credibility", but pointed out that the Reich Ministry of the Interior had argued that payment of the subsidy would lead to a "considerable endangering" of its internal security and order. Consequently, Bumke argued that he could not grant the Thuringian government's request when the interests of the Reich would be threatened.<sup>86</sup>

Quickly following this decision, Wirth sent another letter to the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior, which, like that of 13 May, was designed to maintain pressure by demanding partial refund of the 1929

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<sup>85</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.12 W.T.B. "Urteilsbegründung im Polizeirechtsstreit Thüringen-Reich", 18 July 1930

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., Bl.13; See *The Times*, 22 July 1930

subsidy. It was now calculated that the Thuringian government had been overpaid for 363 police officers, as opposed to the May figure of 379. Further, the amount paid for each officer was not the 1,126.54 RM previously quoted, but was revised upwards to 1,731.12 RM: a difference of 604.58 RM per officer. The Thuringian government was expected to re-pay this difference, which was 219,462.54 RM. In total, Wirth now demanded that the Thuringian government return 646,421.20 RM, an amount which constituted 21.3% of the just over 3 million RM of the subsidy the Land had received for 1929.<sup>87</sup>

This letter had been the first contact between the two sides since Wirth had banned the subsidy in early June,<sup>88</sup> and to begin with the Thuringian government simply ignored this demand also.<sup>89</sup> However, the question of a refund for the 1929 subsidy would occupy centre stage in the Reich-Thuringia feud for several months, and the Reich Chancellery would be dragged into a 'no man's land' between the two governments, where it would play a larger role than before, and one which it appears not to have particularly welcomed.

On 1 September, Baum wrote to Brüning and to Wirth

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<sup>87</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.24-25 Wirth to ThMdl, 22 July 1930

<sup>88</sup> See ThHStAW, ThMdl A/35 Bl.30 ThMdl note, 21 July 1930

<sup>89</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.17 W.T.B. "Vorläufig keine Rückzahlung der Polizeizuschüsse durch

emphatically rejecting any return of the excess subsidy for 1929 until the State Supreme Court had decided the subsidy question for 1930.<sup>90</sup> Wirth, clearly annoyed by this latest example of obstinacy, informed the Thuringian government that Reich Finance Minister Dietrich was authorised to deduct the outstanding 646,421.20 RM from the tax revenue transfers paid by the Reich to Thuringia.<sup>91</sup> That same day, the Thuringian government's representative, Münzel, drew the Reich Chancellery into the dispute when he appealed to Brüning, attempting to side-step Wirth in the process. Münzel asked State Secretary Pünder for a meeting with Brüning so that he could deliver Baum's letter of 1 September. It was hoped that Brüning could bring about a Reich cabinet resolution forcing Wirth to drop his refund demands.<sup>92</sup> A meeting with Brüning was scheduled for 9 September, but Münzel was told that his government "scarcely has the right to ask" for the Reich cabinet's intervention because if a Reich minister (*viz.* Wirth) had overstepped the bounds of his authority, it was a matter for the

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Thuringen", 16 August 1930

<sup>90</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.22-22RS Baum to Brüning, 1 September 1930; R 43 I/2316 Bl.25 Baum to Wirth, 1 September 1930

<sup>91</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl. 20 Wirth to ThStMin in W.T.B. "Schriftwechsel über die Jahresabrechnung der Thüringer Polizei", 3 September 1930; See *The Times*, "The Reich and Thuringia: cutting off supplies", 5 September 1930

<sup>92</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.15 Reich Chancellery note, 3 September 1930

Reich government alone, not the Länder. This rebuke notwithstanding, Münzel informed Pünder that his government would not be prevented in bringing this “important matter” to Brüning’s attention in order to secure a change in policy.<sup>93</sup> Münzel eventually met Brüning, and handed over Baum’s letter, but the record does not mention any discussion of the subsidy question for either 1929 or 1930.<sup>94</sup> Wirth received a copy of Baum’s letter.

On 13 September, Reich Chancellery Ministerialrat Wienstein telephoned Haentzschel to ensure that Wirth produced a written reply to Baum’s letter.<sup>95</sup> (Quite why Wienstein had believed this was necessary is not clear since Wolffs Telegraphisches Büro had published Baum’s letter on 3 September along with Wirth’s reply of the same date.<sup>96</sup>) Haentzschel said that he had not received Baum’s letter and, in any case, he, Haentzschel, could not discuss the matter with Wirth for several days. Haentzschel’s own opinion was that the Thuringian government was attempting to merge the dispute over the 1929

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<sup>93</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.16 Reich Chancellery note, 4 September 1930

<sup>94</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl. 26 Pünder to Wirth, 9 September 1930

<sup>95</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.27 Reich Chancellery note “Forderung des Reichsministeriums des Innern auf Zurückzahlung von für polizeiliche Zwecke im Jahre 1929 gezahlten Beträgen”, 18 September 1930

<sup>96</sup> See BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.20 W.T.B. “Schriftwechsel über die Jahresabrechnung der Thüringer Polizei”, 3 September 1930

subsidy, with that of 1930, into one single issue when the two were “in no way connected”, and he revealed that the Thuringian government had actually admitted that its subsidy for 1929 was “too much”.<sup>97</sup>

Wienstein persisted since Brüning would only answer Baum’s letter once he knew Wirth’s opinion. The Reich Chancellery’s remark that Brüning “would be grateful if any negotiated way out could be found”, is a possible sign of Brüning’s displeasure at being dragged into the dispute, and a reminder to Wirth that he settle the matter quickly. Whatever the significance of the statement, Wienstein discovered that Wirth had no intention of bothering the Reich cabinet with the refund question “in any way”.<sup>98</sup> Evidently Wirth considered the 1929 refund matter closed since the outstanding amount had been ‘recovered’ when Dietrich had withheld part of the Reich tax revenue transfers to the Thuringian government. Reviewing the refund dispute a month later, the Reich Chancellery noted that once Münzel was told that a change in Wirth’s view was “scarcely anticipated”, he had ceased to be a nuisance. However, the review noted that Wirth had no intention of

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<sup>97</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.27 Reich Chancellery note “Forderung des Reichsministeriums des Innern auf Zurückzahlung von für polizeiliche Zwecke im Jahre 1929 gezahlten Beträgen”, 18 September 1930

<sup>98</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.28-29 Reich Chancellery note “Meinungsverschiedenheiten zwischen Thüringen und dem Reichsministerium des Innern wegen der Polizeigelder”, 19 September

answering Baum's letter until the State Supreme Court had fixed a date to decide the subsidy dispute of 1930, and this does not appear to have influenced events since Zweigert had discovered that the Thuringian government had not asked for the refund issue to be stepped up. Concluding the review, the Reich Chancellery believed that it was "advisable" to await Wirth's written answer, and "instigate nothing" if the Thuringian government did not renew the matter.<sup>99</sup> On 6 October Brüning met Hitler, Gregor Strasser and Frick to secure Nazi support for a 'constructive opposition' in the Reichstag.<sup>100</sup> Frick attended in his capacity as leader of the NSDAP's Reichstag faction, but it appears that neither Frick nor Brüning discussed the dispute given the lack of any later reference to the meeting by either side during the course of the dispute.

Wirth's determination to stand firm against the Thuringian government intensified when, in September, Braunschweig became the

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1930

<sup>99</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.30 Reich Chancellery note "Meinungsverschiedenheiten zwischen Thüringen und dem Reichsministerium des Innern wegen der Polizeigelder", 10 October 1930

<sup>100</sup> H. Brüning, *Memoiren 1878-1934* (Stuttgart, 1970), pp.191-192; H. Pünder, *Politik in der Reichskanzlei. Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1929-1932*, edited by T. Vogelsang (Stuttgart, 1961), p.64, entry of 5 October 1930; E. Fröhlich, (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941. Teil 1, Band I. 27. Juni 1924-30. Dezember 1930* (Munich, 1987), entry of 4 October 1930, p.613

second Land to have a Nazi minister in its coalition government. Anton Franzen, Braunschweig's Nazi Interior and Education Minister, soon came to the attention of the Reich government after he was alleged to have claimed that a Nazi arrested during a riot outside the Reichstag was a member of Braunschweig's Landtag. In view of the allegation, Wirth, in a Reich cabinet meeting on 30 October, said he had the "gravest doubts" about paying November's police subsidy to Braunschweig, and that he had written to the Braunschweig government informing it that the subsidy could be suspended.<sup>101</sup> Wirth feared that payment of the subsidy to Braunschweig would lead to "disadvantageous repercussions" upon the Reich Ministry of the Interior's argument for banning Thuringia's subsidy, which would be put before the State Supreme Court. Wirth was clearly worried that the two issues would become entangled, and that the Thuringian government would naturally seek to exploit the contradiction of Wirth banning the subsidy to one Land whilst paying it to another, when both Länder possessed Nazi ministers. With this in mind, Wirth asked the cabinet's permission to suspend Braunschweig's subsidy. Brüning disagreed feeling that the "greatest caution was called for", in case Braunschweig's Landtag considered altering its Schutzpolizei "in

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<sup>101</sup> See BABL, R 43 I/2267 Bl.125 Wirth to the Braunschweig State Ministry, 27 October 1930

a radical sense", i.e. along Nazi lines.<sup>102</sup> Justice Minister Bredt felt that Franzen was guilty only of patronage towards one individual, whilst Frick had broken the Principles, so, Franzen's behaviour was not sufficient to justify withdrawal of the subsidy. Post Minister Schätzel and Transport Minister von Guérard both believed that it was not the time to interfere in Braunschweig, and Finance Minister Dietrich felt it would be best if the subsidy was transferred provisionally to Braunschweig.<sup>103</sup> Only Zweigert, Wirth's state secretary, saw no alternative but to suspend Braunschweig's subsidy.<sup>104</sup> Despite this lack of enthusiasm, Wirth reiterated his conviction that Nazis could not be civil servants, and in particular police ministers, since the Schutzpolizei was of "great significance" - the Reich had to rely upon it unconditionally. Brüning pointed out that the Reich regarded Nazis just as dangerous to the state as Communists. He proposed that Wirth and he be authorised to resolve the situation in Braunschweig, to which the cabinet gave its assent.<sup>105</sup>

The following day Münzel contacted the Reich Chancellery to see if Wirth had answered Baum's letter of 1 September. Münzel was

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<sup>102</sup> BABL, R 43 I/1447 Bl.145RS-146 Ministerbesprechung, 30 October 1930

<sup>103</sup> BABL, R 43 I/1447 Bl.146RS-147 Ministerbesprechung, 30 October 1930

<sup>104</sup> BABL, R 43 I/1447 Bl.146 Ministerbesprechung, 30 October 1930



told that Wirth had mentioned the dispute with the Thuringian government, but that the Reich cabinet had not differed from Wirth's view. Later that day, Baum spoke with Brüning on the 1929 refund question. Brüning said that he would raise the matter with the Reich cabinet, and said he was willing to speak personally with Baum once more. However, the Reich cabinet would only discuss the refund issue after Baum had met with Brüning (scheduled for 4 November). The Reich Chancellery noted that Baum was still attempting to have the Reich cabinet force Wirth to drop the issue of the 1929 refund until after the State Supreme Court had decided the subsidy dispute of 1930. However, Baum's wish was "out of date [*überholt*]" since Reich Finance Minister Dietrich had been withheld the 646,421.54 RM from Thuringia.<sup>106</sup> Once again the Thuringian government had failed to achieve any reversal of its situation. The subsidy for 1930 had been withheld in early June, and in September the Land had almost 650,000 RM withheld because of its refusal to refund just over one-fifth of the 1929 subsidy. From the perspective of the Thuringian government insult had been added to injury, and its financial situation threatened

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<sup>105</sup> BABL, R 43 I/1447 Bll.147-147RS Ministerbesprechung, 30 October 1930

<sup>106</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.31-32 Reich Chancellery note "Polizeigelder und Thüringen, insbesondere Weigung Thüringens, für 1929 zuviel erhaltene Zuschüsse zurückzuzahlen", 3

to deteriorate even further.

In late October, Wirth informed the Reich Chancellery that a reduction in the subsidy was “unavoidable”, even though the amount for 1927 to 1932 had already been fixed by Reich-Länder negotiations. Worried that the interior ministries of the Länder would oppose any reduction, Wirth drafted a letter (in agreement with Dietrich), which Brüning would send to the Länder explaining the situation.<sup>107</sup> Wirth was said to envisage a 10% reduction of the subsidy, although he and Dietrich had not yet decided how much was “absolutely necessary in the interest of the Reich’s finances”. It was certainly recognised that the subsidy was of “great significance” for the Länder - Prussia’s subsidy amounted to 50% of its costs, whilst the smaller Länder received between 60% and 65%.<sup>108</sup> The *Vossische Zeitung* earlier in the year had claimed that Thuringia’s subsidy was as high as 90%,<sup>109</sup> but to

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November 1930

<sup>107</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2694 Bl.242 Wirth to Pünder, 16 October 1930

<sup>108</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2694 Bl.243-244 Pünder to Brüning, “Rundschreiben an die Ministerpräsidenten der Länder wegen Herabsetzung des Reichszuschusses für polizeiliche Zwecke im Haushaltsjahr 1931”, 29 October 1930

<sup>109</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.203 *Vossische Zeitung* “Severing bricht Beziehungen ab”, 19 March 1930. H. Patze and W. Schlesinger (eds.), *Geschichte Thüringens*. Teil 5(ii), (Cologne/Vienna, 1978), p.510, also claims 90%. H. Jacob, *German Administration since Bismarck: Central Authority versus Local Authority* (New Haven, 1963), p.89, claims 80%. Neither work cites a source for the amounts quoted, nor explain why it was so high.

what extent the subsidy actually covered the Thuringia Ministry of the Interior's costs is not clear from the documentation. The Wirth-Dietrich letter sent by Brüning cited the Reich's "extraordinary serious financial position" as the reason why it was not possible to overlook the subsidy when cut backs in other areas was "an unavoidable obligation". There had to be "a decrease in relevant expenditure ... and in modest limits [*mässige Grenzen*]". However, it was pointed out that although a reduction in the 1931 subsidy (195 million RM) was "essential", a cut in the subsidy for the remainder of financial year of 1930 "must be disregarded".<sup>110</sup>

Although the reaction of the Thuringian government to this letter is not extant, it can only have further intensified its distrust and suspicion of the Reich government and its motives. It will be remembered that the financial constraints imposed on the Länder by the Principles were already strict. The subsidy was to fall from 203 million RM in 1927, to 195 million RM in 1929, 1930, 1931, to 190 million RM in 1932, and that the Länder were prohibited from asking for more money whilst the agreement was in force.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2694 Bl.244-245 Brüning to the Minister-Präsidenten der Länder, 29 October 1930

<sup>111</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2694 Bl.248 "Vereinbarung", appendix in, RIM to ThMdl, 15 January 1928

Brüning met Baum on 4 November. Brüning promised to influence Wirth's Ministry so that proceedings before the State Supreme Court "*would in no way be distorted on the side of the Reich*". Brüning then talked with Zweigert, who was told about Brüning's agreement (*Absprache*) with Baum. Zweigert believed that Baum's wish could be realised, since he was in complete agreement with Wirth and would do "his utmost" to expedite matters regarding the Court. The Reich Chancellery's opinion was that "[n]othing is to be instigated ... for the time being".<sup>112</sup>

Once again the Reich-Thuringia dispute over the subsidy (for 1930 at least) appeared to have reached an amicable stage from which a settlement satisfying both governments could be achieved. Face to face discussions, like those of April, and mainly initiated by the Thuringian government, had helped to reduce tension. Yet this apparent *détente*, like its predecessor seven months earlier, was placed in jeopardy by events within Thuringia.

As part of the Reich Ministry of the Interior's attempt to support its claim of political malpractice within the Thuringian police, it had steadily been collecting evidence on conditions within the

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<sup>112</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.60 Reich Chancellery note, 4 November 1930, original emphasis

service. In May and June, Hermann Brill, of the Thuringian SPD, had supplied Wirth and Menzel with material on NSDAP activity within the Thuringian police.<sup>113</sup> Wirth also received, via a third party, information detailing alleged NSDAP infiltration and sympathy within the service.<sup>114</sup> Testimonies from Thuringian police officers and private citizens had supplied the Reich Ministry of the Interior with sufficient material to compile a 40 page deposition for the State Supreme Court in late September,<sup>115</sup> and a further 20 page deposition in early December.<sup>116</sup>

On the basis of the evidence collected Wirth believed that as soon as Frick became Minister he had immediately taken steps “to undermine the Thuringian Schutzpolizei through [the] methodical introduction of National Socialist employees”. To achieve this Frick abolished the previous method of personnel management within the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior since the previous *Polizeidezerent* (head of department) was not a Nazi, but belonged to the right of the DVP and

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<sup>113</sup> See ThHStAW, RStH/132 Bll.13-16 Brill to Menzel, 26 May 1930; BABL, R 18/5051 Bll.46 Wirth to Brill, 6 June 1930; R 18/5051 Bll.20-22 Brill to Wirth, 17 June 1930

<sup>114</sup> See BABL, R 18/5051 Bll.26-44 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930

<sup>115</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.33-52RS Wirth to Bumke (StGH), 23 September 1930

<sup>116</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.99-108RS Wirth to Bumke (StGH), 1 December 1930

was therefore not considered "sufficiently 'trustworthy' ".<sup>117</sup> In his place Frick appointed Rühle von Lilienstern, an ex-leader of the state police who had conducted personnel policies against pro-Republic officers, and Polizeihauptmann Fiedler, a known Nazi.

In order to carry out Frick's order of 28 January that he personally examine all personnel matters, lists of applicants to the police were routinely passed to him. The Reich Ministry of the Interior discovered that the applicants were not only officially vetted by Rühle von Lilienstern and Fiedler, who were both identified as NSDAP *Vertrauensleute* (confidants), but also that the candidates' political opinions were investigated unofficially by the NSDAP since Frick had handed these lists over to the party.<sup>118</sup> As a result there were said to be many examples of officers appointed due to party political reasons, without reference to their ability and/or experience. For example, the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior's *Fachreferent* doubted Kehrl's technical qualifications, yet Kehrl was appointed as Gera's Police Director since he was close to the NSDAP and Rühle von Lilienstern.<sup>119</sup> The promotion of Altenburg's head of police was said to have

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<sup>117</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.33 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930; R 43 I/2316 Bl.102RS Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>118</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.33RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

contravened Thuringia's regulations and due to his political relations with the higher ranks of Thuringia's police force.<sup>120</sup> A candidate's application to join the police was rejected due to his physical condition, yet through the NSDAP's confidants the candidate (a Nazi) was introduced to Rühle von Lilienstern, and the candidate was appointed.<sup>121</sup> Another police officer was appointed despite the availability of better-qualified candidates and that a police check had revealed him to be a "zealous" Nazi.<sup>122</sup> A transfer was offered to an officer by the Sonderhausen NSDAP on condition he join the NSDAP, and the officer was said to have joined the party.<sup>123</sup> Prior to Gommlich's appointment as the Police Director of Zella-Mehlis, its police force was considered pro-Republic, but after his posting there had been a "sudden change". It was alleged that Gommlich had openly said that he wanted to use his influence in the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior for the purposes of promotion, and officers were said to have felt compelled to move closer to the NSDAP as a consequence. Gommlich's influence was said to have

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<sup>119</sup> R 43 I/2316 BII.102RS-103RS Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>120</sup> R 43 I/2316 BII.107RS-108 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>121</sup> R 43 I/2316 BI.34 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>122</sup> R 43 I/2316 BI.37 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>123</sup> R 43 I/2316 BI.102 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

already been felt in several instances.<sup>124</sup> For example, a candidate had continually tried to join the police in Zella-Mehlis, but had always been rejected since police checks had revealed him as a Nazi. After Gommlich's arrival in Zella-Mehlis, the candidate was appointed.<sup>125</sup> During the *Verstaatlichung* of the Thuringian police, politically 'undesirable' officers did not remain in service, sometimes without reason, sometimes with "apparent reasons" (*Scheingründen*). One officer was retired because he had joined the *Deutsche Staatspartei* (DStP). Medical excuses were also used against politically undesirable officials.<sup>126</sup>

Wirth and the Reich Ministry of the Interior believed that as a consequence of such personnel policies Nazi cells had formed within the Thuringian police. The centre of this network was Frick in the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior. The first echelon (*Staffel*) beneath Frick was the NSDAP's six Landtag representatives, who were each 'allocated' a police district. The second echelon consisted of all areas where the various police forces (state, communal, etc.) had more than 20 officers. The third echelon utilised all officers and officials as

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<sup>124</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.40RS-41 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>125</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.34RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>126</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.101-104 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930



informants.<sup>127</sup> This system was believed to operate “entirely without let or hindrance”, and was blamed for the undermining of morale within the police.<sup>128</sup> Many officers were ordered to spy upon colleagues who held left-wing views,<sup>129</sup> and one officer was alleged to have confiscated and opened the personal correspondence of subordinates in order to discover their political views.<sup>130</sup> Allendorf, a dentist from Gotha, was identified as an important part of this system. “A whole series of officials have direct dealings with Dr. Allendorf and give him a running report on events within the police”. Allendorf was believed to pass this information to confidants within Thuringian Ministry of the Interior, and use his influence to secure promotion for officers who had been subjected to disciplinary action.<sup>131</sup> Köhler, an NSDAP Stadtrat member, ran the confidant’s system in Hildburghausen. Köhler was in direct contact with Hellwig, Weimar’s Nazi police director, and reported to him about conditions in Hildburghausen Schutzpolizei. Köhler was alleged to have told Hellwig how many officers were Nazis and how many were

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<sup>127</sup> R 18/5051 Bll.28-30 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930

<sup>128</sup> R 18/5051 Bl.32 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930

<sup>129</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bll.104RS-105 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>130</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.105 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>131</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bll.35-35RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930; R 43 I/2316 Bll.106-107 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

Republicans.<sup>132</sup> Köhler was also believed to have used his influence to assist Nazis with promotion and also to have a known anti-Nazi official excluded.<sup>133</sup> There had also been systematic attempts to influence the Thuringian police in a Nazi spirit, since Nazi newspapers were left in offices,<sup>134</sup> and offices were used by Nazis to recruit and carry out propaganda activities for the NSDAP.<sup>135</sup> Kehrl was said to have ordered all the police districts in Gera to purchase Nazi newspapers and remove pro-Republic newspapers,<sup>136</sup> and it was also claimed that Jena's police had withdrawn its notices from pro-Republic newspapers so that the population would have to read Nationalist or Nazi newspapers.<sup>137</sup> It was said that the use of the 'Hitler salute' by officials - irrespective of rank - was an everyday occurrence. For example, Hellwig, the Nazi police director of Weimar, was said to greet his officials in this manner.<sup>138</sup>

The Police School at Sonderhausen operated at the third level of the informer system and had a "particular significance" since all

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<sup>132</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.35RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>133</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.35RS-36 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>134</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.47RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>135</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.105-106 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>136</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.39RS-40 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>137</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.103RS Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>138</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.38 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

candidates for the Thuringian police were trained there.<sup>139</sup> Witthöft, the director, had been active in völkisch circles since 1924, and by 1930 was “an absolute adherent [*Anhänger*]” of the NSDAP. Witthöft was said to see it his duty to replace pro-Republic officials with Nazis, and appoint anti-Republic officials for non-technical subjects so that police candidates would be instructed in an anti-Republic manner.<sup>140</sup> Civilian teachers were said to have encountered “a reactionary character [*Gepräge*]” in the school.<sup>141</sup> Witthöft had made no secret of his personnel policy, saying that political membership, not ability, was “the most important and decisive question” determining the calling up [*Einberufung*] of officials to the police school.<sup>142</sup> Three officers appointed as teachers at the school were said to owe their appointments solely to their relationship with Witthöft or the NSDAP,<sup>143</sup> whilst 12 police candidates appointed to school were identified as Nazis.<sup>144</sup> Two officers were promoted to the rank of *Polizeihauptmann* without fulfilling the

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<sup>139</sup> R 18/5051 Bl.30, 32 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930

<sup>140</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.44RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>141</sup> R 18/5051 Bl.30 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930

<sup>142</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.99RS-100 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>143</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.45 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>144</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.45RS-46RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930; R 18/5051 Bl.32 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930

regulation of a successful year at a higher police school.<sup>145</sup> A policeman was denied access to an officer's course since his wife's social class was not considered sufficiently high enough (it was alleged that Witthöft had blamed the poor quality of officers' wives on the 1918 Revolution).<sup>146</sup> A candidate was refused admission to the school after the NSDAP in Altenberg had alleged that his parents read the *Ostthüringer Zeitung*, a social democratic newspaper, even though a previous police check into the candidate's background had revealed nothing.<sup>147</sup> Officials who made pro-Republic remarks were reprimanded and spied upon,<sup>148</sup> and candidates were also spied upon.<sup>149</sup> In addition, pro-Republic officials were subjected to a social boycotting.<sup>150</sup>

Wirth estimated that on the basis of this cell formation within the Thuringian police 50-60% of its officers and at least 300 officials were followers of the NSDAP.<sup>151</sup> The leader of the Schutzpolizei in

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<sup>145</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.34RS-35 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>146</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.101 Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930

<sup>147</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.34 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>148</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.100-100RS Wirth to Bumke, 1 December 1930; R 43 I/2316 Bl.45-45RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>149</sup> R 18/5051 Bl.32 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930

<sup>150</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.47 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>151</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.37-37RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

Weimar believed to be closely connected to the NSDAP,<sup>152</sup> and many officers were said to be members, adherents or confidants of the NSDAP.<sup>153</sup> Wirth considered these cells to be “subversion cells” (*Zersetzungszellen*) since he believed it was incompatible with the Reich constitution to employ officials in the state police who belonged to a party which openly professed violent overthrow and elimination of that constitution. “The formation of cells is an open secret within the ranks of the state police”, and pointed out that Frick himself had confirmed the existence of these “subversion cells”. Wirth argued that if a police minister knew of such “subversion cells”, and tolerated their existence, then the police was “no longer the demanded non-political instrument by the Reich government, and it cannot be demanded of the Reich to subsidise such a police [force]”.<sup>154</sup>

To what extent this material corresponded to the actual state of affairs within the Thuringian police is not known given that the vast majority of the evidence came from personal testimony. However, the Thuringian government's near paranoid allegations that Wirth was

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<sup>152</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.41RS Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>153</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.42RS-44 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

<sup>154</sup> R 43 I/2316 Bl.37RS-38 Wirth to Bumke, 23 September 1930

engaged in a conspiracy with the Reichsbanner against the Land, it could be argued, revealed Thuringian fears that a damaging and accurate picture of conditions within its police force had indeed been uncovered by the Reich Ministry of the Interior. It could also be argued that the Thuringian government's failure to have the refund question dropped, and that the 1931 subsidy was to be reduced, were additional factors in prompting the outburst.

The first notice alleged that the examination of witnesses had demonstrated that Wirth's claims were "almost entirely incorrect" and that he was the victim of an "extensive system of informers and denouncers inside the Thuringian police."<sup>155</sup> Baum argued that the letter of Reichsbanner Gaugeschäftsführer Dietzel to an Obersekretär Müller, and which enclosed a questionnaire about NSDAP activity in the police school at Sonderhausen, proved beyond a doubt that Wirth had received "thoroughly false material from the Reichsbanner". Baum then added an intriguing rejoinder: "Whether he [Wirth] has given the order for the procurement of such materials shall never be established with any certainty."<sup>156</sup> Baum's second notice claimed that a police raid

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<sup>155</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI A/35 Bl.54 "Pressenotiz" attributed to Baum, 11 November 1930

<sup>156</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdI A/35 Bl.56-57 "Pressenotiz", 11 November 1930. Dietzel had supplied material for Hauff's letter of 6 June to Wirth. See BABL, R 18/5051 Bl.30 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930

on the Reichsbanner's offices and Müller's private rooms had provided further proof of an informants' headquarters [*Spitzenzentrale*], which had "obviously" supplied Wirth with material. These police officers, Baum continued, had violated their oath of secrecy "in the grossest manner" and would face dismissal from office or other disciplinary action. It was revealed that these officers had not sent the material direct to Wirth, but via the Reichsbanner and a Kriminalkommissar in Erfurt's police headquarters. As with the first press notice, Baum ended the second with an attempt to portray Thuringia at the mercy of a conspiracy by claiming that the allegations in Nazi newspapers, that Prussian government offices had been ordered to spy on Thuringia, were becoming more plausible.<sup>157</sup>

Frick entered the fray by appealing to the loyalty of his police officers. Subtly threatening those staff who considered helping the Reich Ministry of the Interior by recapping the punishment, which had befallen those who had already done so, Frick claimed that his staff condemned "such treasonous action", and that the "prevailing majority" supported his Ministry. Any police officer who succumbing to "insinuations, promises, and enticements" would receive "the most

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<sup>157</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl A/35 Bll.58-59 "Pressenotiz" attributed to Baum, 12 November 1930, original emphasis

grievous official punishment” and possible summary dismissal. Any officer who acquired information on any attempt to subvert the force from within or without was reminded that it was “his official obligation” to immediately report it to the Ministry in Weimar.<sup>158</sup>

Baum sent these notices to Brüning in an attempt to have him pressurise Wirth. Baum failed. Brüning merely acknowledged receipt,<sup>159</sup> and Wirth denied that he had instructed the Reichsbanner to procure information for him.<sup>160</sup>

Haentzschel, who had been present at their examinations, confirmed that witnesses felt intimidated. They felt “extremely harassed under these circumstances, and to some extent, feel their lives threatened on the basis the behaviour of the Nazis in Weimar.” The Thuringian government had admitted that witnesses would feel intimidated by these actions and refuse to testify as a result. The State Supreme Court’s Reporter (Berichterstatter) readily believed the claim of Thuringian government that this “was not intended”.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> ThHStAW, ThMdl A/35 Bl.60-61 “Pressenotiz” attributed to Frick, 13 November 1930

<sup>159</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.67 Baum to Brüning, 13 November 1930; R 43 I/2316 Bl.76 Reich Chancellery note “Verwaltungsstreitfahren des Landes Thüringen gegen das Deutsche Reich wegen der Zahlung von Polizeikostenzuschüsse”, 18 November 1930

<sup>160</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.61 Reich Chancellery note, 13 November 1930



As part of the State Supreme Court's investigations Fritz Sauckel, Gauleiter of the Thuringian NSDAP, was called as a witness. He claimed that his party had not wielded any "illegal and forbidden influence upon the composition and activity of the police."<sup>162</sup> This, he claimed, was contrary to party policy since the NSDAP sought to achieve its goals by constitutional means. However, Sauckel said that he had argued to Frick that NSDAP members could not be excluded from a civil service career. Frick had agreed that Nazis could be admitted like any other citizens, provided that they fulfilled the relevant criteria. Frick was said to have "expressly emphasised" that NSDAP members had to fulfill their official duties. Sauckel claimed that there were very few NSDAP members within the police, perhaps no more than 20.<sup>163</sup> Sauckel denied that there was any deliberate recruitment of NSDAP members into the police, and claimed that after the party's success in the Landtag election it had received a hundred petitions from members asking for party recommendation for appointment in the police. Sauckel had passed these to the Ministry of

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<sup>161</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.82-83 Haentzschel memorandum, 17 November 1930

<sup>162</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.10-10RS Witness Examination of Fritz Sauckel, 13 November 1930

<sup>163</sup> See ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.12 Witness Examination of Fritz Sauckel, 28 November 1930

the Interior, but said that the NSDAP was later surprised "how little success they had."<sup>164</sup> Frick had been approached in the hope that he could change this, but Frick said he could not help since he had to follow regulations. Sauckel told the investigation said that in "one or two" instances Frick had forwarded lists of applicants for the police to him. Sauckel claimed that Frick had asked him to do this since it would damage the NSDAP's image if party members were appointed ahead of applicants already under consideration. Sauckel said that he made inquiries "on one side or another" about the applicants' party membership and their reputation. The information which came back was "very different" - a collection of not knowns, members of various parties, or non-party members. It was "seldom the case", argued Sauckel, that applicants were NSDAP members. Anyhow, Sauckel claimed that the NSDAP was never told of the reason for the inquiry, and that the party had answered to the best of its knowledge. It certainly was not the case, Sauckel stressed, that the NSDAP automatically had a good reputation, whilst all other parties had a bad one. The lists were returned to Frick, and the only comments added were the applicant's reputation and what party he belonged to, if

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<sup>164</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.11 Witness Examination of Fritz Sauckel, 13 November 1930; BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.83 Haentzschel memorandum, 17 November 1930

any.<sup>165</sup> Sauckel revealed that Frick believed that there was an “unspoken stipulation” that SPD members belonged in the police, and so it had a left-wing bias. Frick “considered it necessary in the interests of impartiality that members of the National Socialist Party, and of the bourgeois parties, were appointed in corresponding proportion.” However, Sauckel stated that Frick had “stressed again and again that, above all, it depends upon the personal reliability and ability [of the applicant], and for this reason, the acceptance of National Socialists with [an] unfavourable reputation which could be prejudicial to the reputations of the party and the police must be hindered.”<sup>166</sup>

The Court reporter proposed examining Frick to hear whether he had actually passed the names of applicants to the NSDAP for vetting. Haentzschel objected on the basis the investigation could only hear testimony from third parties, not those under investigation. Following the use of delaying tactics, including having his ministry appeal to the Court, Haentzschel delayed Frick’s appearance until 27 November, with the proviso that it was conditional upon the Court’s

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<sup>165</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.11 Witness Examination of Fritz Sauckel, 13 November 1930

<sup>166</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.11RS Witness Examination of Fritz Sauckel, 13 November 1930; See Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.12 Witness Examination of Fritz Sauckel, 28 November 1930

acceptance.<sup>167</sup> The Thuringian government had given permission for Frick to appear as a witness in mid-October.<sup>168</sup>

Frick testified that soon after coming into office he had reserved the more important personnel questions, including the appointment and promotion of civil servants and police officials, for his own personal decision.<sup>169</sup> He claimed that social democratic viewpoints were “hardly compatible with the duties of a police official” since they led to extreme pacifism or class war aspirations. It was with these considerations in mind, that Frick claimed he had passed the list of applicants on to Sauckel, whose confidentiality, Frick claimed, could be relied upon to produce details about the applicant’s personality, character, reputation, and political standpoint. He argued that aptitude for the job was of more consideration than the applicant’s political allegiance. Frick claimed that although he had used Sauckel’s information in reaching his decisions, he alone had made the decisions. As a consequence of the NSDAP’s investigations, 4 or 5 names were crossed off a list of 50. Frick rejected the view that he wanted “to

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<sup>167</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.83-87 Haentzschel memorandum, 17 November 1930; R 43 I/2316 Bl.81 Zweigert to Punder, 18 November 1930

<sup>168</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.236 30th sitting of the State Ministry, 14 October 1930

<sup>169</sup> See ThHStAW, ThMdl A/28 Bl.25 Frick to all departments and leader of the police, 28 January 1930

recast the Thuringian state police into a National Socialist *Parteitruppe*” since he believed that most candidates did not belong to any party. He claimed that since he was an outsider (from Bavaria), he had to rely upon local knowledge from the beginning.<sup>170</sup> Paul Hennicke, SS-*Stürmbannführer* and an NSDAP Landtag representative,<sup>171</sup> was one of the locals Frick relied upon because of his “personal and local knowledge”. When asked why he had used these unofficial means, Frick answered that official police reports were “colourless and often restricted themselves to the formal ‘not known’”. Frick believed it was more “purposeful and efficient” to use his ‘confidants’ since he thought that the police did not possess the necessary resources to submit a report which was “satisfactory and efficient”. Frick denied that he had an ‘open door’ policy for the recruitment of NSDAP members into the police. Only a “negligible fraction” were employed - the vast majority were rejected.

“In the sanctioning of the candidates lists I allowed myself to be led by the

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<sup>170</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bll.13-14 Witness Examination of Wilhelm Frick, 8 November 1930

<sup>171</sup> See ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/46-1 Bll.169-170 Personal File Paul Hennicke; See BABL, R 18/5051 Bl.30 Hauff to Wirth, 6 June 1930, for the claim that Hennicke had been given ‘responsibility’ for Gotha’s police district

thought that destructive elements must be kept away from the police and that a German conviction [*Gesinnung*] was required, because otherwise the danger of a failure of the police in a serious case and its general contamination existed."<sup>172</sup>

By mid-November the examination of witnesses had finished, although the State Supreme Court was still collecting material.<sup>173</sup> Both the Reich Ministry of the Interior and the Thuringian government were now waiting for the discussion before the Court, scheduled for 20 January 1931.<sup>174</sup> But once again, the uneasy peace between the two governments almost collapsed.

Baum had complained to Brüning that Wirth had written to the Thuringian government saying that he wanted the Court to collect more evidence. Baum believed that he had an agreement with the Reich government that Wirth was not to file any more applications for evidence, and the Court Reporter himself felt that no more material was necessary. Baum believed Wirth was trying to delay matters since "the most thorough evidence" had been collected. The relevant

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<sup>172</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/197 Bl.14 Witness Examination of Wilhelm Frick, 28 November 1930

<sup>173</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.81 Zweigert to Pünder, 18 November 1930

<sup>174</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.91 Reich Chancellery note "Verfahren vor dem Staatsgerichtshof zwischen dem Reichsministerium des Innern und Thüringen wegen Zahlung der Polizeikostenzuschüsse", 27 November 1930

specialist (Sachbearbeiter) in the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior had argued that none of Wirth's assertions "correspond[ed] to the actual facts", and that some had already been dealt with. Brüning was asked to assert his influence and make Wirth retract his request since Baum and the rest of the Thuringian government wanted the court case to happen "without fail".<sup>175</sup>

Brüning took Baum's concern seriously. Pünder talked with Zweigert, and it emerged that Wirth's letter had been sent without any consideration to the agreement (of 4 November) to hasten the resolution of the dispute. Zweigert had had "strong doubts" about the letter and had "urgently recommended" to Wirth that Brüning would like to be told about the letter before it was sent. Zweigert was "very surprised" that this had not happened since Wienstein, who was usually "kept constantly informed", had received "no announcements whatsoever" about the letter.<sup>176</sup>

In reply, Brüning said Baum's complaint was of "particular value" due to Wirth's failure to keep him informed. Brüning had spoken with Wirth, and Baum was told that the Reich would not

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<sup>175</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.95-95RS Baum to Brüning, 2 December 1930. Wirth had sent another 20 page deposition to the State Supreme Court the previous day. See Bll.99-108RS Wirth to Bumke (StGH), 1 December 1930

<sup>176</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.96-96RS Reich Chancellery note, 5 December 1930

initiate any action, which would lead to a postponement of the court case. Baum was also told that Wirth's request did not involve any drawn-out statements, so the date set for the appearance in the Court - 20 January 1931 - was not in doubt. Both sides, Brüning warned, had to abide by the date.<sup>177</sup> The State Supreme Court was already making preparations.<sup>178</sup>

In the period before Christmas, the dispute underwent its final development. The Reich Chancellery files suggest that the Reich government's determination was beginning to flag, possibly even with Wirth himself. Evidence for this comes from "purely personal discussions" between Pünder, Zweigert and Bumke on the dispute, and which, to some extent, had been defined by Wirth and Brüning. These talks had resulted in Bumke visiting Brüning to offer his services as an 'honest broker' and negotiate a compromise, which would not encounter "fundamental disapproval" from either government. Brüning welcomed the move, but told Bumke that due to the details of the conflict he must meet Wirth. That same day (18 December) Brüning, Pünder, Wirth and Zweigert discussed this development and

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<sup>177</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 BlI.97-97RS Brüning to Baum, 10 December 1930

<sup>178</sup> ThHStAW, Landtag von Thüringen/30 Bumke to ThStMin, 15 December 1930



approved Bumke's initiative, but it was suggested to Wirth that he saw to it that a draft compromise was drawn up.<sup>179</sup>

Zweigert drew up a plan that afternoon.<sup>180</sup> Wirth stressed, however, that although he approved of Bumke's intervention, he was "in no way" committed to the details. Wirth emphasised that the details must be discussed, and the situation had to be avoided that they came from him. Bumke was to be informed of the details only verbally, and only by Brüning. Later that evening Bumke, Brüning, and Pünder discussed the details. Bumke approved of this "suitable foundation for his compromise proposal", and said he would approach Baum in the same unofficial manner "to determine the view of the other party". Bumke would then invite representatives from the Reich government (Wirth, Zweigert, and Pünder) and from the Thuringian government (Baum, Frick, and Guyet) to the State Supreme Court.<sup>181</sup>

Zweigert's agreement contained 4 points. First, the Reich and Thuringian governments were to agree that the question of whether the NSDAP pursued revolutionary (*umstürzlerische*) or punishable (*strafbare*) aims was not to be decided in the settlement. Furthermore,

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<sup>179</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.109 Reich Chancellery note, 18 December 1930

<sup>180</sup> Pünder claims that he was co-author of the draft. See Pünder, *Politik in der Reichskanzlei*, p.82, entry of 21 December 1930

neither side was to refer to this question in their reaction to the settlement. Second, the Reich government was to raise the ban on the subsidy, and at a later date re-pay the money withheld, but without interest. In response, the Thuringian government was to drop its application to the Court to have the Reich government pay the subsidy. Third, the Thuringian government was to undertake the obligation that the non-political character of the Schutzpolizei, like that of the individual officer, was guaranteed unconditionally. In addition, the appointment, promotion and transfer of police officials, would not be managed according to party politics, but only due to professional interest and suitability. Both the Reich and Thuringian governments were to agree that the "fundamental rejection" of social democrats was just as "incompatible" as the passing on lists of applicant to a political party for the purpose of vetting political allegiances. The Thuringian government was to guarantee the fulfillment of this condition "in its entirety". Last, the question of whether the Principles were a legal obligation or a political commitment was not to be pre-judged by the compromise.<sup>182</sup>

The Thuringian government quickly accepted Bumke's

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<sup>181</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.109RS-110 Reich Chancellery note, 18 December 1930

<sup>182</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.111-111RS Reich Chancellery note, 18 December 1930

initiative.<sup>183</sup> Both sides met in Leipzig on 22 December, and although “[o]ccasionally everything was rather critical”,<sup>184</sup> the two governments agreed to the plan. Zweigert’s proposal underwent just one alteration. The Thuringian government rejected the clause that the Reich should re-pay the withheld subsidy without interest. The conflict, which had begun 9 ½ months earlier, had finally ended.<sup>185</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter examined Frick’s policy towards his police force by examining the ‘Police Subsidies dispute’ between the Thuringian government and the Reich Ministry of the Interior. It looked at the beginnings of the dispute and the reasons why Reich Interior Minister Carl Severing felt he had to ban the subsidy. It then considered the initial resolution of the dispute under Reich Interior Minister Joseph Wirth, the *volte-face* of the Thuringian government when it openly appointed Nazis to the Thuringian police and how it tried unconvincingly to justify this move. Attention then focused upon the State Supreme Court’s role in the dispute, its defeat of the Thuringian

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<sup>183</sup> Pünder, *Politik in der Reichskanzlei*, p.70, entry of 21 December 1930

<sup>184</sup> Pünder, *Politik in der Reichskanzlei*, p.83, entry of 24 December 1930

<sup>185</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 W.T.B. Bl.116 “Annahme des Vergleichsvorschlags im Streitverfahren zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und Thüringen”, 22 December 1930

government's attempts to force the Reich Ministry of the Interior reverse its position, the Court's role in uncovering alleged Nazi infiltration of the Thuringian police at all levels, and the role how the Court's President eventually brokered a compromise deal between the tow sides in which the Reich subsidy was paid, but that in return Frick's plans were defeated when he had to guarantee the non-political nature of his officers and the police force as a whole.

Chapter Five:

*Frick as Education Minister*

## The Politicisation of Educational and Cultural Life in Thuringia

The review of Frick's career has shown that Hitler had sufficient justification to consider Frick as the 'right man for the job', given Frick's long career in police administration. Even so, Frick had no experience of educational or cultural matters. Theoretically, this posed a handicap. In practice, steps were taken to overcome this. The appointments of Ortlepp, Hellwig and Gommlich to police directorships have shown how Frick favoured the assignment of key posts within his ministerial jurisdiction to NSDAP members or sympathisers; Thuringia's Education Ministry would also experience an *apparatchik* policy.

### Frick's Personnel Policy: The Appointment of the National Socialist *Fachreferenten*

To assist with the transformation of Thuringia into a model of Nazi government<sup>1</sup> Frick appointed two *Fachreferenten* (specialist advisors) within his first week in office. Gustav Zunkel was assigned

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<sup>1</sup> W. Frick, "6 Monate nationalsozialistischer Minister in Thüringen", *Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch*, 5. Jahrgang, 1931, p.177

responsibility for high schools, colleges and the University of Jena; Fritz Wächtler was selected for *Volkschulen* and *Berufsschulen*.<sup>2</sup> Both Zunkel and Wächtler were high ranking Nazis. Zunkel was the leader of the SA in Thuringia,<sup>3</sup> whilst Wächtler, it will be remembered, was one of the six NSDAP representatives elected to the Landtag in December 1929.<sup>4</sup>

Party credentials, however, were not the sole criteria for eligibility for appointment. As with Frick's police appointments, technical expertise was also essential. Zunkel and Wächtler were both experienced teachers, and would be in a position to counsel Frick on which policies would be necessary to create a more nationalist curriculum, and they were as *Fachreferenten* entitled to participate in departmental meetings and examine the Ministry's documentation.<sup>5</sup>

Frick also appointed Hans Severus Ziegler<sup>6</sup> as *Fachreferent* for

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<sup>2</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/210 Bl.2 Frick to Zunkel and Wachtler, 30 January 1930

<sup>3</sup> See ThHStAW, RStH/205 Bl.74 SA-Gruppe Thüringen (ed.), *SA im Kampfum Deutschland* (Weimar, 1937); *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon 1934/1935* (Berlin, 1934), p.548. No file exists for Zunkel in the ThHStAW.

<sup>4</sup> *Wer ist's?* 10. Auflage (Berlin, 1935), p.1665; *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon*, p.510

<sup>5</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/210 Bl.2 Frick to Zunkel and Wächtler, 30 January 1930

<sup>6</sup> *Wer ist's?*, p.1782; *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon*, p.546

theatrical, cultural and learned (*wissenschaftlich*) matters. Ziegler was also another high ranking Thuringian Nazi. He had been deputy Gauleiter since 1925, and editor of *Der Nationalsozialist*. Ziegler had also founded the Thuringian branch of the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* in March 1928 and was its Landesleiter.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to the appointments of Zunkel and Wächtler, the exact date of Ziegler's appointment is not known. One source has suggested November 1930,<sup>8</sup> though Burkhardt Stenzel favours April the same year.<sup>9</sup> There is no letter of appointment for Ziegler, and his personal file reveals nothing since it deals with his activity after 1933.<sup>10</sup> However, it is known that by the end of September 1930 Ziegler was identified as a *Fachreferent* of the Thuringian Education Ministry's official documentation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> B. Stenzel, "Das Deutsche Nationaltheater in Weimar. Symbol und Schauplatz kultureller Praktik um 1930" in L. Ehrlich and J. John (eds.), *Weimar 1930. Politik und Kultur im Vorfeld der NS-Diktatur* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, 1998), pp.228-234

<sup>8</sup> R. Baumgartner, *Weltanschauungskampf im Dritten Reich. Die Auseinandersetzungen der Kirchen mit Alfred Rosenberg* (Mainz, 1977), p.13; U. Zeise, "Experimentierfeld Thüringen. Hans Severus Ziegler und der nazi-faschistische 'Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur' (KfdK) in Thüringen von 1929-1933", Diplomarbeit, *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena*, 1984, pp.22, 28

<sup>9</sup> Stenzel, "Das Deutsche Nationaltheater in Weimar", p.235. See also J. John, R. Jonscher, and A. Stelzer (eds.), *Geschichte in Daten. Thüringen* (Munich/Berlin, 1995), p.226

<sup>10</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin Personal File Hans Severus Ziegler

<sup>11</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/II99 Bl.34 Judgement of the Oberprüfstelle für Schund- und



## The Appointment of “Fanatical German Nationalists”

In addition to the appointments of Zunkel, Wächtler, and Ziegler, it was Hitler's wish that “fanatical German nationalists” were placed within the educational system.<sup>12</sup> During its rise in Thuringia from 1922 onwards, the NSDAP was in close contact with the *völkisch* right, with these groups and individuals from this *milieu* benefiting from Frick's assumption of ministerial power. Within the first six months of Frick's tenure, Weimar became an important location for those organisations and groups hostile to the Republic and its government. In the spring of 1930 Weimar held a conference of *völkisch* youth groups,<sup>13</sup> and in June, the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* met in Weimar “in recognition of the accomplishments of Frick's ministry”.<sup>14</sup> Frick attended both conferences.<sup>15</sup> Weimar was also the location for the conference of the Reich leaders of the National Socialist Pupils'

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Schmutzschriften (Leipzig), 25 September 1930

<sup>12</sup> Dickmann, “Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen”, p.463

<sup>13</sup> D. Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party: Volume I: 1919-1933* (Newton Abbot, 1969), p.126; John, et al, op.cit, p.227

<sup>14</sup> B. Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, MA., 1968), p.157

<sup>15</sup> G. Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick. Der Legalist des Unrechtsstaates. Eine Politische Biographie* (Paderborn, 1992), p.59

League,<sup>16</sup> and of the *Deutsche-Christlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Großdeutschlands*.<sup>17</sup> In early 1931 Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche thanked Frick for a government donation of RM 5000 for the upkeep of the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar.<sup>18</sup>

Nonetheless, it is the appointments of Paul Schultze-Naumburg and Hans F.K. Günther, which help illustrate the NSDAP's relationship with the *völkisch* right. This, in turn, reveals the extent to which Frick had to rely upon others in the execution of his ministerial duties.

## Paul Schultze-Naumburg

On 28 March 1930 the architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg<sup>19</sup> and Frick signed a contract detailing Schultze-Naumburg's duties and

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<sup>16</sup> BABL, R 134/90 Bll.192-193 "Der Nationalsozialismus und die Schule"

<sup>17</sup> K. Scholder, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich. Band I. Vorgeschichte und Zeit der Illusionen*, 1918-1934 (Frankfurt am Main/Berlin, 1977), p.239; L. Siegele-Wenschkewitz, *Nationalsozialismus und Kirche. Religionspolitik von Partei und Staat bis 1935* (Düsseldorf, 1974), p.24

<sup>18</sup> B. McIntyre, *Forgotten Fatherland: The Search for Elisabeth Nietzsche* (London, 1992), p.179. Frick's attempt to secure further funding for the Archive by introducing a bill to extend the 30 year copyright on Nietzsche's works, was rejected by the Reichsrat. See McIntyre, loc.cit.

<sup>19</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin Personal File Paul Schultze-Naumburg; *ibid.*, Staatliche Hochschule für Baukunst, bildene Künste, und Handwerk Weimar/126 Personal File Paul Schultze-Naumburg; *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon*, p.443; *Wer ist's?*, p.1458; C. Zentner and F.

remuneration upon becoming Director of the Weimar Art School on 1 April 1930.<sup>20</sup> The contract was recognised by the government,<sup>21</sup> and announced in the final paragraph of the *Wider die Negerkultur* decree of 5 April.<sup>22</sup> Although Frick denied that Schultze-Naumburg was a Nazi,<sup>23</sup> many believed that Schultze-Naumburg's appointment owed much to his political connections and activity. Schultze-Naumburg is said to have known Hitler personally since the mid-1920s,<sup>24</sup> and to have introduced Walther Darré to Hitler.<sup>25</sup> Schultze-Naumburg was a well-known member of the *völkisch* right, having once been editor of the journal *Volk und Rasse* (produced by the racist publisher Julius F. Lehmann), one of the Nordic Ring's "leading lights",<sup>26</sup> and an early

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Bedürftig, *Das grosse Lexikon des dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1985), p.524

<sup>20</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin Personal File Paul Schultze-Naumburg Bl.2a-2c

<sup>21</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.163 14th sitting of the State Ministry, 28 March 1930

<sup>22</sup> See *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, p.41

<sup>23</sup> *Stenographische Berichte über die Sitzungen des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen*. Band I. 1. bis 35. Sitzung (7. Januar bis 23. Mai 1930), (Weimar, n.d.), 34th sitting, 22 May 1930, p.889, col.II

<sup>24</sup> Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick*, p.59

<sup>25</sup> *Das Deutsche Führerlexikon*, p.225; B. Miller Lane and L.J. Rupp, *Nazi Ideology before 1933: A Documentation* (Manchester, 1978), pp.147, 166-167 notes 88-90; A. Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Walther Darré and Hitler's 'Green Party'* (Bourne End, 1985), p.59

<sup>26</sup> P. Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.473, 474

director of the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*.<sup>27</sup> Schultze-Naumburg's house in Thuringia was a frequent meeting place for many Nazis, *völkisch* thinkers and race-hygienists, including Ziegler, Darré, Hans Günther, Hitler, and Frick.<sup>28</sup>

Schultze-Naumburg's presence on the *völkisch* right, however, does not explain how he secured his nomination, nor his appointment. This is important since an answer could help reveal the extent to which Hitler gave any prior consideration to what Frick was to achieve in office. Given Schultze-Naumburg's acquaintance with Hitler since the mid-1920s, it more than possible that Schultze-Naumburg's nomination (as will be shown with that of Hans Günther) had been under consideration by Hitler since early 1930. It has been argued that Schultze-Naumburg's appointment was brought about through the suggestion of Ziegler,<sup>29</sup> although Schultze-

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<sup>27</sup> N. Borrmann, *Paul Schultze-Naumburg 1869-1949. Maler, Publizist, Architekt. Vom Kulturreformer der Jahrhundertwende zum Kulturpolitiker im Dritten Reich* (Essen, 1989), p.183; A.E. Steinweis, "Weimar Culture and the Rise of National Socialism: The *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*", *Central European History* (iv-December), Volume 24, 1991, p.406; Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, p.157

<sup>28</sup> Bramwell, *Blood and Soil*, pp.75, 78; G. Neliba, "Wilhelm Frick und Thüringen als Experimentierfeld für die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung", in D. Heiden and G. Mai (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus in Thüringen* (Weimar, 1995), pp.89-90

<sup>29</sup> Steinweis, "Weimar Culture", p.414; Zeise, "Experimentierfeld Thüringen", p.29

Naumburg himself claimed that Frick had asked him to become Director of the Weimar Art School.<sup>30</sup> The initial draft of the *Wider die Negerkultur* decree, which Frick presented to the Education Ministry in early February, omitted any mention of Schultze-Naumburg.<sup>31</sup> The decree's final version announcing Schultze-Naumburg's appointment gives the impression that it was added almost as an afterthought, given its location in the final paragraph. The earliest documentation on Schultze-Naumburg's appointment is dated 25 March 1930 - a mere three days before the contract was signed.<sup>32</sup>

## The Appointment of Hans F.K. Günther

Hans Günther,<sup>33</sup> like Schultze-Naumburg, was a noted figure in *völkisch* and pseudo-scientific 'race studies' circles. Through the influence of his publisher (Lehmann) Günther became a biological racist and won the support of social darwinist scholars, such as Fritz

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<sup>30</sup> See ThHStAW, Staatliche Hochschule für Baukunst, bildene Künste, und Handwerk Weimar/29 Bl.14 copy of Schultze-Naumburg speech

<sup>31</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin C/1004 Bl.163-164

<sup>32</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin C/1497 Bl.134

<sup>33</sup> See P. Rees, *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right since 1890* (London, 1990), pp.165-166; Zentner and Bedürftig, *Das grosse Lexikon*, p.232; L.L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of the Third Reich* (New York, 1976), p.232

Lenz and Alexander Ploetz, as well as coming into contact with Schultze-Naumburg and Darré.<sup>34</sup> Yet the circumstances surrounding Günther's appointment to the Chair of Social Anthropology at the University of Jena are not entirely discernible. Weindling believes that Günther was recommended by Max Robert Gerstenhauer, who was not only a *völkisch* publicist and a leading figure in the *Deutsche Christen* movement, but also Frick's Ministerialrat in the Education Ministry.<sup>35</sup> However, it is interesting to note that in early February Hitler hoped that a chair for racial studies would be established at the University, and that Günther would become the occupant. Hitler believed that this would lead to Thuringia becoming the "starting point of another radical spiritual change."<sup>36</sup>

Again, as with Schultze-Naumburg, archival material relating to Günther is dated only a few days prior to his appointment, and it reveals little. On 12 May, Frick informed the Thuringian cabinet that a chair in archaeology would become vacant within the philosophy faculty from 1 October. Frick said he intended to transfer the chair to

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<sup>34</sup> Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, pp.313, 472; Bramwell, *Blood and Soil*, pp.40, 42, 44, 45, 48-49, 75

<sup>35</sup> Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, p.478

<sup>36</sup> Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen", p.463

the mathematical and natural science faculty, whereupon it would be endowed with a professorship in social anthropology. Günther, the author of “well-known books on racial studies”, would occupy the chair. Frick requested this move be placed on the cabinet’s agenda, so that he could personally explain “[t]he necessity of the occupation of this ... chair and of the professorship.”<sup>37</sup> The files have not recorded Frick’s explanation, but the Thuringian cabinet approved without a murmur.<sup>38</sup>

On 21 May it was announced that Günther would be appointed as Professor for Social Anthropology in the University of Jena with effect from 1 October 1930.<sup>39</sup> The University’s Senate thought otherwise, and lodged a unanimous protest against the appointment because it believed the government had ignored the University’s ancient right to be consulted and take part in deliberations concerning professorial appointments.<sup>40</sup> The Senate was particularly steadfast in its attitude since Günther’s appointment had been wholly

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<sup>37</sup> ThHStAW, ThFiMin/6 Bl.94 Frick to ThStMin, 12 May 1930

<sup>38</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.188 19th sitting of the State Ministry, 14 May 1930; ThVbMin Personal File Hans F.K. Günther Bl.1

<sup>39</sup> Thüringisches Staatsministerium (ed.), *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt für Thüringen*. I. Teil. *Regierungsblatt*, 10. Jahrgang, 1930 (Weimar, n.d.), nr. 41, 21 May 1930, p.147

<sup>40</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.297 *Vossische Zeitung*, “Jena protestiert”, 28 May 1930; *The Times*,

rejected by the University's teaching staff. Günther's appointment, like Schultze-Naumburg's, was believed to rest upon the merit of his service to the NSDAP. It emerged that prior to his appointment, Günther had touted himself as a candidate for professorships in philosophy, early history, eugenics, race studies and anthropology. The majority of the members of the Mathematical and Scientific Faculty were not convinced that Günther had the scientific training necessary to be either a lecturer in anthropology or race studies, or for successful research or teaching, and they were "not convinced that original scientific accomplishments are contained in his previous writings".<sup>41</sup> This is perhaps why Frick, on 12 May, devised his solution of establishing the Chair for Social Anthropology.

Even though the University's Senate and teaching staff were hostile towards Frick's brazen manipulation of his ministerial right to be involved in the appointment of professors for party political goals, others in Germany and Thuringia applauded the move. Hitler considered Günther's appointment as Frick's "greatest racial-political act".<sup>42</sup> Frick's Nazi biographer, Hans Fabricius, proudly recalled Frick

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"Reich and Thuringia: Police Subsidies stopped again", 10 June 1930

<sup>41</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.298 *Vossische Zeitung*, "Warum Jena protestierte", 29 May 1930

<sup>42</sup> Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick*, p.59



receiving a letter of congratulations from Jena's students,<sup>43</sup> with support also coming from the Student Council of Munich's Technical High School,<sup>44</sup> and the Catholic Corporations of Munich.<sup>45</sup>

Frick also appointed the anti-Semitic writer Adolf Bartels to a lectureship in literary studies.<sup>46</sup> In May, Frick failed in his attempt to appoint the *Privatdozent* Dr. Ruge to the chair of philosophy at the University of Jena.<sup>47</sup> The University Senate rebelled since Ruge had allegedly been sacked from the University of Heidelberg because of insanity. It had also been alleged that Ruge had a conviction for incitement to murder.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> H. Fabricius, *Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick, der revolutionäre Staatsmann*, 1. Auflage (Berlin, 1933), p.44; BABL, R 143/90 Bl.180 "Über den NS Deutschen Studentbund"

<sup>44</sup> K.D. Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik. Eine Studie zum Problem des Machterverfalls in der Demokratie*, 5. Auflage (Villingen, 1971), p.134; E.J. Feuchtwanger, *From Weimar to Hitler: Germany, 1918-1933* (Basingstoke, 1993), p.226

<sup>45</sup> BABL, R 143/90 Bl.181 "Über den NS Deutschen Studentbund"; G. Pridham, *Hitler's Rise to Power: The Nazi Movement in Bavaria, 1923-1933* (London, 1973), p.211

<sup>46</sup> H. Patze and W. Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringens*. Teil 5(ii) (Cologne/Vienna), p.512; Rees, *Biographical Dictionary*, p.26

<sup>47</sup> BABL, NS 26/1221 Personal File Wilhelm Frick

<sup>48</sup> O. Dutch, *Hitler's Twelve Apostles* (London, 1939), p.210; W. Münzenberg, *Naziführer, sehen dich an* (Paris, 1934), p.72

## Frick's Cultural and Education Measures: The "*Wider die Negerkultur ...*" Decree

In the same week as the appointments of Zunkel and Wachtler, Frick initiated one of his most infamous acts as Thuringia's Education Minister. In a memorandum to the section dealing with theatrical affairs, Frick asked to compose - in agreement with that section - an "official decree" which would appear in the government's *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt*. The decree would be similar to an enclosed paper entitled *Gegen die Negerkultur*.<sup>49</sup>

The paper's preamble began with the assertion that for years "racially-foreign influences" had been asserting themselves in almost every cultural sphere undermining "the moral forces of the German Volkstum". "Jazz band and percussion music, Negro dances, Negro songs and Negro plays represent a glorification of the Negertum and deride the German feeling of culture." Arresting these "manifestations of decay" were said to be in the interest of the German people. The decree would be enforced through articles 32, 33a, and 53, paragraph 2 of the trade regulations (*Gewerbeordnung*).

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<sup>49</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin C/1004 Bl.162 Frick to Theatre Section (ThVbMin), 3 February 1930

The first stage of the decree concerned itself with demanding higher 'standards' from theatre owners applying for licences. For example, under article 32 licensing authorities could refuse licences if they believed that the applicant did not inspire confidence concerning the 'artistic' merit of his business. In view of this, article 33a allowed the authorities to revoke licences if performances of operettas, songs, theatrical pieces and exhibitions did not display "a high interest in art or knowledge", and were considered as running counter to "good morals". Performances of music and theatrical pieces, such as Jazz, were also seen as contrary to "good morals". In order to guard against these "manifestations of decay" the licensing authorities were entitled, under articles 32 and 33a, to examine the past character of the applicant, the nature of previous performances held by him, and whether any future performances would "injure" the population (*Volk*).

Section two of *Wider die Negerkultur* stipulated that, under article 53a, the licence could be revoked if "a deficiency of quality" became evident. Under article 33a licences would also be revoked if facts against the licensee came to light revealing that any performances or recitals ran counter to "good morals". Licences would also be revoked

if prior performances had been unethical. "In all cases it is the duty of the police authorities ... to take steps with all keenness [*aller Schärfe*] and to initiate the action for the withdrawal of the granted licence".<sup>50</sup>

Frick asked for comments on the text, and if any additions were believed necessary. To this end, commentators were reminded to take note of his letter of 3 February, and the first page of *Völkischer Beobachter* of 31 January.<sup>51</sup> By the time of the decree's publication on 5 April,<sup>52</sup> changes had been initiated. The decree was now known as *Wider die Negerkultur für das deutsches Volkstum*, and was attributed to both the Interior and Education Ministries. Finally, whilst the text in the 'draft' had not changed, two paragraphs had been added at the end.<sup>53</sup>

It was also the police's duty to prevent "the infection of the German Volkstum by racially-foreign non-culture" in tandem with

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<sup>50</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin C/1004 Bll.163-164 "Gegen die Negerkultur", 4 February 1930

<sup>51</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin C/1004 Bl.164 Frick to ThVbMin, 14 February 1930. See *Völkischer Beobachter*, "Gegen die Negerkultur", 31 January 1930. The article was attributed to Gottfried Feder.

<sup>52</sup> *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt für Thüringen*, 1930, nr.30, 12 April 1930, p.114-115; *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, nr.6, 22 April 1930, pp.40-41

<sup>53</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin C/1004 Bll.166-168

the Education Ministry, and to do everything "to preserve, advance and strengthen German art, German culture and the German Volkstum in the positive sense." The Weimar Art School was to become, under Paul Schultze-Naumburg, a "centre point of German culture", whilst the Thuringian State Theatre and Weimar's National Theatre were "to be mindful of their great tradition as custodial places of the German spirit and ... work in an exemplary manner."<sup>54</sup>

For what reasons, and on whose initiative, these changes had been made, is not discernible. The swift appearance of the draft decree so soon after Frick's appointment suggests that Feder's article was used as inspiration, that it may have been 'made to order' or was the unsolicited product of a non-NSDAP group or individual, but was readily accepted by Frick. Hans Severus Ziegler has been suggested as the author of *Wider die Negerkultur*,<sup>55</sup> and this is conceivable since Ziegler has been suggested as the originator of Schultze-Naumburg's appointment mentioned in the final draft of the decree.<sup>56</sup> But more

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<sup>54</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin C/1004 BL168

<sup>55</sup> E. John, *Musikbolschewismus. Die Politisierung der Musik im Deutschland 1918-1933* (Stuttgart/Weimar, 1994), p.371; Stenzel, "Das Deutsche Nationaltheater in Weimar", p.236

<sup>56</sup> Steinweis, "Weimar Culture", p.414; Zeise, "Experimentierfeld Thüringen", p.29

importantly, Ziegler believed that theatre should be a 'nationally minded' cultural product, and from the mid-1920s Ziegler had led a stringent NSDAP campaign against orchestra conductors, theatre directors, and the performance of works by Jewish authors and playwrights, as well as demanding the creation of a censor's office. Ziegler sought an end to the influence of Jewish 'elements', 'experiments' with modern dramas and atonal music, although Ziegler's campaign failed to have any impact.<sup>57</sup> Ziegler was also deputy Gauleiter, so the possibility that Frick and he were acquainted much earlier, and perhaps discussed policy opportunities, cannot be ruled out. Ziegler is possible for one further reason: he was deputy Landesleiter of the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*, an organisation that was distinctly anti-Jazz.

The 'fight for morality' initiated by the *Wider die Negerkultur* decree extended into many areas; in fact, Barbara Miller-Lane believes that it formed the basis of Frick's ministerial activity in Thuringia.<sup>58</sup> The performance of plays by Walter Hansclerer, Ernst Toller, Leo

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<sup>57</sup> Stenzel, "Das Deutsche Nationaltheater in Weimar", pp.228-234

<sup>58</sup> Miller-Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, p.156

Janacek, Friedrich Wolf were banned, and the 'musical bolshevism' of composers such as Paul Hindemith and Igor Strawinsky was banned from state subsidised programmes.<sup>59</sup> The theatre programme of 1929-1930 was already established, although the content was overwhelmingly classical, e.g. Goethe, Schiller, Shakespeare. Ziegler's influence, and that of *Wider die Negerkultur*, was more successful in orientating the theatre programme of 1930-1931 along more 'national' lines. The influence of the classical works remained high, but the 'German Freedom Dramas' that Ziegler had been campaigning for since 1926 began to appear in Weimar.<sup>60</sup>

Although not specifically mentioned in *Wider die Negerkultur*, the cinema, it could be argued, was one aspect of modern culture that could have fallen foul of the decree. One area of Frick's activity was the attempt to eliminate the "plague of abortion propaganda" which the NSDAP believed emanated from Berlin and posed a great danger to the eugenic health of the German population.<sup>61</sup> There was an attempt to ban Erwin Piscator's play *Frauen in Not*, § 218, which related

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<sup>59</sup> Baumgärtner, *Weltanschauungskampf*, p.14; Patze and Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringens*, p.511. E Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (Basingstoke, 1994), p.11

<sup>60</sup> Stenzel, "Das Deutsche Nationaltheater in Weimar", pp.236-238

<sup>61</sup> H. Fabricius, *Geschichte der nationalsozialistische Bewegung*, 2. Auflage (Berlin, 1935), p.43;

to that part of Germany's criminal code which outlawed abortion, but Thuringia's *Oberverwaltungsgericht* in Jena revoked the prohibition.<sup>62</sup> Likewise, the Thuringian government applied to the Berlin Censor's Office (*Prüfstelle*) to have the film *Der Fall Sonja Petrowa* withdrawn from general release, but the application was rejected on 30 May 1930, the same day as the ban on its screening in Thuringia was raised.<sup>63</sup> The film *Frauennot - Frauenglück* was banned because of a scene depicting a caesarian operation.<sup>64</sup>

Other aspects of the visual media, e.g. art exhibitions and museums, also appear to have been left alone, apart from one notable example. In October 1930 Frick, advised by Schultze-Naumburg,<sup>65</sup> embarked on a purge of Weimar's *Schloss Museum* to remove the "cultural bolshevist" works of art that had "nothing in common with

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H. Fabricius, *Dr. Wilhelm Frick. Ein Lebensbild des Reichsministers des Innern* (Berlin, 1938), p.19

<sup>62</sup> Fabricius, *Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick*, p.43; Patze and Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringen*, p.511

<sup>63</sup> See *Vorlagen, Anträge, Große Anfragen des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen 1930-1932* (Weimar, n.d.), nr.89, p.85; *Stenographische Berichte über die Sitzungen des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen*. Band II. 36. bis 96. Sitzung (2. Juni 1930 bis 29. Mai 1931), (Weimar, n.d.), 37th sitting, p.1056, col.II-p.1057, col.I

<sup>64</sup> *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt für Thüringen*, 1930, nr.96, 29 November 1930, p.344

<sup>65</sup> Fabricius *Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick*, p.44; Fabricius, *Dr. Wilhelm Frick*, p.17; See H. Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1963), p.33, and Neliba, "Wilhelm Frick und Thüringen", pp.88-89 for the claim that the Interior Ministry issued an oral order for the purge.



the Nordic-German nature", but merely represented "eastern or other minor racial sub-humans."<sup>66</sup> Seventy works of art by Ernst Barlach, Otto Dix, Lyonel Feiniger, Vasily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Erich Kokoschka, Wilhelm Lehmbruck, Franz Marc, Emil Nolde, and Oskar Schlemmer were removed.<sup>67</sup> In the words of one historian, Schultze-Naumburg's policies "led to a dictatorship of narrow-mindedness which finally deteriorated into iconoclastic riots in the Weimar Museum",<sup>68</sup> for example, a fresco by Oskar Schlemmer was demolished.<sup>69</sup>

As stated in the *Wider die Negerkultur* decree, it was Schultze-Naumburg's remit to turn the Weimar Art School into a veritable "model place [*Musterstätte*]"<sup>70</sup> of Nazi cultural policy. The significance of this statement was quickly realised. In an action, described by an anonymous Nazi writer as putting an end to "[t]he Eastern

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<sup>66</sup> Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick*, pp.59-60; Patze and Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringens*, pp.511-512

<sup>67</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin C/1428 Bll.172-174 "Index of the formerly exhibited works of art of the Twentieth Century in the Schloß Museum"; See Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, p.157; E. Bahr, "Nazi Cultural Politics: Intentionalism vs. Functionalism", in *National Socialist Cultural Policy* by G.R. Cuomo (ed.), (Basingstoke, 1995), p.10

<sup>68</sup> G. Schulz, *Von Brüning zu Hitler. Der Wandel des politischen Systems in Deutschland, 1930-1933*. Band III. *Zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur. Verfassungspolitik und Reichsreform in der 'Weimarer Republik'* (Berlin/New York, 1992), , p.150

<sup>69</sup> John, *et al*, *op.cit.*, p.226

Architecture",<sup>71</sup> Schultze-Naumburg sacked 29 teachers from Otto Bartning's architectural school because they were sympathetic to the *Bauhaus* ideas of Walter Gropius; only 15 teachers remained on the staff.<sup>72</sup>

## School Life and Curricula

Just weeks after his appointment Frick lifted a ban on the activity of a nationalist youth group.<sup>73</sup> This led to Frick's first dispute with the Reich Ministry of the Interior, and would set the tone for a further and more extensive dispute over Frick's education policy.

The background to the dispute pre-dated Frick joining the Thuringian government. Dr. Siefert, headmaster of Weimar's *Wilhelm-Ernst-Gymnasium*, had provisionally banned the youth group *Bund Adler und Falken* after parents had complained about the hostility which it had provoked in their children. Siefert informed the Education Ministry that the ban was subject to talks between him and the

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<sup>70</sup> John, *et al*, op.cit., p.226

<sup>71</sup> "Dr. Wilhelm Frick", *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, 1. Jahrgang, 1930, p.230

<sup>72</sup> Bormann, *Paul Schultze-Naumburg*, p.192; Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics*, pp.156, 157

<sup>73</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin B/3413 Bl.53 Frick to Siefert, 10 February 1930; Frick, "6 Monate", p.175

Bund's leader.<sup>74</sup> As a result of his move Siefert complained that he had been subjected to criticism by Ziegler in *Der Nationalsozialist*, and by Willy Marschler in the Landtag.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, Siefert was not deterred. After receiving an answer from the leader of the Bund, he told the Ministry that without these attacks by the NSDAP, he and other teachers would have concluded that the Bund was not a political organisation as defined by school regulations, and the ban would have been raised. However, Siefert believed that the ban should remain, since the Weimar branch of the Bund saw itself as a Nazi youth group.<sup>76</sup> Siefert believed he had done enough to prove this.<sup>77</sup> The question of whether the ban would be lifted or not remained unanswered until Frick became Minister and raised the ban.<sup>78</sup>

Prompted by newspaper reports stating that Siefert had been sacked for refusing to follow Frick's directive, Reich Interior Minister Severing informed the Thuringian government that Siefert had been

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<sup>74</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin B/3413 Bll.1-7 Siefert to ThVbMin, 31 October 1929

<sup>75</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin B/3413 Bl.6 Siefert to ThVbMin, 31 October 1929; ThVbMin B/3413 Bll.8-8RS "Kleine Anfrage", 3 November 1929

<sup>76</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin B/3413 Bll.22-23 Siefert to ThVbMin, 13 November 1929. The Bund had aligned itself with NSDAP ideology at a meeting in Thuringia on 28 March 1929. See P.D. Stachura, *Nazi Youth in the Weimar Republic* (Santa Barbara, CA/Oxford, 1975), p.96

<sup>77</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin B/3413 Bl.35 Siefert to ThVbMin 30 November 1929

<sup>78</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin B/3413 Bl.53 Frick to Siefert, 10 February 1930

well within his rights since article 26 of Thuringia's *staatliche Schulordnungsberufen* prohibited membership in political organisations for pupils not old enough to vote. Severing asked whether, and to what extent, these reports were correct and requested a report on whether the Bund "pursues goals contrary to the Reich Constitution." If these reports were either partially or wholly confirmed, Severing requested a further report on the steps the Thuringian government intended to take, if any.<sup>79</sup>

The Thuringian government simply ignored Severing's letter. During a NSDAP meeting, Frick attempted to provoke Severing by saying he would have to wait a long time for an answer. One month later, Severing wrote again. Stating that he had not received a reply, Severing claimed that Frick's attitude had caused him to tell his Ministry that all communications from the Thuringian government would not be answered until he received an answer to his letter of 17 February. In addition, Severing suspended the transfer of all education subsidies from his Ministry to Thuringia.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.189 Severing to ThStMin, 17 February 1930

<sup>80</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.201 W.T.B. "Ein Brief Severings an das Thüringische Staatsministerium", 19 March 1930; C Severing, *Mein Lebensweg*. Band II. *Im auf und ab der Republik* (Cologne, 1950), p.231

The Thuringian government responded that the Bund did not pursue aims contrary to the Reich Constitution, so it had no reason to take any action. On the matter of Severing's unanswered letter, the Land denied that there had been any decision not to reply, and it argued that Severing did not have the right to suspend the education subsidies. The Reich Minister's action was rejected with "all firmness", since the Thuringian government argued that it was designed to damage its image and bring about an unnecessary conflict between the two governments.<sup>81</sup>

In response, Severing argued that his letter was "the only possible answer" to Frick's behaviour, and claimed that he would have been "extraordinarily surprised" if the Thuringian government had thought, even briefly, that such behaviour would have been tolerated. Frick ought to have been told, Severing continued, that there had not been any decision to answer his letter of 17 February since the inquiry had been directed to the Thuringian government, not to Frick. Therefore, "if Herr Frick anticipates the decision of the Thuringian State Ministry - as he has done - then it lies with you to prompt the necessary action". Severing said he was unsure whether

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<sup>81</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.227 ThStMin to Severing, 20 March 1930

the Thuringian government had briefed Frick on the matter, so he was in the unfortunate position of having to identify the Thuringian government with Frick. Nevertheless, relations between the governments of Reich and Thuringia were restored because of the Land's comments about the Bund. However, payment of the withheld educational subsidies could not re-commence because they had been "completely disposed of" in the meantime. Whether there would be funds in the next financial year was dependent upon "*further political development*".<sup>82</sup>

Even though Frick's official connivance in the anti-democratic activity of the *Bund Adler und Falken* had resulted in a potentially damaging dispute with the Reich Ministry of the Interior, Frick persisted with the transformation of Thuringia's relatively liberal education to a more nationalist, more aggressive and domineering basis. It has already been mentioned that Weimar became an important location for extreme right-wing groups, many of which were directed towards young people. The National Socialist Pupils'

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<sup>82</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bll.230-231 Severing to ThStMin, original emphasis

League met in Weimar,<sup>83</sup> and the Hitler Youth, the National Socialist Students' League, and the *Wandervögel* all attended the *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur*'s conference of 7-9 June 1930.<sup>84</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that any of these groups received any official or unofficial sanction from Frick to begin, continue, or intensify the recruitment of school pupils into their organisations. Certainly, there appears to be no basis for the assertion that school children were to use the Hitler salute.<sup>85</sup> The fact remains, however, that permission was granted for these groups to establish or maintain their public profile in Thuringia without let or hindrance. This must have found a resonance amongst some pupils - there certainly was a reaction amongst parents.

In late September, a parents' committee informed the Education Ministry that it viewed the increasing tendency of pupils being drawn into political activity "with apprehension", when pupils should have been concentrating on their studies. The committee agreed that a patriotic education was necessary, yet argued that party politics did not have any place in school.<sup>86</sup> Fritz Wächtler, Frick's

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<sup>83</sup> BABL, R 134/90 Bl.192-193 "Der Nationalsozialismus und die Schule"

<sup>84</sup> Steinweis, "Weimar Culture", p.415

<sup>85</sup> Dutch, *Hitler's Twelve Apostles*, p.209

<sup>86</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1050 Bl.84 Die Vorsitzenden der Elternbeiräte der vier

*Fachreferent* for *Volksschulen* and leader of the National Socialist Teachers' Association in Thuringia, dismissed these concerns. At the Association's conference, Wächtler, undoubtedly taking Frick's Ministry as his point of reference, declared that once again Germany's youth was able to think about becoming free from "*all the forces of a crippling yoke of slavery which a criminal politic has imposed upon them ... German teachers do not want to betray this glorious youth*". Wächtler argued that the protests of parents and teachers against the "glorious desire for independence" in Germany's youth were political or party political, believing that the "alleged neutral attitude of many headmasters [was] nothing other than *party politics in the sense of the November Revolution*." To this end, Wächtler asked that article 26 of the *Schulordnung* be revised so that concepts such as "desire for independence" and "love of the fatherland" should not be considered party political concepts, but "*foregone conclusions which must be expressly cultivated*".<sup>87</sup>

Frick's regulation "Awakening and Encouragement of the Colonial Idea in Schools" (1 August 1930) may be seen as an attempt

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höheren Schulen Weimars to ThVbMin, 26 September 1930

<sup>87</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1050 Bl.85 Nationalsozialistischer Lehrer-Bund Gau



to foster such sentiments. From 1925 onwards the *Koloniale Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* had been in correspondence with the Thuringian Education Ministry about the dissemination of the colonial idea in schools through various media, including exhibitions, books and classroom instruction.<sup>88</sup> No doubt Frick's appearance as Thuringia's Education Minister was viewed as fortuitous by the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*, given the NSDAP's vocal and hostile demand to overturn the Versailles Treaty, a demand that then included the return of Germany's former colonies. In all likelihood, it was the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* that seized the opportunity, presented by Frick's presence in government, to secure a potentially more vigorous promotion of its ideas. This appears to be the case, since in early April 1930 the Weimar branch of the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* attempted to follow up earlier discussions with Frick when it sought official permission to distribute its material in schools. The *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* asked if the Ministry would demonstrate its support by placing a large order for the

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Thuringens to ThVbMin, 11 November 1930, original emphasis

<sup>88</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1002 Bl.6-29 correspondence between the *Koloniale Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* and the ThVbMin

*Kolonialkalender* “which could be placed at the schools’ disposal”. The *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* also attempted to recruit Ministry officials into its ranks by expressing its “particular joy” that Frick had already joined.<sup>89</sup> The *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*’s attempts to persuade Frick continued into May when it pointed out that the Prussian Education Minister had issued a decree late the previous year concerning the treatment of the colonial idea in schools. The *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* believed that its activity would be strengthened if Frick’s Ministry “recommended to the subordinate teaching institutions” a similar decree.<sup>90</sup> The decree was duly written up,<sup>91</sup> with Frick directing that schools were “obliged [*verpflichtet*]” to awaken the colonial idea in “our youth” and pursue such efforts to the best of their abilities.<sup>92</sup> The *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*’s lobbying can be seen as the influential, if not the sole factor of the Education Ministry’s decision to issue the decree.

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<sup>89</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1002 Bl.53 *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (Weimar) to ThVbMin, 5 April 1930

<sup>90</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1002 Bl.52 *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (Berlin) to ThVbMin, 6 May 1930

<sup>91</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1002 Bl.54 hand-written draft, August 1930; ThVbMin A/1002 Bl.30-34 “Zur Weckung und Pflege des kolonialen Gedankens in den Schulen”

<sup>92</sup> *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, nr.13, 22 August 1930, p.90

That Frick was responsive to lobbying from non-Nazi groups regarding school curricula is also evident from his *Auslanddeutschtum* decree of 7 July 1930. *Berufsschulen* pupils were to be instructed in “the colonial, world-economic, political and cultural significance of the German Volkstum abroad.” The decree stated that teaching material on the *Auslanddeutschtum* was to be developed, if it had not already happened; those teachers who had any “theoretical and practical questions” were to contact with the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland*.<sup>93</sup> Like its colonial counterpart, the *Verein* had been lobbying the Education Ministry throughout the 1920s, and had intensified its efforts once Frick had become Minister.<sup>94</sup>

In December 1930 Frick recommended the social darwinist Fritz Lenz’s book: *Über die biologischen Grundlagen zur Erziehung*, and Hans Günther’s works: *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volks*; *Kleine Rassenkunde des deutschen Volks*; *Ritter Tod und Teufel*; and, *Der nordische Gedanke unter den Deutschen*. A reader’s guide to ‘Günther studies’ was also prescribed. All six books were approved for teachers’ and pupils’

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<sup>93</sup> *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, nr.12, July 1930, p.77

libraries, as well as recommended as prizes for pupils.<sup>95</sup>

No evidence exists to suggest that lists of prohibited books were compiled during Frick's ministry.<sup>96</sup> The nearest to any 'black list' compiled were those indices drawn up by the higher censors' offices of 'trash literature' (*Oberprüfstellen für Schund- und Schmutzschriften*) and published in Thuringia's *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt*, as well as the lists received from other Länder.<sup>97</sup> There is just one example of an attempt to ban 'trash literature', and again it reveals Frick clearly responding to the unsolicited advances of an external agency.

The *Kirchlich-Sozialer Bund* had taken offence to Maurice Dekobra's two books *Der Philosoph und die Dirne* and *Ein Freundmädchen ist gestorben* because they were "the most pernicious diabolical trash, as well as filth, in their effect upon ... youth".<sup>98</sup> In July, after further correspondence with the Bund, the Thuringian Education Ministry

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<sup>94</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/981 Bll.1-30, 35-65

<sup>95</sup> *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, nr.19, 31 December 1930, p.149

<sup>96</sup> Schulz, *Von Brüning zu Hitler*, p.149; M.-L. Worster-Roßbach and M. Gunhe, "Grundzüge der nationalsozialistischen Schulpolitik in Thüringen", in D. Krause-Vilmar (ed.), *Lehrerschaft, Republik und Faschismus. Beiträge zur Geschichte der organisierten Lehrerschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne, 1978), p.223

<sup>97</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1184 Bll.14-74; ThVbMin A/1195 Bll.124a-449; ThVbMin A/1196 Bll.1-7

contacted the Berlin Censor's Office for 'trash literature' and asked to place Dekobra's two works, and another, *Moral um Mitternacht*, on the list of material to be blacklisted. The Thuringian Education Ministry justified its request by calling the books "typical manifestations of a sinisterly progressing cultural decay", which possessed a "demoralising tendency and morally reprehensible motives", through which young readers were introduced to "an inferior world where no desire for sacrifice for nation and fatherland is recognised".<sup>99</sup> The Education Ministry's application failed outright.<sup>100</sup> The Bund asked Frick if he intended to pursue the matter further with the higher censor's office in Leipzig.<sup>101</sup> Frick did, but was again unsuccessful in his attempt to dictate what Thuringia's youth could read.<sup>102</sup> Frick, however, was much more successful in banning the work of a more renowned author.

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<sup>98</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1199 Bl.1 Kirchlich-Sozialer Bund to ThMdl, 22 March 1930

<sup>99</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1199 Bl.7 ThVbMin to Prüfstelle Berlin, 6 June 1930; Fabricius, *Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick*, p.43

<sup>100</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1199 Bl.14 Prüfstelle Berlin to ThMdl, 4 July 1930

<sup>101</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1199 Bl.13 Kirchlich-Sozialer Bund to ThMdl, 3 July 1930

<sup>102</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1199 Bl.34-38 Oberprüfstelle (Leipzig) to ThMdl, 25 September 1930

## *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Within a fortnight of becoming Thuringia's Minister, Frick initiated action against Erich Maria Remarque's war novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*. A circular was sent to all Volksschule inspectorates asking them to report on whether the book was available in school libraries, which teachers had recommended it, and which teachers had used the book in class.<sup>103</sup>

Of the 22 inspectorates asked to reply, 11 responded negatively to all questions.<sup>104</sup> Two inspectorates replied that the book was available in libraries since many teachers and parents had recommended it, but that pupils did not have access to the book.<sup>105</sup> Of the remaining nine inspectorates, all reported that the book had been used in class.<sup>106</sup> Just one inspectorate reported that *All Quiet* was available in the teachers' library.<sup>107</sup> From these nine reports, it emerged that the book had not been employed indiscriminately, rather that teachers had been selective in the use of themes from the

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<sup>103</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 Bl.1 ThVbMin to Schulrate, 7 February 1930

<sup>104</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 Bl.4, 5, 13, 19, 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, 36, 38

<sup>105</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 Bl.20-22, 30

<sup>106</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 Bl.3, 6, 14, 31, 32, 34, 37, 39

<sup>107</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 Bl.28

book. The teaching of history and *lebenskundliche Unterricht* (life studies) were the most frequent examples cited. For example, inspectorate Jena I reported that a teacher had used *All Quiet* in a discussion of the First World War, especially in the imagery of battles. Another teacher in the same district had used the book to illustrate the reality of the conflict by taking the gas attack scene as an example.<sup>108</sup> From those reports that had specified which aspects of *All Quiet* had been used in class, the effect of technology on warfare and its effect upon the ordinary infantryman were the most cited.

Further evidence on the availability of *All Quiet* was accumulated when the memo was circulated to vocational schools. The Education Ministry demanded that if the book had been purchased it was to be immediately removed from libraries, and that teachers who had used the book were strongly forbidden from using the book further.<sup>109</sup> The availability and/or use of *All Quiet* in vocational schools was not as extensive as that in *Volkschulen*, suggesting that use of the book was insignificant. One area stated that the book had been removed from the pupils' library; another stated

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<sup>108</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 Bl.3 Schulrat Jena I to ThVbMin, 27 February 1930

<sup>109</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin B/3740 Bl.62 ThVbMin to Berufsschulräte, 24 February 1930

that the book had been used in class. A further two reported that teachers had abstracted sections for pupils.<sup>110</sup> One teacher had admitted that he could not remember which sections he had used or omitted; although he was certain that he had left out those of a sexual nature.<sup>111</sup>

To what extent - if any - the decision making process within the Education Ministry was influenced by these results is not known. As with many aspects of Frick's tenure in office, the inner workings of the Education Ministry in this matter remains unclear. There was not any analysis of the survey's findings, nor any critique of what Remarque's book was actually about. The Ministry's inquiries had shown that *All Quiet* was largely unavailable in schools, and that in those few establishments where *All Quiet* was available, the book had always been restricted to teachers, a few of whom had used the text within specific contexts, and with discretion. This evidence probably made little, if no impression upon Frick, given the NSDAP's hatred for the book and Frick's faithful adherence to the party line.

Nevertheless, The Education Ministry banned the book on 22

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<sup>110</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 Bl.129, 133, 140, 149

<sup>111</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 Bl.132 Rudolf Swanger to Knabenberufsschule, 11 March 1930



April:

“We consider the book as unsuitable for scholastic purposes in every respect, and we forbid it being given to school boys and girls by the school, it being recommended to them, or making it a subject for instructional discussion.”<sup>112</sup>

On 14 May 1930, the DDP's sole representative asked how the prohibition of the book was handled since Remarque's work was used in schools. Surely, he asked, the teacher could make his or her mind up as to whether the book was to be used. The government replied that the book neither belonged in schools, nor in school libraries since it “saw the events of the war from the viewpoint of the latrine”.<sup>113</sup> Frick does not appear to have removed *All Quiet* from public libraries,<sup>114</sup> since the files contain no reference to the matter at all, but in December, the Thuringian government initiated action to ban the film version of *All Quiet*. The governments of Thuringia, Saxony,

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<sup>112</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1010 BL151 ThVbMin to the Herren Leiter der höheren und Mittelschulen und die Herren Schulräte für die Volksschulen, 22 April 1930

<sup>113</sup> *Ausschußberichte des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen 1930-1932* (Weimar, n.d.), p.116, col.II

<sup>114</sup> M. Eksteins, “*All Quiet on the Western Front and the Fate of a War*”, *Journal of Contemporary History* (ii-April), Volume 15, 1980, p.357; Patze and Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringens*, p.511; Worster-Roßbach and Gunhe, “Grundzüge der nationalsozialistischen Schulpolitik in Thüringen”, p.223

Braunschweig, Württemberg and Bavaria petitioned Berlin's Supreme Censorship Board to ban the film version. They succeeded.<sup>115</sup> Frick, who claimed that the film adaptation "shamefully [depicted] the Germans as cowards",<sup>116</sup> was "openly enthusiastic"<sup>117</sup> about his success, and banned the film in Thuringia on 18 December 1930.<sup>118</sup>

In late April 1930 the SPD had called for the book's prohibition to be revoked immediately,<sup>119</sup> and in February 1931 Hermann Brill, one of Frick's sharpest critics in the Landtag, attacked the book's prohibition. Brill contrasted the classical spirit of Weimar, of Goethe, and of cosmopolitanism, with Frick's desire to create a spirit of Weimar based on "defence" and "resistance".<sup>120</sup> Turning to what he was believed a manifestation of Frick's "new spirit of Weimar", Brill referred to the Education Ministry's circular of 7 February 1930 to the *Volksschule* inspectorates, and the one sent to the *Berufsschulen* later that

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<sup>115</sup> M. Eksteins, "War, Memory and Politics: The Fate of the Film *All Quiet on the Western Front*", *Central European History* (i-March), Volume 13, 1980, p.75

<sup>116</sup> Snyder, *Encyclopedia*, p.101; Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick*, p.58

<sup>117</sup> E. Fröhlich, (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Samtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941. Teil 1, Band I. 27. Juni 1924-30. Dezember 1930* (Munich, 1987), entry of 14 December 1930, p.646

<sup>118</sup> *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt für Thüringen*, 1930, nr.102, 22 December 1930, p.368

<sup>119</sup> *Vorlagen, Anträge, Große Anfragen*, nr.69, p.68

<sup>120</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, 69th sitting, 7 February 1931, p.1589, col.I-II

same month. Brill claimed that the report's demand for information about those teachers who had bought the book or had used it in the classroom was "a request for denunciation".<sup>121</sup>

Brill considered this use of school inspectorates as "extraordinarily remarkable" since the regulations concerning curricula, and material to be used, allowed teachers to introduce material of their own choice. It was "quite impossible" to denounce and persecute those teachers who followed regulations. As far as he was concerned, the prohibition order was little more than an attempt by Frick to exclude the youth of Thuringia from a contemporary literary trend. Brill argued that the prohibition of *All Quiet* would greatly stimulate desire for the book and propagate its reading: Brill said he knew of seven libraries where Remarque's book had been reserved 20 times or more.<sup>122</sup> The prohibition of such an overnight best seller had done nothing to enhance the reputation of Thuringia or Weimar.<sup>123</sup> Brill was emphatic that in all cultural areas National Socialism had produced nothing other than prohibitions, arguing that Nazism did not need to make any exertion to ban anything, but

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<sup>121</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p.1590, col.I

<sup>122</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p.1590, col.II

<sup>123</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p.1591, col.II

required a great exertion to produce something greater or better than that which it prohibited. Nazism had produced “nothing more than the worst kind of trashy literature” and did not possess the “inner justification” (*innere Berechtigung*) to ban a work like *All Quiet*. Brill believed that Frick “has the credit, through the prohibition of the book ... of having added an important chapter to the history of human stupidity”.

In reply Ministerialrat Schnobel declared that the Education Ministry had given no verdict about the “worth or non-worth of the book”, and had taken no standpoint. He then contradicted himself when he said that the question over Remarque’s book was merely concerned with whether it was suitable either to be taught to, or given to, *Volksschule* pupils. The Ministry believed that it was not, and Schnobel gave the following statement in Frick’s name:

“The book *All Quiet on the Western Front* ... is thoroughly unsuitable for use in instruction. It cannot be justified because of its pernicious content, in the greatest part, upon the unestablished judgement and the emotional life of the younger generation, for the school to suggest this book to pupils.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p.1592, col.II-p.1593, col.I

## The School Prayers Decree

On 16 April 1930 the decree *Deutsches Schulgebet* was published. As with *Wider die Negerkultur*, this new edict also claimed that Germany's misfortune resulted not from economic causes, but from the subversion of a 'fifth column'. "For years *foreign and racially foreign forces* [*Art- und Volksfremde Kräfte*] have sought to destroy the spiritual-moral-religious foundations of our German thinking and feeling in order to eradicate the German people [*Volk*], and thereby making it easier to dominate." The decree asserted that the only way in which the German people could successfully resist these "dangerous influences" was by maintaining the purity of its religious and moral character, and passing this to the next generation. This was a "duty of the greatest significance" for both parents and teachers; the latter were reminded of the "high responsibility" they held before the history of the German people. Claiming that Christianity was "inseparably bound" to the Germans, the decree argued that the daily school prayer was "a matter of course" in classes where the majority of pupils were Christian; and it was not a violation of a democratic constitution that school pupils had to forego strengthening their

religious beliefs because some teachers had renounced their own personal beliefs. The next generation of Germans was “the bearer and shaper of the German destiny”, and for this reason, it had the right to “ask for help and strength for the liberation of its people and Fatherland by the Almighty Father in Heaven.” Hence, the Education Ministry said it would “recommend” [*empfehlen*] the introduction of a Thuringian school prayer to be recited by either the pupils or the teacher at the beginning or the end of the week. Neither the rights of the religious organisations, nor the freedoms of belief or conscience enjoyed by teachers or pupils would “in no way” be prejudiced by the decree. Five prayers were attached to the decree, and the Education Ministry expected that one would be chosen. The Education Ministry said it would await a report from the school inspectorates and the headmasters to what extent its “wish” was “conformed to, and where the difficulties occur.”<sup>125</sup>

## The Origin of the School Prayers Decree

As with *Wider die Negerkultur*, the archives reveal neither the

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<sup>125</sup> *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, p.39, emphasis added. The full text of each of the five prayers may be found in the Appendix.

source of the decree, nor the prayers. The first prayer (*Dear God, you desire with a strong hand*) was taken from the Thuringian Landeskirchenrat's collection,<sup>126</sup> but there is no similar documentation for the other four. One researcher has claimed that Frick's *Fachreferent* Fritz Wächtler wrote four, and Hans Severus Ziegler one. However, Zeise has not specified who wrote which, nor has he cited any sources to substantiate his claims.<sup>127</sup> Frick does not appear to have been responsible. He never claimed to be the author, nor did any subsequent Nazi publications name Frick.<sup>128</sup>

Circumstantial evidence suggests that the right-wing *völkisch* religious group, *Deutsche Christen*, was responsible. The group was formed in Thuringia in early 1929 by two priests, Siegfried Leffler and Julius Leutheuser. The *Deutsche Christen* spent much time disseminating Nazi ideas, although this was done in a manner to give the impression that this was not in connection with the NSDAP, even

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<sup>126</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.II Landeskirchenrat der Thüringer evangelischen Kirche to ThVbMin, 7 April 1930

<sup>127</sup> Zeise, "Experimentierfeld Thüringen", p.34; See M. Overesch, *Hermann Brill in Thüringen 1895-1946. Ein Kämpfer gegen Hitler und Ulbricht* (Bonn, 1992), p.202

<sup>128</sup> Frick, "6 Monate", p.175; W. Frick, "Thüringische Bilanz", *Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch*, 6. Jahrgang, 1932, p.215; See "Dr. Wilhelm Frick", *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, p.230; Fabricius, *Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick*, pp.46-50; Fabricius, *Dr. Wilhelm Frick*, pp.18-19

though many of the *Deutsche Christen* were NSDAP members. Leffler and Leutheuser were the prime movers in the establishment of an NSDAP *Ortsgruppe* in Wieratal.<sup>129</sup> In March 1930 the *Deutsche Christen's Arbeitsgemeinschaft* held its annual conference in Weimar, with Frick in attendance. The Chairman of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* was Max Robert Gerstenhauer, Frick's Education Ministerialrat and a Landtag representative for the *Wirtschaftspartei*.<sup>130</sup> It was Gerstenhauer, who, during the State Supreme Court's deliberation of whether the prayers were constitutional, claimed that the *Deutsche Christen Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, which "had nothing to do with politics", had written the prayers;<sup>131</sup> Witzmann believed that Gerstenhauer had written some of the prayers himself.<sup>132</sup> The *Deutsche Christen* were possibly the authors for one more reason. The group professed an

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<sup>129</sup> Siegele-Wenschkewitz, *Nationalsozialismus und Kirche*, p.22; K. Meier, *Die Deutschen Christen. Das Bild einer Bewegung im Kulturkampf des Dritten Reiches* (Halle-Saale, 1964), pp.2-5; G. Lautenschläger, "Der Kirchenkampf in Thüringen", in Heiden and Mai (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus*, pp.464-465

<sup>130</sup> Scholder, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich*, p.239; Siegele-Wenschkewitz, *Nationalsozialismus und Kirche*, p.24. No personal file exists for Gerstenhauer in the ThHStAW

<sup>131</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.5 W.T.B. "Fortsetzung und Schluß von 'die Thüringer Schulgebete vor dem Staatsgerichtshof' ", 11 July 1930

<sup>132</sup> See Landesbibliothek Coburg Nachlaß Witzmann Ms45I/2.4.3 Bl.10 "Politische Geschichte Thüringens 1918-1932" (n.d.)



extremely anti-Semitic view of the Bible, particularly with regard to the Old Testament, which the *Deutsche Christen* believed was the work of Jews, whilst viewing Jesus Christ essentially as Aryan.<sup>133</sup> *The Times* newspaper believed that if the NSDAP had its way instruction in the Old Testament would be cut to a minimum because the party believed it was essentially 'Jewish' in character.<sup>134</sup> There is no evidence suggesting that this was ever considered by Frick, or others within the Education Ministry, despite concerns that Frick might pursue such a policy.<sup>135</sup>

Did the decree, like *Wider die Negerkultur*, undergo any changes before publication? There is no 'first draft' with which to make any comparison, but the Thuringian Landeskirchenrat's letter, which was the source of prayer one, suggests that changes may have been made.

The Landeskirchenrat had asked the Thuringian Education Ministry if a notice could be published alongside the prayers stating

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<sup>133</sup> H.-J. Sonne, *Die politische Theologie der Deutschen Christen* (Göttingen, 1982); See ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1036 Bll.2-7 Speech by Dr. Heerdegen-Jena to the Bund für Deutsche Kirche, 5 March 1930

<sup>134</sup> *The Times*, "De-Jazzing Thuringia: Fascist Minister's Decree", 19 April 1930

<sup>135</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1036 Bll.1-IRS Verband der akademischen gebildeten Religionslehrer Thüringens to ThVbMin, 25 May 1930

that the right of schools in religious matters, as granted under article 136, paragraph 4 and article 149, paragraph 2 of the Reich Constitution would not be harmed by the decree.<sup>136</sup> These clauses specified that no-one was compelled to participate in any religious or ecclesiastical act, that the giving of religious education was subject to the teacher's assent, and that participation in religious instruction and ceremonies by children was subject to the consent of the parents or guardians.<sup>137</sup> The Landeskirchenrat's request for these clauses to be respected may well account for the decree's announcement that the rights of freedom of belief and of conscience of teachers and pupils were "in no way prejudiced."<sup>138</sup> The Landeskirchenrat had also asked that additional prayers were produced which all "expressed in a particular manner, the request for the liberation of the Volk from its present distress". However, the Landeskirchenrat stipulated that the prayers "must be kept free ... from politics ... This appearance must be avoided under all circumstances." The Landeskirchenrat feared that prayers of a party political nature would encourage anti-Church

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<sup>136</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.1 Landeskirchenrat to ThVbMin, 7 April 1930

<sup>137</sup> See E.M. Hucko (ed.), *The Democratic Tradition: Four German Constitutions* (Oxford, 1987), pp.179,182-183

<sup>138</sup> *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, p.39

groups who would accuse it of bias, and agitate amongst parents with the end result that children would be withdrawn from religious instruction.<sup>139</sup> Whether the Landeskirchenrat was against political prayers *per se*, or merely against such overt messaging is open to debate. Nonetheless, the Church's fears that prayers in such a manner could lead to anti-Church, i.e. communist, agitation may have been influential in making the prayers ambiguous in their references to "deception", "treason" and the "liberating act".

## Implementation and Opposition to the Decree

The reception of the school prayers decree amongst Thuringian schools was not overly enthusiastic. The Education Ministry's file contains only six 'positive' replies, dated from late April to late July. Two schools adopted prayer 1 (*Dear God, you desire with a strong hand*),<sup>140</sup> whilst two other schools accepted prayer 5 (*Hear us, O Lord*).<sup>141</sup> Only one school chose to introduce prayer 2 (*Father, in your all-mighty hand*)

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<sup>139</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.1 Landeskirchenrat to ThVbMin, 7 April 1930

<sup>140</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.33 R. Saemann (Uhlstadt) to ThVbMin, 6 May 1930; ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.46 Realschule (Schmölln) to ThVbMin, 7 May 1930.

<sup>141</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.41 Oberlyzeum (Gera) to ThVbMin, 29 April 1930; ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.42 Realschule (Großbreitenbach) to ThVbMin, 30 April 1930

into every class. The school reported that the prayer had been accepted with 59 votes against 7, but that there had been strong opposition to the measure amongst members of the town council.<sup>142</sup> Another school stated that the prayers had been introduced with no difficulties being encountered, although it neglected to state how many and which prayers were chosen.<sup>143</sup> The last school to report stated that it too had accomplished the introduction of the prayers, but it had altered prayers 2, 3, and 4 in light of the State Supreme Court's judgement of mid-July that the prayers were anti-constitutional.<sup>144</sup>

Opposition to both the decree and prayers was scathing in its condemnation. The Thuringian Association of Philologists welcomed the introduction of prayers relating to Germany's situation at home and abroad, but the Association expressed concern about the decree's infringements of the right of individual conscience, and the Ministry's

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<sup>142</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.44 Realschule (Allstedt/Helme) to ThVbMin, 2 May 1930

<sup>143</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.43 Realschule (Hirsberg-Saale) to ThVbMin, 29 April 1930

<sup>144</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.132 Reform-Realschule (Gera) to ThVbMin, 21 July 1930

demand for a report.<sup>145</sup> The Landeskirchenrat noted the decree, but regretted that many of its proposals from earlier that month had not been accepted, “all the more so, as in the now proposed decree many [of the prayers], even from the standpoint of the Christian teachers, are contestable”.<sup>146</sup> Similarly, the Thuringian Association of Religious Teachers supported the Landeskirchenrat’s protests that the Ministry had “disregarded ... the serious doubts” raised earlier that month, and had then, “contrary to our warning, published a decree in which, according to our opinion, the prayers are to express party political opinions.” Like the Philologists, the Association of Religious Teachers welcomed a decree which aimed at the strengthening the school prayer since it was “an important piece of religious-moral education”, but objected to the decree’s content, feeling that the demand to choose from 5 prayers limited their, and the pupils’, freedom of conscience, especially since prayers 2 to 4 had “a political hue [which] cannot be denied”. The teachers further claimed that it was “inwardly impossible” to use prayers which “signify an expression of a particular party political opinion”, arguing that school prayers, like religious

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<sup>145</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.34 Thüringer Philologen-Verband to ThVbMin, 18 May 1930

<sup>146</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.32 Landeskirchenrat to ThVbMin, 26 April 1930

instruction, should be used “to build the community, not to effect the destruction of the community”.<sup>147</sup> Another teachers’ union had gone a stage further when it characterised the decree’s introduction as a “shallow party political saturated polemic”, which injured broad sections of the German people “with audacity”. The prayers were viewed as “phrase-inflated, party political saturated word combinations [phrasengeblaute, parteipolitische abgetönte Wortkombinationen]” and “party political ... hate songs [Haßgesänge] which are contrary to one of the most valuable articles of the Reich Constitution”.<sup>148</sup>

The first attempt to annul the decree was made on 14 May 1930 in the Landtag’s education committee.<sup>149</sup> Criticising the decree, a representative of the SPD argued that the prayers were of a political nature, stressing war rather than reconciliation between peoples, having no consideration for dissenting teachers and pupils, emanating from anti-Semitic tendencies, and in complete opposition to the

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<sup>147</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.36 Verband der akademischen gebildeten Religionslehrer Thüringens to ThVbMin, 23 May 1930

<sup>148</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.31-32 Allgemeine freie Lehrgewerkschaft Deutschlands to ThVbMin, 27 April 1930

freedom of conscience guaranteed under the Reich Constitution.<sup>150</sup> Frick replied that the moral-religious ‘fitness’ [*sittlich-religiöse Ertüchtigung*] of a people was necessary for leading it out of distress [Not]. Religious education was a part of this, and the daily school prayer was an essential factor of this education. Frick denied that the decree was designed to restrict teachers, rather it was a “recommendation” [*Empfehlung*], by claiming that the need for a school prayer in a school in a Land, whose majority was Christian and national was self-evident. “In the last ten years we have had enough opportunity to get to know the foreign and racially-foreign powers - by this he [Frick] considered the Jews - which are inclined to destroy the spiritual-religious-moral foundations of our German thinking and feeling”. Frick stated that no compulsion would be exerted upon dissenters to recite the prayers. As regards the opinions of the bodies to be consulted (as in the decree), Frick said that their remarks were not binding for the government and that Thuringia’s Church had objected.<sup>151</sup> Moving to the second prayer’s mention of “deception and treason”, Frick alleged that these were the actions of those behind the

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<sup>149</sup> *Ausschußberichte des Fünften Landtags*, nr. 33

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p.115, col.II

social democratic newspaper *Vorwärts*, which had recently published an article hostile towards the prayers.<sup>152</sup>

The DVP's representative said that the impression ought to be avoided that the government was exerting a pressure of conscience, and that the doubts expressed by the Church and the Teachers' Association ought to be observed. The best prayer, in his opinion, remained the Lord's Prayer. He further stated that there were, "in the national sense", valuable and trustworthy sources amongst Jews. The SPD then introduced a resolution aimed at revoking the decree.<sup>153</sup>

"All of the prayers bear a political character. They are prayers of war which are, in the sense of the 'liberating act', National Socialist Party propaganda ... They are party political prayers of hate which in a slanderous and truly non-Christian manner reproach the republican minded and peace loving part of the Thuringian population with 'deception and treason' ... The prayers are a misuse of religion and a misuse of schools for the purpose of party political agitation."<sup>154</sup>

The resolution was defeated in view of the government's

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p.115, col.II

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.116, col.I

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p.116, col.II

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p.116, col.II - p.117, col.I



majority,<sup>155</sup> yet the SPD persisted. Two days later the SPD added an appendix to the report of the above meeting. They asked who the “foreign and racially-foreign forces” were; what was meant by “deception and treason”; and what was the “liberating act”. Frick repeated, “*The foreign and racially-foreign powers are the Jews. What is understood by ‘deception and treason’ you can look up in the opinion of Vorwärts concerning the Thuringian School Prayers. Vorwärts has understood me correctly*”.<sup>156</sup>

Referring to a committee meeting of 9 May 1930 the SPD stated that it had read out the relevant passage of *Vorwärts* (morning edition, 23 April 1930) in Frick’s presence. “Concerning the sense and intention of the Thuringian School Prayers there is not the smallest doubt. Deception and treason, treason to the Fatherland; hidden behind [all of this] is agitation against the foreign policy of the Reich and against the Reich Constitution.” Asked whether he had anything to say, Frick declared that he had said enough and that the *Vorwärts* article was “entirely correct.”<sup>157</sup> When asked about “the liberating act” Frick remained silent, and did not contradict the Social Democrats

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p.127, col.I

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p.127, col.II, emphasis added

when they argued that a National Socialist minister could only perceive this as a future war.<sup>158</sup>

## **The Response of the Reich Government**

Frick's remarks of 9 May 1930 led Reich Interior Minister Joseph Wirth to tell Erwin Baum, Thuringia's Minister-President, about his concern. "A deliberate party political tendency has not appeared in these prayers without reason, which is all the more distressing when, in the [Landtag's] budget committee, Herr Frick declared that the prayers are directed against 'racially foreign elements, namely the Jews'." Wirth said that he, as Reich Interior Minister, was compelled to investigate. "The emphasis on political matters in a part of the recommended prayers and the ascribed tendency of Herr Frick in the Committee has itself raised the question of constitutional validity."<sup>159</sup>

Baum replied that the school prayers were dedicated to the "German Distress and Hope, [and] they thoroughly correspond to the

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<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128, col.1

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p.128, col.1

<sup>159</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.289 Wirth to Baum, 12 May 1930. See ThHStAW, RStH/132 Bl.17 Brill to Kniep (RMdI), 31 May 1930 for the reports sent by Brill to Wirth.

essence of a Christian prayer.” The prayers identified “the wicked”, but not specific persons, or groups. Hence, Baum argued, somewhat dubiously, that the feelings of dissenters were not violated. Nonetheless, Wirth was told that the Thuringian government “thoroughly and decisively” rejected the interpretation of article 148, paragraph 2 of the Reich Constitution, which said that the feelings of all dissenters must be protected. Baum argued that this would lead to the protection of feelings which did not recognise Germany’s need to oppose the Versailles Treaty, the need to end the “deception, treason, and inner strife” of the population, nor acknowledge the need to maintain Germany’s Christian character. The prayers had to be “judged by themselves, removed of all trimmings, [and] in particular, the subsequent parliamentary debates”. Baum maintained that Frick’s speeches, in which he identified Jews as the “foreign and racially-foreign forces”, were made with an “unambiguous irony”.<sup>160</sup>

Wirth answered that he attributed “a great and pressing significance” to the matter. Wirth asked Baum to repeal immediately prayers 2, 3, and 4 without further discussion with the church and teachers’ organisations; otherwise he would exercise his

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<sup>160</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bll.89-90 Baum to Wirth, 20 May 1930, excerpts in,

constitutional authority, which included the right of appeal to the State Supreme Court.<sup>161</sup> Baum, replying on 24 May, said he too wanted the matter to be conducted with a view to a speedy and final clarification, but felt “great regret” that the Court was to be invoked by the Reich government before the conclusion of the proposed discussions. He revealed that the Thuringian government had deliberated Wirth’s request to revoke the three contested prayers, but had been unable to decide the question of annulment before the outcome of the talks. Baum claimed his government was especially loath to do this since the Landtag had rejected another SPD resolution to annul the decree, but had accepted a resolution calling for the continuation of the prayers. Baum said his government would abide by a verdict of the Court, although he hoped that it would not intervene until after the discussions had finished. But if the Court had already been invoked, the discussions would continue: only when they had been concluded would the Thuringian government come to any decision over the prayers’ recommendation.<sup>162</sup>

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Thuringia to the State Supreme Court, [6] June 1930

<sup>161</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.281 W.T.B. “Das Schreiben des Reichsinnenminister Dr. Wirth an Staatsminister Baum”, 23 May 1930

<sup>162</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2315 Bl.282 W.T.B. “Das Schreiben des thüringischen Staatsministeriums an den Reichsinnenminister”, 28 May 1930

In view of the Thuringian government's refusal to revoke the prayers, Wirth invoked the Court under articles 15 and 19 of the Reich Constitution.<sup>163</sup> The Thuringian government was informed by the Court of Wirth's step.<sup>164</sup> The two sides dispatched their claims and counter-claims. The case was to be heard on Friday, 11 July.<sup>165</sup> Although the dispute had only arisen a fortnight before, Wirth appears to have been determined to avoid a repetition of the police subsidies conflict and of being 'strung along' by the Thuringian government.

## **The Case before the State Supreme Court for the German Reich**

Zweigert, Wirth's State Secretary, said the Reich government had not found it easy to bring the matter to the Court's attention, but the step had been essential since the Thuringian government had refused to withdraw the decree. "[T]he Reich government has attributed [a] fundamental significance to the resolution of this

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<sup>163</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bll.71-72 Wirth to State Supreme Court, 26 May 1930

<sup>164</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.81 State Supreme Court to Thuringia, 27 May 1930

<sup>165</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bll.81, 85-92, 108-113, 116 for the correspondence

question. School prayers may not be misused to prepare the way for party political goals and injure the feelings of dissenters." Zweigert explained that the Reich government's interpretation of the prayers - including their sense and meaning - had been arrived at only through an analysis of the prayers' wording, and from Frick's statements in the Reichstag and in the Landtag. "[N]o doubt can exist that the prayers ... are against the Jews and social democrats". The prayers, Zweigert continued, were indefensible on the basis of their wording alone; and the Thuringian government's attempt to attribute another meaning to the prayers after the fact "can be described as unsuccessful. The prayers are directed against the Jews. Thereby, a programme point of the National Socialist Party is made the content of school prayers."<sup>166</sup>

Turning to the subject of opposition to the prayers, Zweigert claimed that the discussions in the Reichstag and in newspapers agreed with his government's interpretation. Ecclesiastical circles had described the prayers as "profanation [*Profanierung*] and blasphemy", with both the Thuringian Church and Thuringian teachers aligning themselves against the prayers. The teachers' association had, in fact,

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between the State Supreme Court, Wirth, and Thuringia, late May and late June 1930

<sup>166</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bll.3-4 W.T.B. "Die Thüringer Schulgebete vor dem Staatsgerichtshof", 11 July 1930

designated the school prayers decree as "one of the most questionable measures in scholastic policy since the founding of the state of Thuringia".<sup>167</sup> It was undeniable, Zweigert continued, that sections of the German population, who had different political outlooks to National Socialists, were characterised as practitioners of deception and treason, and that Divine punishment should be meted out to them. As a consequence, not only were the prayers bound to injure broad sections of the German people, but also those who held religion in high regard when prayers were misused for party political purposes. Moreover, it was irreconcilable with the principles of the Christian Church to call for God's punishment of dissenters. Zweigert believed that all Germans - save Nazis and Communists - would be injured by the prayers.<sup>168</sup>

At this point Geheimer Konsistorialrat Dr. Eger and Prelate Mausbach gave their expert ecclesiastical opinions on behalf of the Reich government.<sup>169</sup> Supplementing Zweigert's arguments, Dr. Eger

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<sup>167</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bl.94-96 Thüringer Lehrerverein to ThVbMin, 6 May 1930

<sup>168</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.4 W.T.B. "Die Thüringer Schulgebete vor dem Staatsgerichtshof", 11 July 1930

<sup>169</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.4 W.T.B. "Fortsetzung und Schluß von 'die Thüringer Schulgebete vor dem Staatsgerichtshof'", 11 July 1930

admitted that Germany's economic situation ought be considered in schools, but the prayers were offensive. Eger argued that the prayers "signified an injuring of Protestant feeling if the prayers were so used as to make God an implement of human wrath and human hate against other people". Prelate Mausbach agreed that patriotic schooling in prayers was "permissible and authorised". However, he saw the prayers as "clear announcements of struggle", not against foreign countries, but against sections of the population. "The recommendation of such disputed prayers does not conform to the spirit of Jesus Christ". Mausbach believed it was "no accident" that the prayers not only injured the feelings of dissenters but practising Christians also.

The Thuringian government then argued its case.<sup>170</sup> Ministerialrat Geheimrat Schnobel (Thuringian Education Ministry) regretted that his government had not been granted the opportunity to discuss and resolve the matter with the religious and teaching organisations since the Reich government had immediately invoked the Court, even though Schnobel believed that the matter could be resolved since the doubts were not "of such a fundamental manner".

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<sup>170</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.4 W.T.B. "Fortsetzung und Schluß von 'die Thüringer



Schnobel claimed that Frick's remarks in the Reichstag and the Landtag had been provoked by Social Democrats, and argued, like Baum, that they were "to some extent ironical and were not meant seriously". Schnobel argued that his government believed that the decree had not violated article 148 of the Reich Constitution, since dissenters did not have to participate in the prayers and therefore their feelings would not be injured. The Thuringian government, said Schnobel, had not wanted to exert any influence upon teachers, and had withdrawn the request for reports from school authorities; those reports, which the government had received, had revealed no difficulties. Any contestable interpretation of the prayers had only acquired such an aspect because they had been interpreted in a party political manner. The Bible, Schnobel maintained, contained Psalms and passages in much the same manner as the prayers.<sup>171</sup>

Ministerialrat Gerstenhauer doubted that the Court could arbitrate in this case. He argued that, according to the Thuringian Constitution, only the Landtag could lay charges against a minister, and only the Thuringian State Supreme Court could decide whether a

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Schulgebete vor dem Staatsgerichtshof ' ", 11 July 1930

<sup>171</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.4 W.T.B. "Fortsetzung und Schluß von 'die Thüringer Schulgebete vor dem Staatsgerichtshof ' ", 11 July 1930

minister had acted illegally or not. The Reich Constitution simply did not allow the Reich government to suspend the measures of a Land government. Gerstenhauer rejected any idea of banning all national sentiments in schools since the Reich Constitution defined them as German establishments. The sole cause of the Reich government's objection was the reference to "foreign and racially-foreign forces". "It can only be said that these forces are one of the causes of the German distress". The reference to "deception and treason" referred to high treason, but did not place all the blame on "foreign and racially-foreign forces". Therefore, argued Gerstenhauer, all attempts to characterise the prayers as unconstitutional failed. Gerstenhauer claimed that the decree had not originated with Frick, but rather the *Deutsche-Christlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaft des Großdeutschlands* which had drawn up the prayers, an organisation which had "nothing to do with politics". From the perspective of the prayers, "deception and treason" meant Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and the 'War Guilt Lie'. Gerstenhauer argued that the prayers strove after external liberation, and internal moral liberation from evil as understood by the Lord's Prayer. All the parties represented in the Thuringian Landtag, with the exception of the SPD, KPD and DDP had approved of the

prayers.<sup>172</sup>

## The Court's Decision

Before turning to the question of the prayers' constitutional validity, the Court dealt with the question of whether this dispute fell within its jurisdiction. The Court answered that it was indeed authorised on two counts. Firstly, under article 15 of the Reich Constitution, the Reich government had the right to supervise the implementation of its laws by the Länder, and ask them to correct any deficiencies within the legislation. This right, the Court argued, also extended to the provisions of the Reich Constitution, since these provisions determined the parameters within which the legislation was enacted and executed, and the Constitution's provisions on education were a case in point. Therefore, the Court accepted that Wirth was perfectly entitled to invoke the Court, since article 15 of the Reich Constitution allowed such a move if a dispute arose between the Reich and a Land government. Secondly, should article 15 have not sufficed, article 19 allowed the invocation of the Court by

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<sup>172</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.5 W.T.B. "Fortsetzung und Schluß von 'die Thüringer Schulgebete vor dem Staatsgerichtshof'", 11 July 1930

a Reich or Land government over any matter other than a civil dispute. The Court rejected the Thuringian government's argument that only its own State Supreme Court was the only judicial body competent to handle the matter, since the argument was clearly between the governments of the Reich and Thuringia.<sup>173</sup>

Following an examination of how and why article 148 became incorporated into the Reich Constitution, the Court argued that from the wording of paragraph 2, which stated that "in giving instruction in public schools, care must be taken not to give offence to the susceptibilities of those holding different views",<sup>174</sup> that this clause established "general tolerance as the guiding principle" for the giving of instruction schools, i.e. instruction was to avoid injuring the feelings of dissenters. Moreover, this regulation was not solely directed at teachers, but also the Länder who, according to article 144, were responsible for the supervision of the entire school system. The Court stipulated that article 148, paragraph 2 was a "legal obligation" upon those giving instruction in subjects where there were contrasting opinions and interpretations. Therefore, in every school

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<sup>173</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bll.141RS-142 Judgement of the State Supreme Court, 11 July 1930; Hucko, *The Democratic Tradition*, pp.152-153, 154

<sup>174</sup> See Hucko, *The Democratic Tradition*, p.182

where this was the case, care had to be taken not cause offence. It was obligatory to take into account the feelings of dissenters, although it was not prohibited “to discuss impartially ... questions of religion, history, or politics, and to take an opinion on them, but it is forbidden to do this in a manner which insults dissenters [and which] appears as a disparagement of their individual views and causes them distressing and painful feelings in them.” The Court further ruled that what was said in schools passed on to the families of pupils, and then to the general public. This dissemination of views and opinions would injure feelings of dissenters, and this also had to be considered when giving instruction in schools. The Court argued that article 148, paragraph 2 protected the feelings of dissenters without consideration of the fact of whether those feelings were deemed to be authorised or not by those giving instruction. No belief was “objectively correct”, but in practice this meant that other opinions were to be “preserved”, i.e. respected.<sup>175</sup>

In view of this, the Court stated that the Thuringian government's prayers, and the disputed passages within them, were not compatible with the Reich Constitution. The Court ruled that the

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<sup>175</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bll.142-144RS Judgement of the State Supreme Court, 11

Thuringian government's argument that the prayers could only be judged upon their wording, irrespective of the decree and Frick's statements, was insufficient. The Court argued that the decree and Frick's explanations of it could not be "disregarded", since the prayers could not be understood by their wording alone, least of all by the schools which had to know "from what grounds and to what purpose" they had been sent the prayers. The Thuringian government could not, ruled the Court, now push such 'yardsticks' to one side - they had to be used in the evaluation. Therefore, when the decree and Frick's statements were considered together there was no doubt that the contested passages and prayers were against the political views of broad sections of the German population, and that they did contain a "confession of anti-Semitism" by stigmatising Jews, and others, as "deceivers" and "traitors".

Similarly, the claim by the Thuringian government that it had not ordered the introduction of the prayers, for the decree's statement that schools were to report back on the extent to which the prayers had been accepted, and on any difficulties encountered, was rejected by the Court. The Education Ministry "expected and demanded an

account if they were not introduced". The Court asserted that such a "recommendation ... is equal to a decree", since article 148, paragraph 2 placed an obligation upon the authorities responsible for instruction in schools to discontinue everything which would effect an offence against the provision. The Court determined that even if the Thuringian Education Ministry had merely "suggested" the prayers, an offence would still have been committed since the content of the prayers had made it plain to teachers to "turn against the definite political views of a definite group of citizens in the manner as it occurs in the contested passages of the prayers". Even the recommendation that teachers were to encourage pupils to write their own prayers in a similar vein contradicted article 148, paragraph 2. In fact, it allowed the violation to be thrown into "sharper relief". Following a short recapitulation of the Court's viewpoint the Reich's petition was granted.<sup>176</sup>

On 19 September 1930, Thuringia's Education Ministry announced that the State Supreme Court had judged prayers 2, 3 and 4 to be incompatible with article 148, paragraph 2 of the Reich

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<sup>176</sup> ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/1011 Bll.145-147 Judgement of the State Supreme Court, 11

Constitution.<sup>177</sup> The decree was not withdrawn formally until 19 June 1931, and there was no reference to the Court's decision of the previous year.<sup>178</sup> Willy Kästner, Frick's successor as Education Minister, stated that the Ministry reserved the right to lay down - in conjunction with Thuringia's Church and teachers - principles for "appropriate" prayers.

## Conclusion

This chapter examined the second of Frick's ministerial competencies, that of Education Minister. It examined Frick's successful acts in this area: the appointment of the Nazi *Fachreferenten*, Schultze-Naumburg, and Günther; the origins of the *Wider die Negerkultur* decree, and its implementation in musical, theatrical, film and artistic matters; the introduction of the colonial thinking decree and the *Auslanddeutschtum* decree in schools; and the banning of the book *All Quiet in the Western Front*. The chapter also considered Frick's

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July 1930

<sup>177</sup> *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, nr.14, 22 September 1930, p.95

<sup>178</sup> *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1931, nr.12, 6 July 1931, p.87



failures, which were much more usual: the conflict with Reich Interior Minister Severing over the *Bund Adler und Falken*; the attempt to ban *Schund- und Schmutzliteratur*; and the conflict with Reich Interior Minister Wirth over the School Prayers' Decree leading to Frick's comprehensive defeat at the hands of the State Supreme Court.

## Chapter Six:

*Frick as Coalition Minister*

## Frick's Relationship with his Coalition Partners

In his post-war memoirs Georg Witzmann (DVP) recorded that the DNVP, DVP, WP, and LB had all failed to take into account Nazism's "principle of the uncompromising and exclusive totality", which would have made any "honourable coalition" with the NSDAP "impossible from the outset." This initial "error in the whole calculation", which all the parties, including the DVP, had made, meant that the coalition with Frick would break up "sooner or later".<sup>1</sup> It was unlikely that any government party would suddenly and/or willingly defect to the opposition since they had all had rejected a coalition with the SPD,<sup>2</sup> the largest party in the Landtag. Any desertion from the government was likely only after one or more of its constituent parties had repudiated the idea of collaboration with Frick and refused to continue working with him.

Of all parties in the coalition, the DVP was the most liable to dissent. Frick's entry into the government had essentially come about because the DVP's financial backers - possibly at Hitler's bequest - had

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<sup>1</sup> G. Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933: Erinnerungen eines Politikers* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1958), pp.155-156

<sup>2</sup> Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933*, p.153

coerced the party into joining the government. Yet in order to bring about any defection of the DVP both opportunity and method were needed. The opportunity to cross over was supplied by the SPD by tabling motions of no confidence in Frick in the hope that one or more of the coalition parties would vote in favour. Eventually the DVP did so, but it did not willingly 'cross the floor' to the SPD-KPD-DDP opposition, but only after Frick and the Thuringian NSDAP provided all the justification the DVP needed to overcome its dislike and hostility towards the SPD.

On 12 March 1930, Frick exploited his position as one of Thuringia's two chief plenipotentiaries (*Hauptbevollmächtigte*) to the Reichsrat to denounce the Young Plan in a session of the Reichstag.<sup>3</sup> Frick's "biting commentary"<sup>4</sup> surprised his coalition allies as much as it did the Reichstag since Frick had been not authorised by the Thuringian government to make any statement on the Young Plan, and the DVP began to distance itself from Frick.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Frick's speech is in *Verhandlungen des Reichstags IV. Wahlperiode, Band 427*, p.4392, col.II-p.4393, col.I

<sup>4</sup> The phrase is Goebbels'. See Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. Teil I, Band I, p.514, entry of 14 March 1930

<sup>5</sup> See BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.9 Bauer and Witzmann to von Kardoff, 27 June 1930

The DVP considered Frick's Reichstag speech an affront to the Reich government and its foreign policy, all the more since the DVP fully supported it. During the formation of the Thuringian government the DVP had been given numerous assurances that questions of foreign policy would remain in the background in order to facilitate inter-party co-operation. Frick, as the Thuringian government's Reichsrat plenipotentiary, had made his speech in the government's name. The DVP was surprised by Frick's action since it was given "without the permission and without the knowledge of the Thuringian government".<sup>6</sup> The consequence of Frick's "unprecedented conduct" was that the DVP refused to participate in any government discussions until Frick had given his assurance that he had not spoken as a member of the Thuringian government.<sup>7</sup> On the Tuesday it was reported that there had been an extra two cabinet meetings in order to resolve the dispute. Those government parties (DNVP, WP, and LB) which shared the NSDAP's views on the Young Plan wanted a government statement that would cover Frick's declaration, whilst the DVP wanted a statement saying that Frick had behaved "in a careless manner". Inter-party discussions remained curtailed, and the *Allgemeine Thüringische*

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<sup>6</sup> *Weimarerische Zeitung*, "Neue Regierungskrise?", 13 March 1930

<sup>7</sup> *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Thüringens Innenminister zum

*Landeszeitung Deutschlands* believed an agreement was unlikely since the NSDAP would not make any concessions, and Willy Marschler had raised the possibility of new Landtag elections during an NSDAP meeting.<sup>8</sup> The conflict finally ended when the Thuringian government issued a statement saying that Frick had not been authorised to make his statement in the Reichstag. However, and what is perhaps significant, the statement continued by saying that the content and wording of Frick's speech covered the views of the majority of cabinet members.

The DVP responded to this snub by saying that even if Frick's statements had coincided with the majority view of the Thuringian government, the government's statement had not given Frick retroactive authority to make his statement.<sup>9</sup>

Günther Neliba, however, believes it is "unlikely" that Frick had not been given permission to speak on Thuringia's behalf,<sup>10</sup> since the Thuringian cabinet's resolution of 29 January instructed its Reichsrat

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Young=Plan", 13 March 1930

<sup>8</sup> *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Die Regierungskrise in Thüringen", 14 March 1930 ("Politisches aus Thüringen" column)

<sup>9</sup> *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Keine Regierungskrise in Thüringen", 15 March 1930; *Weimarer Zeitung*, "Der Thüringer Konflikt beilegt", 14 March 1930

<sup>10</sup> G. Neliba, "Wilhelm Frick und Thüringen als Experimentierfeld für die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung", in D. Heiden and G. Mai (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus in*

plenipotentiary to vote against the Young Plan,<sup>11</sup> and a cabinet resolution of 12 March instructed its deputy plenipotentiary to issue a protest in the Reichsrat.<sup>12</sup> These two resolutions mention the plenipotentiary and deputy plenipotentiary by title, not by name, and the distinction is important since Thuringia's representation in the Reichsrat consisted of two different groups - politicians and civil servants. Baum and Frick in their respective roles as Minister-President and deputy Minister-President were the Thuringian government's chief plenipotentiaries in the Reichsrat, whilst Willy Kästner, Thuringia's Justice and Economics Minister, was deputy plenipotentiary.<sup>13</sup> The civil servants Bevollmächtigte Minister Dr. Hermann Münzel and Ministerialrat Dr. Metzler were deputy plenipotentiaries also.<sup>14</sup> It is possible that Frick sought to exploit the ambiguity of who was to speak on Thuringia's behalf for the NSDAP's ends. Frick had decided himself that morning to

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Thüringen (Weimar/Cologne/Vienna, 1995), p.78

<sup>11</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.128 3rd sitting of the State Ministry, 29-30 January 1930. Frick was present at this session. Bauer (DVP) was the only cabinet member to vote against the resolution. See *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Die Thüringische Regierung gegen den Young-Plan", 31 January 1930

<sup>12</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/60 Bl.150 8th sitting of the State Ministry, 12 March 1930. Frick was absent at this meeting.

<sup>13</sup> Thüringisches Staatsministerium (ed.), *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt für Thüringen*. 1. Teil. *Regierungsblatt*, 10. Jahrgang, 1930 (Weimar, n.d.), nr.8, 25 Januar 1930, p.17

<sup>14</sup> *Amts- und Nachrichtenblatt*, 1930, p.17

denounce the Young Plan whilst on the way to the Reichstag,<sup>15</sup> and had done so without Hitler's prior knowledge, let alone sanction, since Hitler was forced to deny that he had not supported Frick's action.<sup>16</sup>

The denouement to the episode involved the Thuringian government issuing of regulations regulating statements in the Reichstag by either members of its government, or its plenipotentiaries to the Reichsrat.<sup>17</sup>

Less than a week later Witzmann (DVP) publicly complained that his party's attempts to work within the government had been "repeatedly impeded through [the] unfounded and insulting attacks"<sup>18</sup> made upon it by members of the coalition parties, and even by government members. Witzmann admitted that from the beginning of the coalition's existence the DVP acknowledged that relations "would not always be easy", yet it had hoped that differences over the policies of the Reich government - especially the Young Plan - would retreat into the background.<sup>19</sup> To Witzmann's regret, this had not happened. For

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<sup>15</sup> H. Fabricius, *Dr. Wilhelm Frick. Ein Lebensbild des Reichsministers des Innern* (Berlin, 1938), p.16

<sup>16</sup> *Völkische Beobachter*, "Adolf Hitler dankt Dr. Frick", 18 March 1930

<sup>17</sup> See ThHStAW, ThVbMin A/60 Bll.85-87

<sup>18</sup> *Stenographische Berichte über die Sitzungen des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen. Band I. 1. bis 35. Sitzung (7. Januar bis 23. Mai 1930)*, (Weimar, n.d.), 11 sitting, 18 March 1930, p.229, col.II

<sup>19</sup> See Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933*, pp.157-158



instance, despite assurances to the DVP, the cabinet had dispatched a telegram to Reich President Hindenberg asking him to prevent the Young Plan from becoming law. Witzmann argued that Frick's attack upon the Young Plan in the Reichsrat seriously endangered the coalition. So anxious was Witzmann to preserve the coalition he asked Frick and the NSDAP not to make further co-operation impossible and warned against "going too far". It was, Witzmann claimed, up to Frick and the NSDAP if they wanted to avoid a renewed government crisis, which would be catastrophic for Thuringia. If Frick and the NSDAP were as serious as they claimed to be about serving the interests of Thuringia, Witzmann said that they must have the necessary respect for their coalition partners more than ever before.<sup>20</sup>

On 3 April 1930, only ten weeks after Frick had joined the government, the Landtag debated the SPD's first motion of no confidence against him.<sup>21</sup> Given that it was his party's motion,<sup>22</sup> August Frölich failed to make much of the opportunity. Even though he argued that the NSDAP's behaviour after Frick had become Minister was on a

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<sup>20</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.230, col.1-11

<sup>21</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, 19th sitting, 3 April 1930, p.391, col.1-p.410, col.1. Frick was not present.

<sup>22</sup> *Vorlagen, Anträge, und Grosse Anfragen des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen 1930-1932* (Weimar,

par with its activity in Bavaria before Hitler's Putsch and Mussolini's fascists before the 'March on Rome', Frölich stopped short of accusing the NSDAP of using Frick's ministerial position to prepare for a head-on clash with the Reich authorities. Instead, Frölich merely asserted that Frick was not fit to be a minister since his activities, such as wearing his NSDAP badge in the Reichstag, constituted a breach of discipline as a member of the government.<sup>23</sup>

Friedrich Heilmann, leader of the KPD, chose to open his speech not with an attack on Frick, but ironically, on the SPD. Heilmann scorned the SPD's claims of being tough on Frick since the SPD, whilst it had been in the Reich government, had done nothing to obstruct him. Similarly, the SPD's motion of no-confidence in Frick was of no more value than the "paper war" that had been initiated against him by Carl Severing, the SPD's ex-Reich Interior Minister. Heilmann accused the SPD of tabling the motion solely because it was no longer a part of the Reich government.<sup>24</sup>

Heilmann viewed Frick's actions as proof that the NSDAP was an agent of heavy industry, and claimed that Frick's previous activity in Bavaria in 1923 showed how he had used a government position to

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n.d.), nr.157, 27 March 1930, p.43. Willy Marschler, the NSDAP's Staatsrat was ignored.

<sup>23</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.392, col.I-p.393, col.I

secure and advance the position of the NSDAP and its industrial paymasters.<sup>25</sup> Like Frölich, Heilmann asserted that Frick was using Thuringia as a base to build up the NSDAP in the rest of Germany. Heilmann, however, went further than Frölich when he claimed that Hitler's policies were the result of an understanding with Frick's coalition partners, and that these policies were in full agreement with the dictates of heavy industry.<sup>26</sup> In conclusion, Heilmann argued, as he had done earlier,<sup>27</sup> that the SPD's motion of no confidence in Frick was worthless since little could be achieved in the Landtag against fascism with a vote of this kind. Yet, he argued, albeit contradictorily, that the KPD would support the SPD's motion since the KPD believed in using all parliamentary means whilst organising the extra-parliamentary fight against Frick.<sup>28</sup>

In response, Paul Papenbroock (NSDAP) denied that Frick's policies were in any way responsible for Thuringia's situation, rather it was the "absurd foreign policy of the Reich". He claimed that Nazi participation in government came about from the NSDAP's feeling of

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<sup>24</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.393, col.II-p.394, col.I

<sup>25</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.395, col.I, p.397, col.I, p.399, col.I

<sup>26</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.399, col.II-p.400, col.II

<sup>27</sup> See *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.393, col.II, p.395, col.I

<sup>28</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.401, col.I-II. See also *ibid.*, p.399, col.I

responsibility towards the population of Thuringia. Papenbroock argued this meant "an enormous sacrifice" for the NSDAP since it would not, and could not, pursue its policies given Thuringia's position.<sup>29</sup> Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel mocked the SPD by claiming that its motion of no confidence would actually strengthen Frick's position. Like Heilmann, Sauckel identified the cause of the SPD's motion as the "boundless stupidity" of Severing and the SPD. Frick, said Sauckel, would remain in office much longer than the left desired, and all attempts by the SPD and the KPD would not distract the NSDAP from its work since all attempts were bound to fail.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, Witzmann stated there was no need for the DVP to repeat its view on Frick's measures since this had not altered following the last time the DVP had made known its opinion. The DVP recognised that the SPD's motion had been introduced in order to cause difficulty for the coalition parties, especially the DVP. Witzmann maintained that the DVP wanted the government to continue its collaboration and "lead the work begun to a successful end." Accordingly, the DVP would vote against the motion, thus depriving the SPD of any chance of success.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.403, col.I

<sup>30</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.404, col.II

<sup>31</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band I, p.409, col.II-p.410, col.I

When put to the vote the motion received 25 votes in favour,<sup>32</sup> 25 against,<sup>33</sup> and 3 abstentions. All 3 abstentions came from the ranks of the DVP, including Witzmann himself.<sup>34</sup>

## The DVP's Relationship with Frick

During the negotiations in January to form the coalition, the DVP came under pressure from its own party elsewhere in Germany not to participate in government with Frick and the NSDAP. Five months later the DVP was still attracting criticism from within its own ranks.

In June, von Kardoff, a leading member of the DVP, argued that "parliamentary frivolity" was responsible for the DVP sitting with the NSDAP in the Thuringian government. Bauer, the DVP's Staatsrat, and Witzmann told von Kardoff that he was "evidently mistaken" to believe that the sole outcome of the Landtag election was the present coalition. They claimed the DVP's Thuringian leadership "would have been willing" (*gewillt gewesen wäre*) to form a government with the SPD and

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<sup>32</sup> 18 SPD, 6 KPD, and 1 DDP.

<sup>33</sup> 6 NSDAP, 6 WP, 2 DNVP, 9 LB, and 2 DVP.

<sup>34</sup> See *Der Nationalsozialist*, "Mißtrauens-Antrag gegen Minister Frick abgelehnt", Folge 14; *Völkische Beobachter*, "Ablehnung eines Mißtrauensantrag gegen Dr. Frick im Thüringer Landtag", 5 April 1930; *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Stürmische Szenen im Landtag von Thüringen. Ablehnung des Mißtrauensantrags gegen Staatsminister Dr. Frick mit 25 gegen 25 Stimmen"; 4 April 1930; *Weimarische Zeitung*, "Der Mißtrauensantrag gegen Dr. Frick abgelehnt!", 4

DDP, but pointed out that “nowhere in the party does the inclination exist or has existed”. The consideration of Thuringia’s position and the past reputation of the SPD were cited as the reasons why nothing had happened. In addition, they pointed out that an SPD-DDP-DVP government would not have had a majority in the Landtag. Von Kardoff had further angered Bauer and Witzmann by suggesting that the DVP should have demanded a dissolution of the Landtag. Bauer and Witzmann argued that any new election would not have produced a different result, and this, they feared, would have made the DVP responsible for aggravating Thuringia’s position.<sup>35</sup>

An anonymous paper revealed that the DVP believed it was “additionally decisive” (*weiter maßgebend*) that the NSDAP was considered closer to the DVP “in important general-political and ideological [*weltanschauliche*] questions” than the SPD. The DVP recognised that the NSDAP’s electorate was derived from socio-economic and cultural groups that were associated with the DVP, and acknowledged that these groups, which had experienced downward mobility, had turned the NSDAP. Nevertheless, the DVP was optimistic

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April 1930

<sup>35</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bll.7-8 Bauer and Witzmann to von Kardoff, 27 June 1930

that these groups “in the future shall sensibly come back to us”.<sup>36</sup> The paper’s author(s) admitted that the NSDAP had received “a great rush from bourgeois circles” since the Nazis portrayal of themselves as strongly nationalistic and in favour of ‘order’ had won “the confidence of the broadest circles of the citizenry”. The DVP believed that such groups hoped that the NSDAP would ‘get tough’ on Marxism, but in fact the NSDAP had had “few successes” since membership in the SPD and the KPD had not changed. “What the National Socialists have won, they have fundamentally taken from the bourgeois parties. Through the disintegration of these circles, the Marxists have not been hurt”. The irony, the DVP argued, was that the NSDAP were in fact helpers of the Marxist parties.<sup>37</sup> The DVP believed that the NSDAP would not have been so popular with the Thuringian public if they were not “taken as excessively important by the Reich”, arguing that the Reich Interior Minister Wirth and the social democratic press had given Frick and the NSDAP additional publicity.<sup>38</sup>

The DVP claimed to maintain a critical distance from Frick. Even though the party opposed many of his actions, e.g. the ‘Reichsrat speech’

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<sup>36</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.2 “Die DVPI und N.S. in Thüringen”. The author(s) and date of this document are not known, although internal evidence dates this document from June 1930 onwards through reference to the State Supreme Court’s decision in the school prayers dispute of July 1930.

<sup>37</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.3-4 “Die DVPI und N.S. in Thüringen”

and the school prayers decree, the DVP had not left the government because Thuringia's interests were deemed to stand "higher than party interests". The Thuringian DVP opposed the view of its Reich counterpart that Nazis, because of their political views, were unsuitable to be police directors. It was decisive for the DVP that both Georg Hellwig and Walter Ortlepp had sworn the civil service oath, pledging non-political execution of their official duties,<sup>39</sup> and that the NSDAP had repeated its disinterest in a violent overthrow of the Republic.<sup>40</sup> "We cannot understand, therefore, how these people can be *fundamentally excluded* from civil service posts, while it is tolerated - entirely irrespective of the strong saturation of the police with Social Democrats - that even Communists are Bürgermeister and thereby exert an influence over the local police". Even though the DVP claimed that its Staatsrat, Bauer, was "very frequently in the sharpest opposition to Frick", the DVP supported the Thuringian government since the party believed that Wirth was not justified in banning the police subsidies.<sup>41</sup> Only when the DVP could no longer make its opinion known on

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<sup>38</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.5 "Die DVPI und N.S. in Thüringen"

<sup>39</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.10 Bauer and Witzmann to von Kardoff, 27 June 1930

<sup>40</sup> See the anonymous comments in BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.4 "Die DVPI und N.S. in Thüringen".

See also Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933*, p.167

<sup>41</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.10 Bauer and Witzmann to von Kardoff, 27 June 1930; See also Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933*, p.167



important issues, would it leave the coalition.<sup>42</sup>

The NSDAP had attempted to portray itself and Frick as the “saviours of Thuringia”, but the DVP pointed out that Frick “cannot actually find the time to save Thuringia” since he was running “two difficult ministries as someone not previously familiar with Thuringia’s conditions”, and was also busily occupied as the NSDAP’s Reichstag faction leader and a “political agitator”.<sup>43</sup> Frick and the NSDAP had made “next to no use of their socialism”, and constantly sought to blame “the evil Reich policy” - the Young Plan - for this.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, this had not stopped the Nazi Party from claiming that it alone was responsible for the legislation improving Thuringia’s situation.<sup>45</sup>

The DVP claimed that its “stubborn fight” (*zähe Kampf*) in the Landtag against the NSDAP would have been much easier if the LB and the WP had “not all too often in the past gone through thick and thin”

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<sup>42</sup> “[T]hat is and shall be our most important concern.” See BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.11 Bauer and Witzmann to von Kardoff, 27 June 1930.

<sup>43</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.2 “Die DVP!”. See Landesbibliothek Coburg Nachlaß Witzmann Ms 451/2.4.3 “Frick und Genossen” (c.1946) Bl.2, and J. Grass, *Studien zur Politik der bürgerlichen Parteien Thüringens in der Weimarer Zeit 1920-1932* (Hamburg, 1997), p.313 for similar comments.

<sup>44</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.3 “Die DVP!”

<sup>45</sup> For two examples see *Völkischer Beobachter*, “Die Rettung Thüringens. Ein Erfolg des Nationalsozialismus”, 20-21-22 April 1930, and *Der Kampf in Thüringen. Ein Bericht über die Tätigkeit des ersten nationalsozialistischen Staatsministers um der thüringischen nationalsozialistischen Landtagfaction* (Weimar, n.d.), *passim*.

with the NSDAP.<sup>46</sup> The situation, however, had since improved, with the LB now “sharply against” the NSDAP. Ties with the NSDAP, which had been necessary for passing legislation, “have unravelled or have become weaker”. The DVP felt much freer, but feared that the government might collapse. The DVP saw this as leading to either the end of Thuringian independence, or a coalition with the SPD, which, the DVP recognised, would mean a coalition effectively run by the SPD, given its 18 seats in the Landtag. The DVP felt that the question of whether it would have to make smaller sacrifices in a coalition with the SPD, given its “radical attitude”, rather than with the NSDAP, was one which the DVP’s electorate would answer with a ‘no’.<sup>47</sup>

On 4 July 1930, the SPD’s second motion of no confidence in Frick<sup>48</sup> was debated in the Landtag.<sup>49</sup> August Frölich (SPD) initiated the debate by attacking Frick’s dismissal of Landräte by saying that this had happened in contravention to the assurance to the Reich government that there would not be any further dismissal (*Abbau*) of staff under the

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<sup>46</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.5-6 “Die DVPI”

<sup>47</sup> BAK, NL 1002/61 Bl.6 “Die DVPI”

<sup>48</sup> *Vorlagen, Anträge, und Grosse Anfragen*, nr.111, 27 June 1930. The SPD also tabled a motion of no confidence against Willy Marschler, the NSDAP’s Staatsrat. See, *ibid.*, nr.110, 27 June 1930

<sup>49</sup> *Stenographische Berichte über die Sitzungen des Fünften Landtags von Thüringen*. Band II. 36. bis 96. Sitzung (2. Juni 1930 bis 29. Mai 1931), (Weimar, n.d.), p.1161, col.1-p.1205, col.11

Enabling Act. Frölich singled out Baum for alleging that the decision of the Reichsgericht was not important, even though Baum had abstained from voting on the dismissal of the Landräte.<sup>50</sup> Frölich argued that Frick's behaviour in the school prayers dispute had abused his cabinet colleagues by first saying that his comments about the prayers were ironic, and then later said that his statements were meant in all seriousness. Frölich pointed out the irony that one of the school prayers, which referred to treason, could be applied to Frick because of his participation in Hitler's Munich Putsch. Frölich sarcastically called Frick "a worthy successor of the great Goethe" and called Frick's behaviour "cultural barbarism" (*Kulturverwilderung*), recognisable from the manner in which the NSDAP behaved in the Landtag. "That [cultural barbarism] is the new spirit, which has made its entrance in Thuringia with Herr Frick and the National Socialists".<sup>51</sup> Frölich turned to Frick's handling of the Thuringian police force and the dispute with the Reich government. Frölich argued that if Frick had nothing to hide he would have allowed a representative from the Reich government to Thuringia to investigate the matter, but Frick had rejected this since he was misusing the Thuringian police force to further the NSDAP's aims.

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<sup>50</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1162, col.I-p.1166, col.II

<sup>51</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1167, col.II-p.1169, col.I

Frölich mocked claims that Frick would support and protect the Reich constitution. He claimed that Frick had the intention to make the Reich Constitution invalid within Thuringia, even though Frick constantly accused Wirth of violating the Reich Constitution. The standard of the Thuringian Landtag had sunk lower than previously thought possible since the NSDAP had been putting their “yob politics” (*Radaupolitik*) into effect. Frick’s accusation that the conference of Länder Ministers of late May was of low repute had also contributed to the intensification of the conflict between the Reich and Thuringia, and it was understandable, said Frölich, that the conference’s participants had turned away from a man “who can only belittle and insult”.<sup>52</sup> Frölich quickly dealt with Willy Marschler, the NSDAP’s Staatsrat. Marschler had boasted that if the police subsidies remained banned the NSDAP would set up a Thuringia police militia wearing brown shirts. Frölich refused to take Marschler seriously, since he believed that Marschler could only make such threats in public and did not have the courage to do as he threatened.<sup>53</sup>

Kallenbach, the sole DDP member in the Landtag, believed that the vote of no-confidence would receive a majority, but feared that it

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<sup>52</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1170, col.I-1172, col.II

<sup>53</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1172, col.II-p.1173, col.I

would not be sufficient to force Frick to step down,<sup>54</sup> though Kallenbach did not believe that Frick was “sensitive” enough to give up power without being forced to, since Hitler’s concept of participation in government was a means for the seizure of power. Hitler’s idea, the DDP representative believed, was to get rid of the present Reich government by undermining it through the use of power and in order to construct a ‘Third Reich’ in which Hitler would be the dictator, and Kallenbach accused “inactive parties” of being the NSDAP’s “stirrup-holders”. Using legislation, especially in the areas of administration and personnel policy, the NSDAP was attempting to “realise its principles and seize power in the state”.<sup>55</sup> Kallenbach argued that the government was completely under the influence of the NSDAP, and the effects of Frick’s administrative measures were ever more noticeable. In his opinion a severe crisis of state was brewing over the police subsidies dispute. If the State Supreme Court did not rule that the ban on the subsidies was unconstitutional financial pressures would lead to a crisis within Thuringia, or political pressure would lead to a crisis with the Reich government. Marschler’s threat of establishing a militia would lead to a “most severe conflict” with the Reich and could lead to a situation

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<sup>54</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1173, col.II-p.1174, col.I

<sup>55</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1174, col.I-p.1174, col.II

similar to that of 1923 when the Reichswehr intervened in Thuringia. Kallenbach believed that the Thuringian government did not desire the conflict with the Reich government but had to continually tolerate Frick's behaviour.

Many of Frick's actions had been declared illegal, invalid or unconstitutional, and Kallenbach mentioned Frick's appointment of Schultze-Naumburg as an example of the 'cushy job' politics (*Futterkrippenpolitik*), which "was never so evident and manifest as in this Landtag".<sup>56</sup> Kallenbach believed that under normal circumstances any minister who was guilty of such behaviour would not have been allowed to remain in office, and he repeated that the vote of no confidence would be passed with a majority, but that Frick would be incapable of drawing conclusions from this. Kallenbach accused the DVP of wanting to ignore the vote, adding that they had taken on a "huge responsibility" when the DVP had "delivered over" the Interior and Education Ministries on the order of Hitler. The DVP denied this, but Kallenbach argued that the existence of this order was openly known and accused the DVP of saying that there was nothing to be done. He asked the DVP how long they would put up with the situation.

Frölich accused the bourgeois parties of having "not summoned

up the courage" to lead Thuringia in the direction they wished,<sup>57</sup> accusing the DVP of allowing Frick's ideas to represent the 'Spirit of Weimar'.<sup>58</sup> Heilmann (KPD) characterised the five months of Frick's ministry as "a teasing game of footsie, ... a comedy act". He argued that people should not be so excited by the fact that Frick had attempted to put Nazi ideas into practice since it was known what type of Nazi Frick was and how he would behave in office. In view of this, and the complaints raised about Frick, those who had in their power to prevent Frick from becoming Minister had done nothing, rather they had accepted the assurances of both Hitler and Frick that the constitution would be recognised and protected by Frick.<sup>59</sup>

Heilmann believed that the DVP would not risk voting against the no-confidence motion, but would abstain, even though the motion would receive a majority of votes. Should this happen, Heilmann believed that Frick would not resign but would refer to the fact that under the Thuringian Constitution the vote did not have a sufficient enough majority to force him to resign. Heilmann then discussed the nature of the Thuringian government. He claimed that German

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<sup>56</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1174, col.II-p.1175, col.I

<sup>57</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1175, col.I-II

<sup>58</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1177, col.II-p.1178, col.I

<sup>59</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1182, col.II-p.1183, col.I

capitalism had attempted to bring the Nazis into government “on a trial basis”. “It [capitalism] wanted to put them to the test once, it wanted to give them [the NSDAP] the opportunity to show how far they are capable of carrying out the policy of large capitalism, with reference to the renunciation of their [Nazi] radical phrases. Well, five months have passed and the Nazis have passed their test splendidly.” In fact, the Nazis, according to Heilmann, had done more than the “most audacious hopes” put in them since they had “furnished the proof that they are worthy servants of the present rule of capitalism”.<sup>60</sup>

The response of the Nazi Party to this motion of no-confidence in Frick and Marschler was more concerned with proving that the SPD was in the pay of the French military rather than mounting a sustained defence of Frick’s period in office. Sauckel argued that Frölich’s attacks on Frick were a failure, claiming that Frick would be appreciated by the German population for many years to come for his activity in Thuringia, and he asked the DVP if they thought that they could have achieved the maintenance of Thuringia’s independence as a Land in a coalition with the SPD.<sup>61</sup>

The DVP spoke only at the end of the debate. Witzmann said that

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<sup>60</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1183, col.I-col.II

<sup>61</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1190, col.I-p.1192, col.I



the DVP answered only to its conscience, and would always do so. Witzmann then read out a statement. The DVP, he said, recognised that there were "fundamental differences" which separated his party and the NSDAP, and so made a collaboration between the two difficult. The manner in which leading Nazis in the Reich and in Thuringia had attacked the DVP had caused discord within the party's ranks.<sup>62</sup> The extent of the complaints, which had reached the Thuringian DVP's leadership "clearly demonstrates what deep agitation has seized broad circles of our party". It regretted that in spite of the "urgent warnings and resolute protests", Bauer, its Staatsrat, had not been successful in preventing measures which the DVP believed would be ruled illegal by the State Supreme Court and the Reichsgericht. Witzmann said that if the DVP, which stated its "severe doubts ... in all openness and with all seriousness", did not vote in the motion of no confidence it was because the DVP would not let its actions be determined by the "wishes and demands of other parties", i.e. the NSDAP. When or if the time came for the DVP to withdraw its support from the Nazi members of government, Witzmann assured the Landtag that it would be solely due

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<sup>62</sup> The DVP had threatened to leave the coalition because of the NSDAP's attacks against Stresemann and Hindenburg during the Saxon Landtag election campaign. See *Völkischer Beobachter*, "Deutsche Volkspartei droht wieder mit Austritt aus der Thüringer Koalition", 21 June 1930

to the DVP's judgement, not that of other parties.<sup>63</sup>

This second no-confidence motion resulted in 25 votes for the motion, 22 against, with one absentee (Baum). All five members of the DVP abstained.<sup>64</sup> Britain's Ambassador reported to the Foreign Office that there were hopes that the vote would force Frick to resign, but that Frick had resisted, since Thuringia's Constitution determined that a minister did not have to resign if less than 50% of a no-confidence vote went against them. However, "at the same time the fact that such a vote should have been passed by the Landtag has undoubtedly weakened Herr Frick's position".<sup>65</sup> Frick had now managed to survive a second vote of no confidence in him, but he was undoubtedly in a 'minority' position amongst the cabinet since he could no longer count upon the DVP.<sup>66</sup>

This situation, however, did not last long once the NSDAP had their spectacular breakthrough in the Reichstag elections of September 1930.

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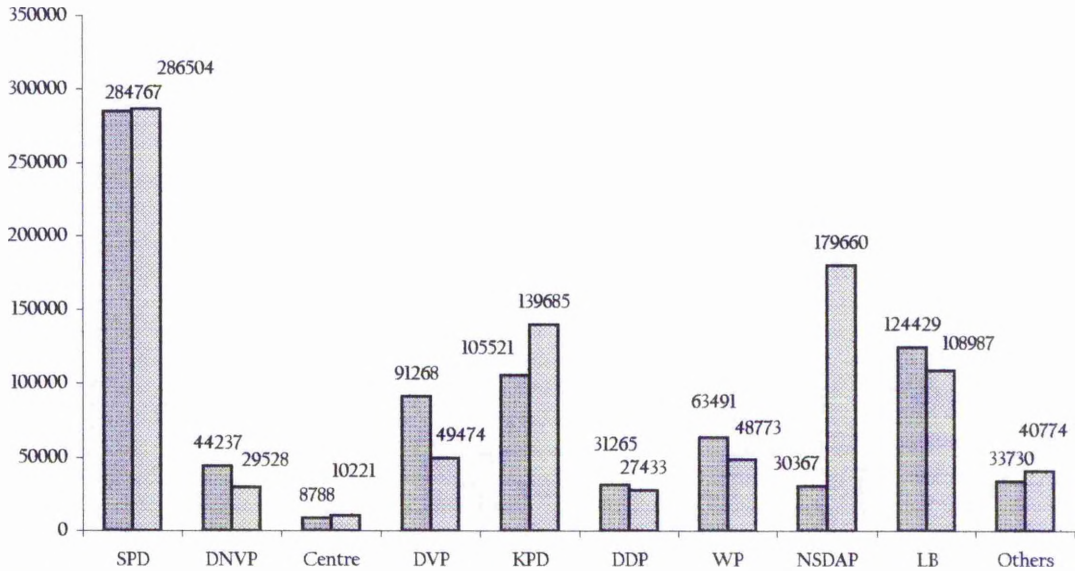
<sup>63</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1205, col. I

<sup>64</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p. 1205, col. I. *Der Nationalsozialist*, "Mißtrauensanträge gegen Frick und Marschler abgelehnt", Folge 37; *Völkische Beobachter*, "Thüringer Landtag nimmt Mißtrauensantrag gegen Dr. Frick an", 6-7 July 1930; *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Ablehnung der Mißtrauensanträge gegen Dr. Frick und Staatsrat Marschler im Landtage", 5 July 1930; *Weimarerische Zeitung*, "Ablehnung der Mißtrauensanträge gegen Frick und Marschler", 5-6 July 1930

<sup>65</sup> Comment by Newton, Britain's Ambassador in Berlin, 15 July 1930. See C5822/140/18, FO 371/14362

## Reichstag Elections

Thuringia, 1928 and 1930



(Source: G. Dressel (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte Thüringens*. Band IV. *Wahlen und Abstimmungsergebnisse 1920-1995* (Erfurt, 1995), pp.72-73, 94-95)

Donald Tracey has argued that if the Reichstag election of September 1930 is seen as a referendum on Frick, the result was “inconclusive, presenting neither a clear repudiation nor an outstanding endorsement of the NSDAP.”<sup>67</sup> On the contrary, the Reichstag election of September 1930 confirmed and completed the process of electoral breakthrough of the Thuringian Nazi Party, a process that had taken less than twelve months. Even when factors such as the higher turn-out

<sup>66</sup> Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933*, p.174

<sup>67</sup> D.R Tracey, “The Development of the National Socialist Party in Thuringia, 1924-1930”, *Central European History* (i-March), Volume 8, 1975, pp.46-47

(both relative and absolute), the increase in spoilt papers, votes for minority parties, and the exclusion of Prussian government areas from Thuringia's Reichstag constituency are taken into account,<sup>68</sup> it is quite clear that the NSDAP secured its breakthrough wholly at the expense of its coalition partners, the bourgeois parties. It is perhaps no coincidence that those which were squeezed the hardest - the DVP, the DNVP and the WP - were precisely those coalition parties which held the same number of seats or less in the Landtag than the NSDAP. Only the LB, which held more Landtag seats than the NSDAP, maintained its share of the vote in the Reichstag election. Similarly, the LB was the only coalition party to return more than one representative to the Reichstag. Both the DNVP and WP kept their sole representatives, whilst the DVP's representation was reduced by half to one. The Nazi Party quadrupled its representation of Thuringia in the Reichstag.<sup>69</sup> In effect, the NSDAP had captured the three Reichstag seats returned to Thuringia following the Reichstag election of 1928.<sup>70</sup> Herbert Albrecht,<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> These areas were included in the Thuringian Reichstag constituency even though they did not vote in the Thuringian Landtag elections.

<sup>69</sup> For the comparisons see Reichstagsbüro (ed.), *Reichstag Handbuch. IV. Wahlperiode 1928* (Berlin, 1928), pp.212-214; and Reichstagsbüro (ed.), *Reichstag Handbuch. V. Wahlperiode 1930* (Berlin, 1930), p.280

<sup>70</sup> 1928 was the only Reichstag election in which Thuringia was allocated less than 20 seats in its Reichstag constituency.

<sup>71</sup> M. Schumacher (ed.), *M.d.R. Die Reichstagsabgeordneten der Weimarer Republik in der Zeit der*

Ernst Katzmann,<sup>72</sup> Friedrich Triebel,<sup>73</sup> and Frick's Fachreferent Gustav Zunkel<sup>74</sup> replaced Franz Stöhr,<sup>75</sup> who had been Thuringia's sole Nazi Reichstag representative since May 1924. The NSDAP was now only second to the SPD in terms of Reichstag representatives in Thuringia.<sup>76</sup>

## Frick and the NSDAP

Hitler's decision to participate in the Thuringian government had been a momentous move for the party. How did Hitler present this undertaking to Nazis like Otto Strasser<sup>77</sup> who feared that participation in government would not only lead to a conflict of loyalty between the NSDAP's programme and the government's aims, but also saddle the Nazi Party with an unwanted share of the responsibility for the failure of the 'System'?<sup>78</sup>

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*Nationalsozialismus* (Düsseldorf, 1994), p.92; *Wer ist's?* 10. Auflage (Berlin, 1935), p.13

<sup>72</sup> Schumacher, *M.d.R.*, p.324; *Wer ist's?*, p.789

<sup>73</sup> Schumacher, *M.d.R.*, p.592; *Wer ist's?*, p.1622

<sup>74</sup> Schumacher, *M.d.R.*, p.639

<sup>75</sup> Schumacher, *M.d.R.*, p.569; *Wer ist's?*, p.1561

<sup>76</sup> Frick headed the Landesliste and the Reichsliste for the Reichstag election of 14 September 1930, though Frick was eventually elected to the Reichstag in Pfalz. See *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Die Thüringer Reichstagskandidaten der Nationalsozialistischen" ('Politisches aus Thüringen'), 30 July 1930, and *ibid.*, "Minister Dr. Frick und Abgeordnete Stöhr nicht thüringische Reichstagsabgeordneten" ('Politisches aus Thüringen'), 3 October 1930

<sup>77</sup> R. Kuhn, *Die nationalsozialistische Linke 1925-1930* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1966), pp.224-229

<sup>78</sup> H. Fabricius, *Geschichte der nationalsozialistische Bewegung*, 2. Auflage (Berlin, 1935), p.42; H.

In a front-page article in *Völkischer Beobachter* two days after Frick became Minister, Hitler denied that participation in government was the result of any misguided notion that the NSDAP could “remove these authorities from the general destiny”. On the contrary, he argued that participation in government was a means of further broadcasting “the necessity of the victory of our idea”, which would contribute to the NSDAP’s success “by recognising the prerequisites for the salvation of our Volk”.<sup>79</sup>

Hitler’s description of Frick as “one of our most tested fighters” was also intended to reassure doubters. Hitler argued that it was Frick’s duty to “represent the proclaimed National Socialist Will” within the Thuringian government and seize every opportunity, permitted by the Land’s constitution, to work for Thuringia, but “use the future for the German Volk”.<sup>80</sup> Should some NSDAP members have remain unmoved, Hitler introduced a ‘get-out clause’ into his argument. He claimed that if a contradiction arose between Frick’s aims and the accomplishment of them, Frick would immediately resign from the government. Nazis, said Hitler, would not participate in government to represent the policies of

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Fabricsius, *Dr. Wilhelm Frick. Ein Lebensbild des Reichsministers des Innern* (Berlin, 1938), p.15

<sup>79</sup> *Völkische Beobachter*, “Nationalsozialistischen”, 25 January 1930

<sup>80</sup> *Völkische Beobachter*, “Nationalsozialistischen”, 25 January 1930

“foreign parties”, but the NSDAP’s *Weltanschauung*.<sup>81</sup>

Frick would later claim that he had been in “very close contact with Hitler” since the latter had visited him “very often”.<sup>82</sup> When asked why Hitler had given him the post of Reich Interior Minister in January 1933 Frick suggested it was the result of his activity in Thuringia: “During that time he had observed me and thought I had done a good job”<sup>83</sup> Similarly, Goebbels’ diary entries on Frick were equally positive, describing Frick as “dignified”,<sup>84</sup> a “German Minister indeed” and a “great guy! [*knorker Kerl!*]”.<sup>85</sup>

The public representation of Frick was in much the same light. “In the last few months hardly any man has stood at the centre of the domestic political struggle like the first minister of the NSDAP”.<sup>86</sup> The

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<sup>81</sup> *Völkische Beobachter*, “Nationalsozialistischen”, 25 January 1930. See also *Illustrierte Beobachter*, “Politik der Woche”, 1 February 1930, cited in C. Hartmann (ed.), *Adolf Hitler. Reden, Schriften, Anordnungen. Februar 1925 bis Januar 1933. Band III. Zwischen den Reichstagswahlen, Juli 1928 - September 1930* (Munich, 1995), doc. 10, pp.55-58

<sup>82</sup> NA, RG 238, M1270, roll 4 Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick, 2 October 1945, fr.560, 721

<sup>83</sup> NA, RG 238, M1270, roll 4 Interrogation of Wilhelm Frick, 3 October 1945, fr.757

<sup>84</sup> See E. Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941. Teil 1, Band I. 27. Juni 1924-30. Dezember 1930* (Munich, 1987), entries of 28 January and 8 June 1930, pp.489, 558 respectively

<sup>85</sup> Fröhlich, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, entries of 7 June and 11 October 1930, pp.557, 616

<sup>86</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, “Kämpfer des kommenden Reiches. Dr. Wilhelm Frick”, 8 August. For more examples of hyperbole see *Völkischer Beobachter*, “Ein Jahr Staatsminister Dr. Frick”, 25-26 January 1931, and, *ibid.*, “Dr. Frick”, 27 January 1931

article accused the Marxist and bourgeois parties of wanting Frick's ministry to be no different from those of his predecessors, in the hope that disillusionment with Frick would retard the growth of the NSDAP. The article argued that, unlike the DVP and DNVP, Frick did not regard his ministerial post as a "cushy job" [*Ruhepolster*], but a "workstool" [*Arbeitschemel*] - Frick had only been in office eight months and his name, the *Völkischer Beobachter* argued, was already "a beacon". "Frick has shown what a single-minded and resolute Minister today has the power to do. Even though one or more of the measures are not entirely feasible, it finds its way to the heads and hearts of the remaining healthy part of the nation".<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, the NSDAP's pamphlet *Der Kampf in Thüringen* emphasised the party's achievements in government, claiming that the NSDAP's success in realising its goals was due to the fact that it represented "higher ideals"; and it had saved Thuringia from incorporation into Prussia,<sup>88</sup> but the bourgeois parties wanted to dispute the effort made by Frick and the NSDAP Landtag faction towards the reorganisation of the administration. *Der Kampf in Thüringen* claimed that the bourgeois parties had not carried out this reorganisation before

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<sup>87</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, "Kämpfer des kommenden Reiches. Dr. Wilhelm Frick", 8 August 1930



because they lacked the “necessary strength, courage and backbone”.<sup>89</sup> It was “particularly pretentious” when the bourgeois parties, especially the Landbund, claimed that Baum had balanced the budget. In the NSDAP’s view the LB and WP were not truly nationally minded. The two parties continued to libel NSDAP in election meetings. Höfer (LB) claimed that there wasn’t a “Frick government”, but rather a “Baum government”.<sup>90</sup> “Self-interest”, in the NSDAP’s view, “shows there and everywhere” – the LB was “cunning, ruthless and brutal”,<sup>91</sup> whilst the DVP was the “public antagonist” of the NSDAP.<sup>92</sup> The behaviour of Bauer in the cabinet had shown the NSDAP that the DVP was “the greatest obstacle in the whole reform work”.<sup>93</sup> In contrast to the DVP, Frick did not regard his post as a “cushy job”.<sup>94</sup> Of all the coalition parties, only the DNVP had supported Frick “in the most respectable [manner] without exception”.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *Der Kampf in Thüringen*, pp.6-11

<sup>89</sup> *Der Kampf in Thüringen*, p.12, 16

<sup>90</sup> *Der Kampf in Thüringen*, p.16

<sup>91</sup> *Der Kampf in Thüringen*, pp.22, 23

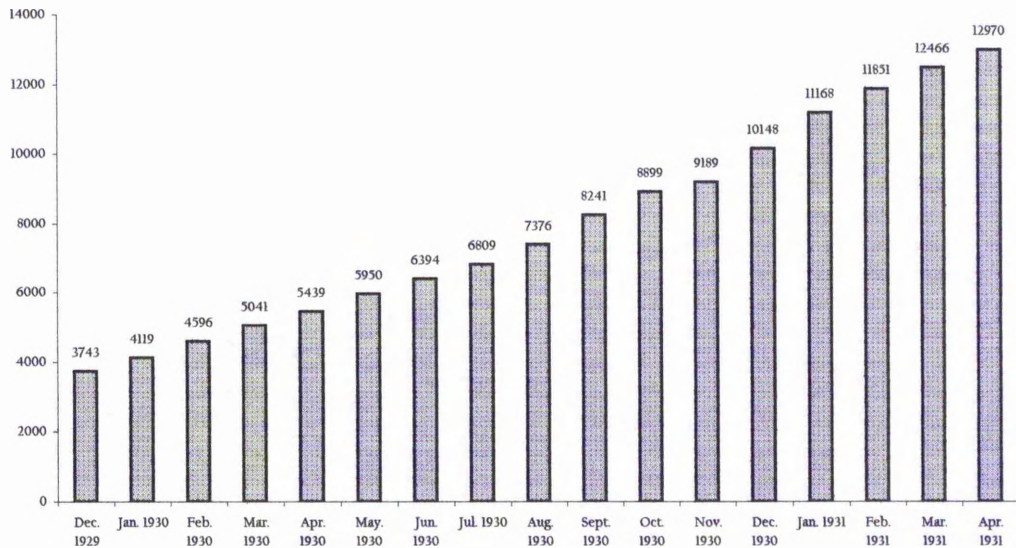
<sup>92</sup> *Der Kampf in Thüringen*, p.22

<sup>93</sup> W. Frick, “Thüringische Bilanz”, *Nationalsozialistisches Jahrbuch*, 6. Jahrgang, 1932, p.214. See also Fabricius, *Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick*, p.38

<sup>94</sup> “Dr. Wilhelm Frick”, *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, 1. Jahrgang, 1930, p.229

<sup>95</sup> *Der Kampf in Thüringen*, p.22

### NDSAP Membership in Thuringia, December 1929 - April 1931



(Sources: December 1929, F. Sauckel (ed.), *Kampf und Sieg in Thüringen* (Weimar, 1934), p.26; January 1930 to April 1931, BABL, NS 22/1072 "Übersicht über die Mitgliederstandsbewegung des Gaues Thüringen nach den von den Ortsgruppen tatsächlich abgerechneten Mitgliedern und an die Reichsleitung abgeführten Mitgliedsbeitragen.")

The membership figures for the Thuringian Gau during Frick's period in office show a steady rise of between 400-500 per month from January to August 1930, rising to over 600 for September, then returning to the previous monthly rises of between 400-500, until November and December when membership rose by roughly 1000 a month, then returning to the average of 400-500 a month for the remainder of Frick's period in office. The SA in Thuringia had grown from 9 to 47 Stürme, with membership tripling from 1000 in January 1930 to 3000 by January

1931.<sup>96</sup>

To what extent this rise in membership can be attributed solely to Frick's presence in the Thuringian government is debatable. Undoubtedly many joined when Frick was in government, seeing his participation in government as a sign of the NSDAP's respectability, but any attempt to separate such members from those who joined because the NSDAP had broken through in the Reichstag elections or those who turned from the bourgeois parties (as the DVP itself admitted) because of the downward spiral of the German economy at this time is almost nigh impossible to do. Yet, it would be safe to say that Frick must have, in some way, acted as a recruiting agent for the NSDAP.

### **The Third Motion of No-Confidence in Frick**

The third motion of no confidence in Frick had been tabled by the SPD in mid-November.<sup>97</sup> Ernst Höfer (LB) introduced a counter-motion proposing the Landtag ignore the SPD's motion. Von Thümmel, the Landtag's President, accepted that Höfer's proposal was valid since similar proposals were used in the Reichstag when motions of no confidence were introduced against Reich Ministers. However, von

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<sup>96</sup> ThHStAW, RStH/205 Bl.89, 96RS

<sup>97</sup> *Vorlagen, Anträge, Grosse Anfragen*, nr.167, 13 November 1930. Marschler was again the subject

Thümmel suggested that a speaker for acceptance of Höfer's motion, and a speaker against be heard by the Landtag before it voted on the motion.<sup>98</sup>

Höfer argued that since there had been a vote of no confidence on Frick and Marschler on 4 July there was no need for another. The SPD's motions of no confidence, Höfer argued, were "solely disturbance attempts (*Störungsversuchen*) with the aim of thwarting the reconstruction work of the present government and making it impossible" to continue. The government parties would do everything to influence the Landtag so that the work of the present government could continue undisturbed.<sup>99</sup>

Frölich argued that during the course of the government the SPD, and the opposition parties in general, had expressed their lack of confidence in Frick and Marschler, and this had been made repeatedly possible, according to Frölich, by the attitude of a government party.

## Frick's Final Conflict with the Reich Government

The conclusion of the police subsidies dispute did not restore

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of a motion of no confidence. See *ibid.*, nr.168, 13 November 1930.

<sup>98</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, 55th sitting, 20 November 1930, p.1397, col.I

<sup>99</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, p.1397, col.II

Reich-Thuringian relations to any degree of normalcy. Frick's presence in the Thuringian government continued to inhibit its rehabilitation. In March 1931 his activities led directly to him not being invited to the Reich Ministry of the Interior's conference on communist inspired 'godless propaganda' (*Gottlosenpropaganda*) for the Länder interior ministers, scheduled for 16-18 March 1931.

Wirth believed it was inadvisable to invite Frick because of his speech in Braunschweig in which he had threatened to establish a parliament of the 'National Opposition' in Weimar's National Theatre.<sup>100</sup> In addition, Wirth found Frick's additional statements insulting, believing that Frick "had no cause to make threats". Münzel reported that Wirth was unsure as to whether he should have any contact with Frick. Wirth believed that an amicable conversation with Frick was out of the question since he had strongly spoken out against Frick's statements in the Reichstag and had threatened the Thuringian government with action by the Reich (*eine Reichsexekution*). Wirth hoped, however, that a *modus vivendi* could be reached, but it had not come about after Frick's "recent provocation". Münzel pointed out that

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<sup>100</sup> See K.D. Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik. Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie*, 5. Auflage (Villingen, 1971), p.343; K.D. Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism* (London, 1971), p.237

Frick's speech was given in his capacity as a member of the NSDAP, not as Thuringia's Interior Minister. Wirth argued that the two could not be considered as separate.<sup>101</sup>

Münzel's written report outlined Wirth's objection in more detail. Wirth had argued that Frick's statement about a parliament of 'National Opposition' was "a revolutionary statement in the most extreme [*eminentsten*] sense of the word". This was why Wirth had threatened Reich action against Thuringia, and why he believed that it was not advisable to invite Frick. The other Länder interior ministers, Wirth reasoned, had to understand "that it is certainly better that a minister who makes such threats remains away" from such a conference.<sup>102</sup>

Baum wrote to Brüning to complain that his government had been "passed over".<sup>103</sup> Baum said that the entire government could not consider Wirth's justification as "sound" [*stichhaltig*].<sup>104</sup> Baum argued that in his speech Frick had not threatened to call any parliament of the 'National Opposition' into being, but had merely stated that the idea of one had been discussed. Baum further argued that Frick had only re-

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<sup>101</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/80 Bl.137 Note by Thiemer, 14 March 1931

<sup>102</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/80 Bl.138RS-139 Münzel to ThStMin, 14 March 1931

<sup>103</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/80 Bl.141 Baum to Brüning, 27 March 1931

<sup>104</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/80 Bl.142 Baum to Brüning, 27 March 1931

stated that which had already been mentioned in the left-wing press, and so claimed that Frick could not be interpreted as threatening Wirth with the creation of any such institution.<sup>105</sup> Baum expected that Wirth would find out which statements Frick “had actually made” before he had decided not to invite Frick to the conference.<sup>106</sup>

Baum believed that Wirth’s action was not only “an unfounded snub” of Frick, but also injured of the Thuringian government’s reputation, and showed a disregard for the Land’s standing amongst the other Länder. He also argued that it had also injured the reputation of the Reich government since a Reich minister had shown disregard towards a Land and its minister. Baum asked Brüning to ensure that Wirth would in the future “offers the measure of attention and respect which corresponds to Thuringia’s position and to which the Land is entitled” under article 56 of the Reich Constitution.<sup>107</sup>

As with aspects of the police subsidies dispute, Baum had chosen to write direct to Brüning, deliberately ignoring Wirth, with Baum’s letter being reproduced in full in a Thuringian newspaper. State Secretary Wienstien (Reich Chancellery) and Ministerialdirektor Menzel (Reich Ministry of the Interior) both agreed that Wirth should

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<sup>105</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/80 Bl.142RS Baum to Brüning, 27 March 1931

<sup>106</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/80 Bl.142RS-143 Baum to Brüning, 27 March 1931

receive a copy of the letter, and that nothing would be done except to issue an acknowledgement.<sup>108</sup> A bland acknowledgement was duly sent to Baum with no mention of any further action or resolution of the dispute.<sup>109</sup>

### Frick's Exit from the Thuringian Government, 1 April 1931

The NSDAP had presented its successes in the Reichstag election as a demonstration of the population's confidence in the abilities of Frick and the NSDAP Landtag faction, claiming that, amongst other things, that the result showed that the attempts of "certain coalition parties", i.e. the DVP, to damage the NSDAP's credibility and influence had been "completely frustrated". The NSDAP argued that the bourgeois parties had to choose between working with the NSDAP or the Marxist parties since the "abstention of the DVP is no longer tolerable. The Volkspartei is either in favour of a consciously national Thuringia or it is a compliant instrument of the Social Democrats".<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> ThHStAW, ThStMin/80 Bl.143 Baum to Brüning, 27 March 1931

<sup>108</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.131 Reich Chancellery note "Beschwerde des Vorsitzenden des Thüringischen Staatsministeriums über die Nichteinladung des Staatsministers Dr. Frick zur Innenminister-Konferenz im Reichsministerium des Innern", 1 April 1931

<sup>109</sup> BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl.131-131RS Pünder to Baum, n.d.

<sup>110</sup> *Völkische Beobachter*, "Die NSDAP an die Thüringischen Koalitionsparteien", 18 September 1930. See also *ibid.*, "Der Sieg Ministers Frick", 21-22 September 1930



The DVP became increasingly fed-up with such abrasive attacks by the NSDAP. The British Embassy in Berlin reported that the DVP's patience was at breaking point, and that it would not oppose an SPD-KPD sponsored vote of no confidence in the "notorious Dr. Frick" on 1 April 1931.<sup>111</sup> Fritz Sauckel's article ("Hitler muß siegen") in *Der Nationalsozialist*, attacking the Reich DVP, was cited as the final factor prompting the DVP's defection from the government.<sup>112</sup> The NSDAP argued that the DVP viewed this article as a "welcome pretext" to remove Frick from the coalition.<sup>113</sup>

The DVP's Landtag faction considered the ties between it and the NSDAP as severed, yet the DVP wished to remain with in coalition with the other parties, arguing that the NSDAP itself had severed the ties because of Nazi speeches and statements.<sup>114</sup> The DVP argued that the NSDAP's "arrogant tone", in which it had been attacked by the NSDAP, had become unbearable further stating that there was a point of "thus

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<sup>111</sup> See the two reports of 27 March 1931, C2080/11/18 and C2179/11/18, FO 371/15214.

<sup>112</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, "Die Volkspartei in Thüringen wieder einmal eingeklappt", 13 March 1931; Witzmann, *Thüringen von 1918-1933*, p.175; L.D. Stokes (ed.), *Kleinstadt und Nationalsozialismus. Ausgewählte Dokumente zur Geschichte von Eutin 1918-1945* (Neumünster, 1984), doc.I/24B/IV, pp.167-168

<sup>113</sup> Frick, "Thüringische Bilanz", p.214. See also Fabricius, *Reichsinnenminister Dr. Frick*, p.51

<sup>114</sup> *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, "Bruch der thüringischen Koalition

far and no further” with its patience. The DVP objected to its leaders being continually slandered and vilified, accused as being fellow travellers of the SPD since it had always opposed the SPD in Thuringia. The DVP reiterated that its view that it was the NSDAP was solely responsible for the coalition’s collapse, arguing that the NSDAP was naïve to believe that the DVP would remove Bauer from the cabinet and replace him with a Staatsrat more amenable to the NSDAP. The DVP also argued that the NSDAP was also naïve to believe it could leave the coalition whenever it suited it since this was not solely dependent upon the wishes of the NSDAP. The Nazis had to remember that all the other coalition parties had objected to this view and had told the NSDAP this in the last inter-faction discussions.<sup>115</sup>

The NSDAP replied that it was increasingly forced to the view that the DVP’s “far-fetched article” [*an den Haaren herbeigezogener Artikel*] was solely “a pretext”, and that “behind these intrigues stands the [DVP’s] Reichstag faction, who, with the Centre, Democrats and Social Democrats, wants to destroy Thuringia’s independence”. The NSDAP refused to tolerate another attempt originating in Berlin “to torpedo”

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vollzogen”, 14 March 1931

<sup>115</sup> *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, “Der thüringische Parteikonflikt”, 16 March 1931

Thuringian independence.<sup>116</sup> The article in *Der Nationalsozialist*, “Dolchstoß gegen Thüringens Selbständigkeit auf Geheiß Rot-Berlins”, which argued that the government crisis was “caused” by the DVP, had to be viewed as the NSDAP’s official and “final statement” on the matter.<sup>117</sup>

The Landtag’s *Ältestenrat* decided that the Landtag would meet on 1 April 1931 to discuss, amongst other matters, the SPD’s motions of no confidence in Frick and Marschler. It was reported that the DVP would vote for the motion. The *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands* believed that any other development was unlikely since “the coalition parties themselves have the greatest interest in a quick solution to the crisis”, a crisis, which had by then lasted a fortnight had prevented any practical work by the government.<sup>118</sup>

The NSDAP launched one last attempt to ‘persuade’ the DVP into remaining within the government. “If the tone of some of our newspaper remarks have been sharp, it has been counter-acted by the insulting of Hitler by Witzmann, ... and through the grave affronts of our State

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<sup>116</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, “Vor Neuwahlen im Thüringen”, 15-16 March 1931

<sup>117</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, “Der Volkspartei-Feldzug in Thüringen”, 19-20 March 1931

<sup>118</sup> *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, “Entscheidende Aenderungen in der

Minister Dr. Frick by Knittel", a reference to the DVP's Landtag representative had allegedly accused Frick of cowardice in a meeting of the budget committee. According to the NSDAP, the DVP had "absolutely no cause", therefore, to complain about the NSDAP's tone, although the NSDAP believed that the DVP should "mind its own business".<sup>119</sup>

The NSDAP was interested in the LB, WP and DNVP's opinion regarding the vote of no confidence. It accused any party that considered abstaining of turning its back upon the politics of the last year. The Gau leadership in Thuringia was fully aware that there were discussions being held on forming a minority government which would depend on the toleration of the SPD, "the greatest enemies of an independent, national Thuringia". The NSDAP claimed the maintenance of a financially and politically independent Thuringia as "a stronghold [*Hochburg*] of a national and Christian Germany" had been the purpose of the government since it was formed in 1930. "The parties moreover must be clear that this treason to every foundation preached since 1924 would cause a storm of wrath which we in Germany have never experienced

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Thüringischen Regierungspolitik", 25 March 1931

<sup>119</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, "Alarmsignale aus Thüringen", 29-30 March 1931

before”.<sup>120</sup>

## The Vote of No-Confidence in Frick

Frölich introduced the fourth and final no-confidence motion by saying that since the election of the coalition the SPD had regarded it as its first duty to remove the NSDAP from the coalition. According to Frölich, Frick and his *Fachreferenten* had persecuted non-Nazis and their organisations whilst favouring Nazis, citing the example of Georg Seifert, and the appointment of Nazis to the police force. This “political narrow-mindedness” had also led to Frick banning theatre performances and films, and the attempt to turn Thuringia’s cultural and educational establishments into party agencies. But, Frölich continued, Frick’s “style of governing” (*Regierungskunst*) had met its match in the court judgements passed against his measures, whilst the “huge majority” of the Thuringian population wanted an end to Frick’s policies, with the SPD attempting to bring this about with their votes of no confidence.<sup>121</sup>

Witzmann confirmed that the cause of the crisis was Sauckel’s article. The article contained “insults of the coarsest manner” against the

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<sup>120</sup> *Völkischer Beobachter*, “Alarmsignale aus Thüringen”, 29-30 March 1931. See also *Der Nationalsozialist*, “Will man Thüringen der Partei der Kriegsdienstverweiger, Landessverräter und Religionsbeschimpfer ausliefern?”, 28 March 1931

bourgeois parties in general, and the DVP in particular. Witzmann had been offended by Sauckel referring to the DVP as the “so-called Volkspartei”, its members as “imbecilic old men”, “deceivers and traitors, who in their unheard of incompetence and impudence play a wicked game with the fate of our population”. It was simply incorrect, protested Witzmann, that Sauckel claimed to be attacking the DVP at Reich level since the DVP in Thuringia was also affected by such remarks. The NSDAP had refused to withdraw the remarks and as a consequence the DVP had refused to participate in the inter-party discussions. Witzmann told the Landtag that the day before (31 March) the NSDAP had published a declaration, which was passed off as an offer of peace, yet Witzmann regarded the effort as “too late”. “You [the NSDAP] have had three weeks to take back the insults”. The attempt was also inadequate since it “in no way” conceded the severity of the insults.<sup>121</sup> Witzmann said that behind the crisis of the last few weeks lay “weighty causes” which had continually risen in their intensity. Witzmann argued that although the NSDAP claimed not to be a party, it was the most political party of all since its representatives considered it more important to carry out propaganda for the NSDAP than carry out the

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<sup>121</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, Band II, 79th sitting, 1 April 1931, p.1820, col.II-p.1822, col.I

<sup>122</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, p.1822, col.I-p.1822, col.II

government's work: "That has been a severe disappointment for us". Witzmann confessed that it had not occurred to the DVP that it should not have had any expectations about Frick.<sup>123</sup> Witzmann stressed that from the beginning of the coalition "we knew ... that we would have to make sacrifices". The DVP did not deny that some good had been achieved by the coalition, yet it had been achieved by the coalition acting together. It was quite wrong, in Witzmann's opinion, for the NSDAP to claim that it had done all the work. Witzmann reminded the Landtag that since Christmas he had been publicly pronouncing that there was a point of 'thus far and no further', protesting that the DVP had always behaved in a loyal manner towards the government despite the anti-NSDAP view of the Reich DVP. "So loyal and unbiased has our attitude always been, that we are therefore filled with pain and indignation because ... I had again and again held fast despite all the difficulties from day one, not to lose patience, and to make the effort with this young party".<sup>124</sup>

Heilmann accused Witzmann of doing an injustice to the Nazis since in all important areas the NSDAP had helped high finance and the DVP carry out their policies, and that the DVP had consented to and

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<sup>123</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, p.1823, col.II

<sup>124</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, p.1825, col.I-p.1826, col.II

participated in Nazi policies, albeit with “bleeding hearts and tearful eyes”.<sup>125</sup> Heilmann pointed out that over the previous year the DVP had been attacked and insulted by the NSDAP many times, but only now the DVP sought a reason to leave the government. Heilmann accused the DVP of wanting to leave since membership contradicted DVP policy at Reich level over foreign policy.

In spite of the KPD's remarks, the DVP voted alongside the KPD and the DDP in support of the SPD's motion.<sup>126</sup> There were 29 votes for the dismissal of Frick and Marschler, 22 for their retention in the government, and two absences.<sup>127</sup> Frick and Marschler immediately resigned.<sup>128</sup> Karl Kien, the DNVP's Staatsrat, resigned for ‘personal’ reasons.<sup>129</sup>

The coalition formally dissolved despite Hitler and Sauckel's

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<sup>125</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, p.1831, col.II

<sup>126</sup> *Vorlagen, Anträge, Grosse Anfragen*, nr.209, 21 March 1931. Marschler was subject to his third motion of no confidence. See *ibid.*, nr.210, 21 March 1930.

<sup>127</sup> 1 LB and 1 KPD.

<sup>128</sup> See ThHStAW, ThStMin/281 Frick to von Thümmel, 1 April 1931; *Allgemeine Thüringische Landeszeitung Deutschlands*, “Die nationalsozialistischen Mitglieder scheiden aus der thüringischen Regierung aus”, 1 April 1931; *Weimarerische Zeitung*, “Sturz des nationalsozialistischen Ministers Dr. Frick”, 1 April 1931; BABL, R 43 I/2316 Bl. 134 W.T.B. “Das Mißtrauensvotum gegen Staatsminister Frick angenommen”, 1 April 1931; *The Times*, “Setback to Nazi Fortunes: Defeat of Dr. Frick”, 2 April 1931

<sup>129</sup> Kien, like Frick, had not been elected to the Landtag.



attempts to revive it.<sup>130</sup> Frick's fall from office was a particular blow for Hitler since the NSDAP was also facing the 'Stennes Revolt' within the SA at the same time. On hearing of Frick's fall, Goebbels wrote: "In the meantime Frick is overthrown. Luck enough!" [*Glückes genug!*]<sup>131</sup>

That evening Hitler launched a stinging attack upon the DVP. He claimed that the whole of German history had been a series of tragic acts, which revealed the enemy of the German Volk as an internal enemy.<sup>132</sup> The DVP, which had deposed Frick, was not representative of the German Volk. "[A]fter today's contemptible infamy", said Hitler, "a day of revival shall come once again ... There is no reconciliation with our opponents. They must be annihilated. There is no German ascent without destroying these parties." Turning to the subject of Frick's removal from the coalition, Hitler said that Frick could only use "a fraction of his might for Thuringia". For, after today's events, you can judge how much he has had to struggle against these parties ... that he has been overthrown has elevated him in my eyes ... one cannot govern

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<sup>130</sup> H. Patze W. Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringens*. Teil 5(ii) (Cologne/Vienna, 1978), pp. 512-513

<sup>131</sup> See E. Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Samtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941*. Teil 1, Band II. 1. Januar 1931-31. Dezember 1936 (Munich, 1987), p.42, entry of 2 April 1931

<sup>132</sup> *Der Nationalsozialist*, "Die Tat von Heute bringt der Bewegung mindestens eine Million neuer Menschen", 3 April 1931

Germany with these elements ... Our opponents shall also come to the realisation that 1 April has been the blackest day of the Deutsche Volkspartei."<sup>133</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter considered Frick's relationship with his coalition partners, particularly with the DVP given that they had been strongly opposed to Frick's candidature. The chapter revealed that the DVP's attitude towards Frick began to harden as early as March as a result of the Thuringian NSDAP's hostility towards the DVP, but that despite the DVP's evident misgivings it decided to remain in the coalition, and focused on the intense misgivings of the DVP towards Frick and the NSDAP by June 1930, but how dislike of the SPD, prevented the DVP defecting from the coalition in July's vote of no-confidence, despite the undeniable evidence that the NSDAP despised the DVP. The NSDAP-DVP relationship deteriorated even further after the NSDAP's spectacular result in the Reichstag elections in September 1930, to the point that by late March 1931 the DVP had simply had enough of being the target of the NSDAP's hostility and abandoned any reservations it

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<sup>133</sup> *Der Nationalsozialist*, "Die Tat von Heute bringt der Bewegung mindestens eine Million neuer Menschen", 3 April 1931

had had in voting with the SPD, KPD and DDP in removing Frick from office.

## Chapter Seven:

### *Conclusion*

## Frick, the first Nazi Minister

“Unimportant as the entire incident appears, it [Frick’s period in office] did achieve significance through the fact that it involved the first attempts by the National Socialists to use the powers of a constituted government for their own ends.”<sup>1</sup>

As Thuringia’s Interior Minister Frick clearly attempted to remove pro-Republic, communist or anti-Nazi officials from his Ministries and the Thuringian government, and recruit Nazi or pro-Nazi individuals, with particular regard to the Thuringian police force. The existence and use of article 3, paragraph 1 of the Enabling Act, it could well be argued, pointed to an intention to apply it on a much broader basis, but that the Reich Ministry of the Interior’s successful opposition, which led to the Reichsgericht’s judgement against article 3, paragraph 1, prevented its further application. Given that Frick then enacted a measure designed to root out communist officials and civil servants is possible proof that Frick did have the intention of applying article 3, paragraph 1 of the Enabling Act on a much broader scale within the government and administration of Thuringia.

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<sup>1</sup> E. Eyck, *A History of the Weimar Republic: Volume II: From the Locarno Conference to Hitler’s Seizure of Power* (Cambridge, MA., 1963), p.262

On the subject of the political complexion of the police officers and orientation of the political police after the *Machtergreifung*, Robert Gellately has written:

“The transformation of the old centralised political police forces across the individual German states did not require a widespread cleansing of the ranks or purge of the old political police. In a word, the police became Nazis or at least adjusted to the Nazi conceptions of the police; there was no wholesale expulsion of the old custodians in favour of the Nazi Party members, the Brownshirts (SA), or SS radicals. That said, there was to be some shuffling in some quarters; but, as we have seen, there is a considerable difference of opinion concerning the nature and extent of any ‘purge’. The only way to settle this issue would be to carry out a full-scale quantitative analysis of Germany’s various political police forces before 1933 (perhaps as far back as 1930), and then to trace what happened in the following years.”<sup>2</sup>

The course of the police subsidies conflict shows that Frick was keenly interested in altering Thuringian police force. But Frick’s appointment of Nazi Party members as police directors illustrates that he was more interested in ‘re-aligning’ the management of the Thuringian police force since this offered more potential to capture and control the whole police force from above than would an influx of Nazi Party members into the rank and file of the police. Perhaps it did not escape Frick that the appointment of professionally qualified civil servants who *just happened* to be NSDAP members would

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<sup>2</sup> R. Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945* (Oxford,

provoke less of a furore, though the police subsidies dispute has illustrated that the Reich government would not tolerate any attempt by Frick to alter the Thuringian police in a manner other than that laid down by law. As 1930 progressed the Reich and Prussian governments' concern about the growth of the NSDAP, and the threat it posed to the Republic, were revealed in the lengthy manuscripts about the Nazi Party.<sup>3</sup> For, despite the ambivalent attitude of the NSDAP towards civil servants,<sup>4</sup> the Reich and Prussian governments feared that this group, as well as those that were relied upon to maintain public order and internal security (the police and the Reichswehr) could be used by the Nazis as a means of subverting the Republic from within.

What can be said of Frick's time as Education Minister? Hitler certainly believed that the post offered great potential and, if exploited correctly, would lead to Thuringia becoming the centre of

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1990), pp.252-253

<sup>3</sup> See BABL R 43 I/2682 Reich Ministry of the Interior, 'Das hochverräterische Unternehmen der NSDAP', November 1930, and R 43 I/2682-2683 Prussian Ministry of the Interior, 'Denkschrift des Preußischen Innenministeriums', August 1930

<sup>4</sup> See J. Caplan, "Speaking the Right Language: The Nazi Party and the Civil Service Vote in the Weimar Republic", in T. Childers (ed.), *The Formation of the Nazi Constituency, 1919-1933* (London, 1986), pp.182-185

another renewal of the German spirit,<sup>5</sup> and place the NSDAP at the head of the right wing and conservative movement against the ‘modernist’ trends associated with the Weimar Republic. Frick desperately wanted to awaken the instinct for *völkisch* ‘self-preservation’ in the youth of Thuringia by developing the education syllabus to illustrate and reflect the “heroic stance.”<sup>6</sup> The banning of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the introduction of decrees designed to foster colonial sentiments, as well as irredentist feelings towards the *Auslanddeutschtum*, together with the introduction of anti-Semitic school prayers, was part and parcel of Frick’s mandate. In light of such measures, it would be hard to disagree with a contemporary opinion that “Frick did his best to obey [Hitler’s] instructions by using his position to turn every school and educational agency into an instrument of propaganda”.<sup>7</sup> Needless to say, Frick’s attempts to inculcate the minds of young people in the ways of National Socialist thinking were only part of the picture. The action against the contents of the Weimar *Schloss Museum* can be viewed as a reaction

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<sup>5</sup> F. Dickmann, “Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen als Modell der Machtergreifung: ein Brief Hitlers aus dem Jahre 1930”, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (iv-October), 14. Jahrgang, 1966, p.463

<sup>6</sup> G. Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick. Der Legalist des Unrechtstaates. Eine Politische Biographie* (Paderborn, 1992), p.58



against what was perceived as the Republic's "fraudulent spirit of Weimar."

Donald Tracey has argued that many of Frick's measures were more notable for their publicity value, rather than for any real administrative content.<sup>8</sup> Frick publicly avowed his intention "to make Thuringia into the centre of an extremely fanatical National Self-defence, Opposition and Freedom",<sup>9</sup> and Frick was indeed successful in drawing attention to himself and the NSDAP. *The Times* newspaper and Great Britain's embassy in Berlin compiled extensive reports concerning Frick's ministerial period. *The Times* reported that Thuringia became known as "Frick's Reich" due to the publicity he generated.<sup>10</sup> Frick's "biting commentary"<sup>11</sup> against the Young Plan can be cited as an example, for although it quickly emerged that Frick had not been entitled to make such a speech, this was irrelevant since the speech had been made, with public and media attention

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<sup>7</sup> R. T. Clark, *The Fall of the German Republic: A Political Study* (London, 1935), p.323

<sup>8</sup> D.R. Tracey, "The Development of the National Socialist Party in Thuringia, 1924-1930", *Central European History* (i-March), Volume 8, 1975, p.47

<sup>9</sup> H. Patze and W. Schlesinger, *Geschichte Thüringens*. Teil 5(ii) (Cologne/Vienna, 1978), p.509; Neliba, *Wilhelm Frick*, p.59. Frick allowed National Socialist papers to resume publication in Thuringia, see L.L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of the Third Reich* (New York, 1976), p.101

<sup>10</sup> *The Times*, "Setback to Nazi Fortunes: The Defeat of Dr. Frick", 2 April 1931

<sup>11</sup> E. Fröhlich, E. (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941*. Teil 1, Band I. 27. Juni 1924-30. Dezember 1930 (Munich, 1987), p.514

again focusing upon Frick and his role in the Thuringian government. Even Frick suffering the misfortune of losing to the Reich government over the Enabling Bill, the Reich government's withholding of police subsidies, and the defeat of his anti-Semitic school prayers undoubtedly had a beneficial effect in reminding the German electorate within Thuringia and Germany that Frick was very much alive and well.

One final factor that deserves consideration is Frick's relations with his coalition partners. Those who consider Frick's ministerial sojourn in Thuringia as a prelude to the Third Reich have neglected this. The development of the Thuringian NSDAP, first under Artur Dinter, and then Fritz Sauckel, provided a power base for the Nazi Party to challenge the other right-wing parties in Thuringia for a share in political power following the Landtag election of December 1929. More importantly, the organisational cohesion and electoral success of the Thuringian Nazi Party was a major factor in the reason why Frick was not ejected from the government prior to April 1931, despite the evident dissatisfaction of the DVP from early March 1930 onwards. The coalition parties – DVP, DNVP, WP, and the LB – needed the Thuringian NSDAP in the coalition government, for without Nazi support, the coalition would not have possessed a

majority, and Thuringia would have possibly been governed by an SPD-KPD coalition instead. However, and arguably more importantly, the coalition parties were more minded to tolerate Frick than they perhaps would have done if their performance in the Landtag election of December 1929 had not been characterised by a weakening of the vote through defections to the Nazi Party. The coalition parties understood, especially the DVP (and Hitler more so), that they needed Frick much more than he needed them, and that should they remove him from office a new Landtag election would result in a further disintegration of their vote in the NSDAP's favour.

## **Towards an Interpretative Framework**

Hitler's letter of early February 1930 to Herr Eichhorn, his overseas supporter, which contained Hitler's frank description of his "deliberate plans and tactics"<sup>12</sup> over the formation of the coalition government in Thuringia, shows that Hitler clearly possessed definite ideas about how Frick was to spend his time in office. Most historians who have considered Frick's period in office believe that it

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<sup>12</sup> F. Dickmann, "Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen", p.455

constituted something more than a propaganda campaign. Donald Tracey acknowledges that

“the Frick ministry illustrates Hitler’s tactics so clearly as to constitute a general model for the assumption of power.”<sup>13</sup>

Fritz Dickmann believed that:

“the course of events from January 1930 in Thuringia appear almost as a dress rehearsal to the *Machtergreifung* three years later.”<sup>14</sup>

The ‘dress rehearsal’ interpretation is a simple and initially convincing theory - a good example of a *post hoc* analysis that historians can impose upon events. However, there are three objections to this theory.

First, little - if any - primary or secondary source research has been undertaken to substantiate the claim. After all, how can it be possible to describe Frick’s exercise of ministerial power in Thuringia as a “dress rehearsal for the seizure of power” without any detailed examination of his period in office?

Second, there has not been any attempt to develop a theory of

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<sup>13</sup> Tracey, “The Development of the National Socialist Party in Thuringia”, p.48

<sup>14</sup> Dickmann, “Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen”, p.458

a 'dress rehearsal' and what this would mean in practice: it has simply been enough to describe Frick's activities in Thuringia as a precursor to events within Germany between 1933 and 1934, and then leave the matter at that. Such an uncritical association between the NSDAP's wielding of power in Thuringia, and then Germany, does not take the understanding of events in either situation far, if anywhere at all. The hypothesis is far too rigid and deterministic since it rests upon a superficial and selective view of the two events.

Lastly, and perhaps, most importantly, despite Hitler's professed wish that Frick radically alter the areas of Thuringia's government and administration that were within his grasp, what did Hitler understand by this? Was it to be a 'dress rehearsal', even though to anyone's knowledge Hitler never mentioned the term in connection with the events in Thuringia? If it was, *how far* did Hitler conceive Frick's ministry as a 'dress rehearsal', e.g., a highly defined exercise with highly defined aims, or a mission to reconnoitre the ground to see how far the NSDAP could advance. Even the nature and contents of Hitler's briefing to Frick can only be speculation. Yet what did Goebbels mean when he wrote on 8 January 1930? "There

[in Thuringia] we will put it to the first test.”<sup>15</sup> If Goebbels’ views can be taken as an accurate reflection of Hitler’s, then the idea of a “dress rehearsal” moves from the sphere of circumstantial evidence (and historical wishful thinking) towards the realm of premeditated action. However, the “dress rehearsal” theory is a view of the Nazi Party and its attitude towards governmental power, which, it could be argued, is one of the last ‘conspiratorial’ interpretations of Nazism that still awaits demolition by historians, for the “dress rehearsal” hypothesis fails to take into account any degree of opportunism and reaction to events, either by Frick in 1930-1931, or by Hitler in 1933.

It is the missing dimension of opportunism, which is crucial in considering the wider significance of Frick’s ministries. Günther Neliba, Frick’s biographer, has taken an idea of Hildegard Brenner,<sup>16</sup> and argues that Frick turned Thuringia into a “field of experiment” (*Experimentierfeld*)<sup>17</sup>. Neliba believes that many of Frick’s decrees and

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<sup>15</sup> “Da wir werden die erste Probe aufs Exempel liefern”, E. Fröhlich (ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Aufzeichnungen 1924 bis 1941. Teil I, Band I. 27. Juni 1924-30. Dezember 1930* (Munich, 1987), p. 480

<sup>16</sup> H. Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1963), p. 22

<sup>17</sup> See G. Neliba, “Wilhelm Frick und Thüringen als Experimentierfeld für die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung”, in D. Heiden and G. Mai (eds.), *Nationalsozialismus in Thüringen* (Weimar/Cologne/Vienna, 1995)

measures possessed the character of a “political experiment”; any similarities with the events of 1933-1934 are dismissed by Neliba as superficial. The concept of the *Experimentierfeld* is possibly the best interpretation that can be derived from the extant historical evidence. It permits the fact that Hitler had ideas and policies, which he wished Frick to pursue through his offices, but it allows for flexibility and opportunism in pursuit of the goals. Frick was not a Nazi radical. If anything, he was in many ways still the sober, conservative minded civil servant from the *Kaiserreich* he had been before he met Hitler, conscious of what could be achieved in office; after all, this mindset of Frick’s was the reason why he was chosen as Hitler’s candidate. Hitler undoubtedly wanted Frick to push the boundaries of reform as far as he could, but Frick knew from practical experience how difficult this could be. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler rejected the idea of action dictated by blueprints because he recognised the need of the politician to remain flexible in pursuit of his aims: note the change from pursuing the overthrow of the Weimar Republic by violent means to one of using the ballot box and the constitution following the failure of the Munich *Putsch*. The evidence suggests that whilst Frick’s attitude toward his mission was enthusiastic, his actions were tempered by caution, e.g. Frick’s

piecemeal appointment of professionally qualified civil servants who *just happened* to be NSDAP members and their sympathisers into the upper echelons of the administration of the Thuringian Police Force.

In view of Frick's experiences, did the NSDAP, as a whole, learn anything from the episode? Jane Caplan argues:

"It is true that Hitler wanted Frick's spell as Thuringian interior minister in 1931 to serve as an experiment for a future national government, but such evidence as we have does not suggest that the party leadership undertook any systematic review of this experience or sponsored any serious planning for the future."<sup>18</sup>

It could be argued that this lack of explicit planning for any future 'seizure of power' is evidence that Frick's period in office cannot be viewed as a "dress rehearsal". If anyone were to learn any lessons from Frick's period of rule in Thuringia it would be Hitler and a select few in the top echelon of the NSDAP who would conduct the negotiations over entry to a Land or Reich government. The lower levels of the Party would have to suffice with being told what to do when the time came.

Nevertheless, Frick's experiences in Thuringia had demonstrated to Hitler that his idea of pursuing power at the Land

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<sup>18</sup> J. Caplan, *Government without Administration: State and Bureaucracy in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 1988), p.131



level was correct, providing “a recipe for broader testing”<sup>19</sup> in Braunschweig from September 1930 onwards, and Anhalt, Oldenburg and Mecklenburg in 1932. “In all of these coalitions the NSDAP was a minority party and as such interested only in controlling those agencies of direct use in furthering its seizure of power.”<sup>20</sup> Although the events in Thuringia were by no means a complete success because of the strong opposition, which had been encountered, this, it could be argued, reflected more on the methods used to exploit the opportunity, rather than the aims and the ministries occupied. The gaining of control over the Interior and Education Ministries in the state governments before 1933 show that the aims remained constant as these ministries would, or rather, could lead to the right rewards. Despite the excesses of Frick and the notoriety he brought to himself and the NSDAP, the Nazi Party remained a perfectly respectable coalition partner in the eyes of the conservative right,<sup>21</sup> which was a significant step toward the creation of the Third Reich.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Dickmann, “Die Regierungsbildung in Thüringen”, p.458

<sup>20</sup> Tracey, “The Development of the National Socialist Party in Thuringia”, p.49

<sup>21</sup> J.C. Fest, *Hitler* (London, 1974), p.265. See A. Dorpalen, *Hindenberg and the Weimar Republic* (Princeton, N.J., 1964), p.437, for von Papen’s comments of 1932 that Frick was “a moderate man who ... had led the Thuringian government with circumspection.”

<sup>22</sup> M. Broszat, *The Hitler State* (Harlow, 1981), p.8

## Appendix

*The Thuringian School Prayers, April 1930*

## The Thuringian School Prayers, April 1930

1. Dear God, you desire with a strong hand,  
In these terrible times,  
The Homeland, the Fatherland,  
to cultivate deep in our hearts.  
Lord, allow us to grow pure and great,  
To one day carry out a great duty  
The bright destiny of the liberated Volk,  
To be held in strong hands.

*(From a prayer collection of the Thuringian Protestant Church's Landeskirchenrat)*

2. Father, in your all-mighty hand,  
Stand our Volk and Fatherland.  
You were our Forefathers' strength and honour,  
You are our constant weapon and defence.  
Therefore liberate us from deception and treason.  
Make us strong for the liberating act,  
Grant us the heroic courage of the Saviour,  
Honour and freedom are the highest good!  
Our vow and watchword is always:  
Germany awake! Lord liberate us!  
God grant it!

*(By a Protestant clergyman)*

3. Father in Heaven,  
I believe in your all-mighty hand,  
I believe in the Volkstum and Fatherland,  
I believe in the Forefathers, might and honour,  
I believe you are our weapon and defence,  
I believe you punish the treason of our Land,  
And bless the liberating act of the Heimat,  
Germany, awake to freedom!

*(By a German poet)*

4. Father in Heaven.

I believe in your omnipotence, justness and love.

I believe in loving my German Volk and Fatherland.

I know that atheism and high treason tear apart and destroy our Volk.

I know that despite this, the yearning and the force for freedom live in the best.

I believe that this freedom shall come about through the love of our Father in Heaven if we believe in our own strength.

*(By a Protestant teacher)*

5. Hear us, O Lord, the children implore you:

Allow our work to go forward!

Give rest to our dead warriors!

The widows, orphans you console!

And give us Germans renewed strength

Which shall create Freedom and Peace for us.

*(By a catholic teacher)<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung*, 1930, nr.6, 22 April 1930, p.40

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