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'The Greatest Stupidity of My Life': Alfred Hugenberg and the Formation of the Hitler Cabinet, January 1933

On the day after Adolf Hitler’s installation as chancellor, Alfred Hugenberg, the chairman of the German National People’s Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei or DNVP) and a prominent member of the Hitler cabinet, supposedly remarked: ‘I’ve just committed the greatest stupidity of my life; I have allied myself with the greatest demagogue in world history.’ Whether apocryphal or not, the remark attributed to Hugenberg nevertheless reflects the uneasiness that the Nationalist Party leader felt upon his entry into the Hitler cabinet on 30 January 1933. After all, Hugenberg had been repeatedly disappointed by his personal experiences with Hitler, first in 1929–30 in connection with the National Committee for the German Referendum against the Young Plan (Reichsausschuss für das deutsche Volksbegehren gegen den Young Plan) and then more recently in 1931–32 as Hitler’s confederate in the short-lived ‘Harzburg Front’. Moreover, Hugenberg’s party had waged a particularly vitriolic campaign against the Nazi Party in both the July and November 1932 Reichstag elections, and there was strong opposition within party ranks to an accommodation with the nazis that did not sufficiently secure the vital interests of those whom the DNVP purportedly represented. All of this suggests that Hugenberg’s decision to enter the Hitler cabinet was not an easy one and that it took place in spite of strong personal reservations both on the part of Hugenberg and many of his most ardent supporters.

While the secondary literature on the formation of the Hitler government is by now quite extensive, neither it nor the various studies of Hugenberg’s political career have provided an altogether adequate explanation of Hugenberg’s role in the negotiations that led to Hitler’s installation as chancellor. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to examine the factors that led Hugenberg to set aside his...
personal antipathy towards the Nazi Party leader and join him in the formation of a new government on terms that offered little protection for his party and the conservative interests that still stood behind it. In this way, the paper seeks to shed new light on the precise nature of the relationship that developed between Hitler and Germany’s conservative élite in the first months of the Third Reich and to understand why the latter was so powerless in preventing the nazis from establishing a one-party dictatorship less than six months after Hitler’s accession to power. This study is based in large part on the diary and private papers of one of Hugenberg’s closest associates, Reinhold Quaatz. A member of the inner circle that regularly advised Hugenberg on political matters from 1928 to 1933, Quaatz was in close touch with the events that led to the formation of the Hitler cabinet. His diary, therefore, provides a wealth of information on the deliberations and political calculations that surrounded Hugenberg’s decision to enter the Hitler government and complements what historians already know about these negotiations from the diaries of Joseph Goebbels, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Count Lutz von Schwerin-Krosigk.

Hugenberg’s election to the chairmanship of the German National People’s Party in October 1928 constituted a genuine turning point in the history of the Weimar Republic. Within the DNVP Hugenberg had always been an outspoken nationalist and was resolutely opposed to any move by the party that might be interpreted as a gesture of reconciliation toward the hated Weimar Republic. In the summer of 1924, for example, Hugenberg was deeply agitated by the split that developed in the DNVP Reichstag delegation over the ratification of the Dawes Plan and called for a purge of those party members who had brought the odium of fulfilment down upon the DNVP. Over the course of the next four years Hugenberg led a relentless campaign against the efforts of Germany’s Foreign Minister, Gustav Stresemann, to stabilize the Weimar Republic from the Right by co-opting influential conservative economic interest organizations such as the National Federation of German Industry (Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie or RDI) and the National Rural League (Reichs-Landbund or RLB). When the DNVP entered the national government first in 1925 and then again at the beginning of 1927, Hugenberg denounced this as nothing less than a betrayal of the very principles upon which the party had been founded. At the DNVP’s Königsberg
party congress in autumn 1927, Hugenberg launched a determined bid to regain control of the party with an open letter to national party chairman Kuno von Westarp, in which he exhorted the DNVP to purge itself of those who had placed economic self-interest before the struggle for national liberation and to return to the policy of unconditional opposition that had served it so well during the first years of the Weimar Republic. A year later, Hugenberg's efforts were crowned with success when, after a bitter internal party struggle, he was chosen as Westarp's successor to the DNVP party chairmanship.

Hugenberg's goal as DNVP party chairman was to transform the party from a socially and ideologically heterogeneous conservative Sammelpartei into a strong bloc 'fused together by the iron hammer of Weltanschauung'. At the same time, Hugenberg sought to polarize the German party system into two mutually antagonistic camps through the destruction of the various middle parties that lay between the Marxist Left and the nationalist Right. With the creation of the National Committee for the German Referendum against the Young Plan in the summer of 1929, Hugenberg began to reach across party lines to unify all of those who were irrevocably opposed to the policy of fulfilment into a united national front that would liberate Germany from the twin shackles of Weimar and Versailles. It was in this connection that Hugenberg first established contact with Adolf Hitler and the leaders of the still benign National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei or NSDAP). Hugenberg's relationship with Hitler proved trying from the very beginning. For although Hitler's presence in the presidium of the National Referendum Committee helped legitimate the Nazi Party leader as a national political figure, he refused to countenance any change in the wording of the notorious 'imprisonment clause' of the so-called freedom law against the Young Plan that might have made it possible to keep the leaders of the DNVP's left wing from leaving the party. When Hugenberg temporarily weakened in the spring of 1930 and agreed to support the newly founded cabinet of Heinrich Brüning in order to prevent the secession of his party's entire agrarian wing, Hitler promptly resigned from the National Referendum Committee and denounced the DNVP for its lack of political resolve.

Though disappointed by Hitler's behaviour as a member of the National Referendum Committee, Hugenberg continued to court the Nazi Party leader even after the outcome of the September 1930
Reichstag elections dramatically altered the relative strengths of their respective parties. In February 1931, Hugenberg re-established contact with Hitler in connection with a referendum the Stahlhelm, a conservative veterans’ organization that had allied itself with the DNVP and NSDAP in the campaign against the Young Plan, was planning to initiate in an attempt to force the dissolution of the Prussian state parliament.19 Although the leaders of the two right-wing parties had no alternative but to support the referendum, they tried to force the crusade for the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag into a more radical direction than the leaders of the Stahlhelm had planned to take by walking out of the Reichstag on 10 February in an ostensible protest against Brüning’s alleged violations of Article 54 of the Weimar Constitution.20 While the leaders of the DNVP and Stahlhelm were able to resolve their differences in April 1931 by agreeing not only to co-operate in the second phase of the referendum for the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag, but also to organize a demonstration for the entire national opposition a week or so before the Reichstag reconvened in the autumn,21 Hugenberg’s efforts to reach a similar understanding with Hitler were thwarted by the DNVP’s antipathy towards the increasingly radical methods the NSDAP had begun to employ in its struggle against Brüning and Hindenburg.22 As a result, it was not until the middle of the summer that Hugenberg was able to meet with Hitler and resolve some of the difficulties that stood in the way of the NSDAP’s co-operation with the other organizations in the national opposition.23

The rapprochement between Hugenberg and Hitler in the summer of 1931 prepared the way for a major demonstration that the DNVP, NSDAP and other right-wing organizations held in the small resort town of Bad Harzburg on 10–11 October, the weekend before the Reichstag was scheduled to reconvene.24 But as plans for the Harzburg demonstration were being finalized, Hitler and the Nazi Party leadership became increasingly apprehensive over the way things were developing. Hitler was particularly infuriated at the way in which the more conservative elements of the national opposition had monopolized planning for the Harzburg rally, thereby making it appear as if he and the NSDAP were actually in the tow of Hugenberg and his associates. As a result, Hitler was not only late for the conference that had been scheduled in Harzburg for the evening of 10 October, but on the following day he insulted the leaders of the Stahlhelm by leaving the podium just as its detachments were being reviewed.25 This bit of impudence precipitated a bitter exchange
between Hitler and the Stahlhelm leadership, and it was only through Hugenberg's vigorous intervention that the Nazi Party leader could be dissuaded from leaving the rally before he and the other leaders of the national opposition were scheduled to address the assembled throngs on the evening of 11 October.26

As events at Harzburg clearly indicated, the unity of the national opposition was fragile, if not non-existent. Although Hugenberg continued to foster the illusion that the Harzburg demonstration contained the seeds of a viable political alliance,27 relations between the NSDAP and the more conservative elements of the national opposition continued to deteriorate throughout the remainder of 1931.28 At no point did this become more apparent than in the negotiations to nominate a candidate to challenge Reich President Paul von Hindenburg's re-election to the office he had held since 1925. The various factions of the German Right had been jockeying for position in anticipation of the forthcoming presidential elections for the better part of two years. Brüning had originally hoped that it might be possible to secure an extension of Hindenburg's term of office by a two-thirds majority in the Reichstag, but after extensive negotiations with the Nationalist and Nazi Party leadership at the beginning of 1932, both of the right-wing parties, in what must have been one of the few instances in which the unity of the 'Harzburg Front' was more fact than fiction, refused to go along with such an arrangement.29 For his own part, the eighty-four-year-old Reich President was reluctant to stand for re-election and agreed to do so only after the German Kyffhäuser League (Deutscher Reichskriegerbund Kyffhäuser), an organization for retired army officers under the leadership of former general Max von Horn, added its voice to those that were already exhorting him to become a candidate.30

Having successfully blocked any arrangement that might have spared the Reich President the ordeal of a re-election campaign, Hugenberg hoped that it might be possible to persuade the NSDAP to join the DNVP, Stahlhelm and more conservative elements of the 'Harzburg Front' in supporting a common candidate.31 But Hugenberg's negotiations with the Nazi Party leadership in the second week of February 1932 failed to produce a candidate on whom the various factions within the 'Harzburg Front' could agree. In the meantime, Hitler found himself under increasingly heavy pressure from elements within his own party to dissociate himself as unequivocally as possible from the reactionaries of the 'Harzburg
Front’ and to challenge Hindenburg for the presidency himself. When Hitler therefore announced his own candidacy on 17 February, his action destroyed whatever unity the ‘Harzburg Front’ still possessed. Embittered by this turn of events, Hugenberg and the leaders of the Stahlhelm proceeded to conclude an agreement whereby the DNVP would support Stahlhelm leader Theodor Duesterberg in the forthcoming presidential campaign in return for their support in the state and regional elections that were scheduled to take place throughout much of the country on 24 April. Relations between Hugenberg and Hitler were further strained when the DNVP announced after Duesterberg’s miserable showing in the preliminary election on 13 March that it would not endorse any candidate in the run-off elections that were scheduled for 10 April. Members of the DNVP were therefore free to make their own choice between Hindenburg and Hitler.

The collapse of the ‘Harzburg Front’ destroyed the last remnants of Hugenberg’s confidence in Hitler’s political reliability and set the scene for a bitter polemic between their respective parties in the election campaigns that were held throughout the country over the course of the next six months. While nazi propagandists routinely denounced the DNVP as the party of social and political reaction, Hugenberg and his associates attacked the NSDAP for its social and economic radicalism in a desperate attempt to stem the defection of its predominantly middle-class and peasant supporters. Speaking at a special conference of the DNVP’s national leadership (Reichsführertagung) on 26 June 1932, Hugenberg claimed that the NSDAP’s obstructionist tactics had severely undermined the effectiveness of the struggle against Marxism and designated National Socialism the new opponent of the national front. By far the most vehement attack against Hitler, however, was to be found in a pamphlet that one prominent Nationalist, Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin, published under the title, Der Nationalsozialismus — eine Gefahr. Kleist-Schmenzin held Hitler personally responsible for the anti-Christian propaganda of nazi ideologues like Alfred Rosenberg and called upon the more traditional elements on the German Right to dissociate themselves from the NSDAP as unequivocally as possible.

The fact that the two parties pursued radically different policies towards the cabinet that had assumed office in early June 1932 under the chancellorship of Franz von Papen constituted a further strain in relations between the DNVP and NSDAP. For, whereas both parties had
been united in their opposition to Papen's predecessor, the Nationalists were far more favourably disposed to an accommodation with the new government than were Hitler and the Nazi Party leadership. The Nationalists were particularly critical of the obstructionist tactics that the NSDAP had employed in bringing about the dissolution of the Reichstag on 12 September 1932, and attacked the nazis in the campaign for the November 1932 Reichstag elections for having consistently placed partisan political gains before the unity of the German Right. With the demise of the Papen government at the end of November and the appointment of General Kurt von Schleicher as his successor, however, Hugenberg and his associates began to moderate their attacks on the NSDAP. For, to the DNVP party leadership, Schleicher's appointment signalled nothing less than 'a backslide [Rückfall] into parliamentarism' and a return of the German Centre Party (Deutsche Zentrumspartei) to the pre-eminent position it had held through most of the Weimar Republic. By the same token, Schleicher's overtures to the leaders of the socialist and Christian labour unions alarmed Hugenberg about the possibility of renewed trade-union influence on the policies of the national government. In short, Schleicher threatened to undo much, if not all, of what the Nationalists had come to regard as the most important accomplishments of the Papen government. Throughout the campaign for the November 1932 Reichstag elections, Hugenberg had repeatedly exhorted the National Socialists to join him and the other members of the national opposition in reviving the 'Harzburg Front'. Following the appointment of the Schleicher cabinet at the beginning of December, Hugenberg began to pursue this goal with an even greater sense of urgency. Hugenberg's urgency stemmed not merely from his antipathy towards Schleicher, but also from his deepening concern over the future of the NSDAP. For although Hugenberg and his confederates derived a measure of satisfaction from the NSDAP's heavy losses in recent national and regional elections, they were also concerned that the party's continued decline would destroy whatever prospects there might still have been for a government of national concentration based upon the parties and organizations of the 'Harzburg Front'. In this respect, the leaders of the DNVP were particularly fearful that the rebelliousness on the NSDAP's left wing might degenerate into a civil war if the party were permanently excluded from power. If nothing else, the mutiny of the Berlin Storm-Troopers (Sturm-Abteilung der NSDAP or SA) against Joseph Goebbels and the local party leadership
in late December 1932 only seemed to confirm Nationalist fears that the NSDAP was indeed on the verge of falling apart.  

It was against the background of these developments that Hugenberg agreed to meet with Hitler in the first week of December. This meeting, which took place at Hitler's initiative and through the mediation of former Reich Bank president Hjalmar Schacht, was predicated on the condition that neither the DNVP nor the NSDAP would participate in a parliamentary solution to the existing political crisis.  

True to his word, Hugenberg assiduously resisted overtures from the chancellor that might have tied his party more closely to the Schleicher government. For his own part, Hugenberg felt that it was best to keep lines of communication with the NSDAP open, with the result that a second meeting appears to have taken place on or around 20 December.  

As a result of these contacts, Hugenberg became sufficiently emboldened by the understanding that seemed to be developing between him and the Nazi Party leader to express his hopes for the reunification of the national movement in a private letter to Hitler on 28 December. Concerned that the NSDAP might join the Centre in the formation of a new national government based upon some sort of parliamentary coalition, Hugenberg drew a clear parallel between the current political situation and the events that in 1925 and 1927 had led the DNVP to abandon the national movement. Hugenberg insisted that under no circumstances should the Centre be allowed to regain the predominant position it had held throughout most of the Weimar Republic. Nor should those forces whose past history had been characterized by the relentless, yet futile struggle to split the national will, argued Hugenberg, be allowed to sow discord again.

If that is not to happen, if all of our present accomplishments are not to be undone, then that requires above all else unity within the national movement. History will have a hard time understanding why in this serious moment unity is lacking. Our situation at home and abroad is now perhaps more critical than ever. I therefore feel obligated to suggest that we at least meet once again to find out whether that unity cannot be restored.

Hugenberg repeated his overture shortly after the beginning of the new year and sent the Nazi Party leader drafts of the proposals he had been working on for the solution of Germany's most pressing economic problems. In the meantime, Schleicher's political mandate had begun to unravel. On 11 January 1933 — seven days after Hitler's infamous meeting with Papen in Cologne — the executive
committee of the National Rural League adopted a resolution that
condemned the Schleicher government for having failed to protect
the German farmer not only against unfair competition from abroad,
but also against the exploitative policies of finance and industry at
home. With the publication of this resolution, the RLB officially
withdrew its support from the Schleicher cabinet in a move that
emanated not so much from the initiative of those RLB leaders close to
the NSDAP but from that of DNVP loyalists under the leadership of
Hans-Joachim von Rohr-Demmin from Pomerania. This turn of
events set the scene for another meeting between Hugenberg and
Hitler on 17 January. No doubt encouraged by the NSDAP’s impressive
recovery in the Lippe state elections two days earlier, Hitler declared
his intention of seeking the chancellorship. At the same time, Hitler
dissociated himself from the idea of a party government and indicated
that he was prepared to accept Schleicher in the cabinet as long as he
and his party received a free hand to crush Marxism in the streets.
Hitler then reassured the Nationalist Party leader that there would be
a place for him in his cabinet if he were called upon to form a new
government.

Though his associates were quick to caution Hugenberg against
being overly optimistic about the outcome of his meeting with Hitler,
the DNVP party leader was relieved to have found an alternative to the
Schleicher cabinet. In this respect, Hugenberg was confident that he
and his supporters would be able to control Hitler if the Nazi Party
leader were to receive the chancellorship. As Quaatz confided to his
diary upon hearing of Hugenberg’s meeting with Hitler: ‘If Hitler sits
in the saddle, Hugenberg gets the whip.’ Sensing that the collapse of
the Schleicher government was imminent, Hugenberg and the leaders
of the DNVP tried to gain time for further negotiations with the nazis
by voting with the Centre and NSDAP in the Reichstag Council
of Elders (Ältestenrat) on 20 January to postpone the convocation
of the Reichstag until 31 January. In the meantime, the leaders of
the DNVP prepared what they hoped would be the fatal blow to
the Schleicher government in the form of an ultimatum that Otto
Schmidt-Hannover delivered to the chancellor following its adoption
by the DNVP Reichstag delegation on 21 January. This ultimatum
chastised the Schleicher government for its passivity in the face of the
mounting economic problems confronting the German people and
amounted to nothing less than a declaration of war by the DNVP
against Schleicher and his cabinet. Schleicher was visibly distressed
when Schmidt-Hannover presented the ultimatum on behalf of the

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DNVP Reichstag delegation, knowing full well that this left him with little, if any, hope for political survival.\textsuperscript{56}

Although Hugenberg and the DNVP leadership were quick to administer the death blow to the Schleicher government as soon as the opportunity presented itself, this was a calculated risk in so far as the Nationalists had no clear idea of what might follow in its place. In an attempt to gain a better sense of the developing political options, Hugenberg and Quaatz met with Otto Meissner, the under-secretary in the Bureau of the Reich Presidency, for an hour and a half on the evening of 21 January. Meissner, whose own role in the formation of the Hitler government has been a matter of considerable speculation,\textsuperscript{57} had met with Quaatz on a fairly regular basis since autumn 1932 in his capacity as a liaison between the presidential entourage and the various groups that were jockeying for power in anticipation of Schleicher’s dismissal. In response to Hugenberg’s query regarding the Reich President’s attitude towards Hitler, Meissner indicated that while Hindenburg remained adamantly opposed to Hitler’s appointment as the head of a presidential cabinet vested with Article 48 emergency powers, he might accept the Nazi Party leader as the leader of a majority government in which he was ‘contained [eingerahmt]’ by the DNVP and Centre. Only then would Hindenburg be willing to grant Hitler presidential emergency powers. Although this represented a dramatic retreat from Hindenburg’s earlier stand that under no circumstances would he tolerate the ‘Bohemian corporal’ as chancellor, it evoked little enthusiasm from Hugenberg, since it not only presupposed an accommodation with the Centre but, more importantly, entailed a return to the form, if not the substance, of parliamentary government. Returning to this issue later in the conversation, Meissner indicated that Hindenburg might be persuaded to go along with Hitler’s appointment as the head of a minority government if his cabinet were supported by the Stahlhelm, the National Rural League and industry, and could therefore present itself as a cabinet of the entire national movement. That would, in Meissner’s words, make it impossible ‘for one party to rape the other’.\textsuperscript{58}

While Hugenberg was genuinely surprised by Meissner’s candour, he remained sceptical, if not apprehensive, about the direction in which events seemed to be moving. His apprehension mounted when, over the course of the next several days, he found himself effectively excluded from the negotiations that were taking place between Hitler, Papen and representatives of the presidential palace.\textsuperscript{59} Hugenberg’s
predicament, as Quaatz noted in his diary, was that he desperately wanted to be in the cabinet, but could neither shape nor lead it.\textsuperscript{60} To be sure, Hugenberg and Schmidt-Hannover met with the NSDAP's Wilhelm Frick and Hermann Göring on 25 January, but they were unable to reach agreement as to how the current political crisis might be resolved.\textsuperscript{61} It was not until the afternoon of 27 January that Hugenberg and Hitler were to meet again, this time at Hitler's suggestion and in the presence of Frick, Göring, and Schmidt-Hannover. Göring opened the meeting by announcing that Papen had agreed to recommend Hitler's appointment as chancellor to the Reich President and that the Stahlhelm's Franz Seldte had acknowledged the legitimacy of Hitler's claim to the leadership of the cabinet. Confronted by a virtual fait accompli, Hugenberg proposed a number of party associates for ministerial appointments but was unable to persuade the nazis to go along with his demands for a strong Nationalist presence in the Reich and Prussian cabinets. By the same token, the two party leaders remained equally divided over control of the Prussian state police.\textsuperscript{62}

Realizing that his position was hopeless, Schleicher tendered his resignation as chancellor in a private audience with Hindenburg on the morning of 28 January. The Reich President promptly commissioned Papen with the task of forming a new government. Later that afternoon, Papen informed the Nationalists that the chancellorship, along with the Reich and Prussian ministries of the interior, had been offered to the nazis and that he himself had agreed to serve as vice chancellor.\textsuperscript{63} Frustrated by the way in which he had been excluded from the formation of the new government, Hugenberg dispatched Quaatz to Meissner for clarification. Hugenberg's own preference for a solution to the existing crisis called for the creation of a 'crisis cabinet' or Kampfkabinett headed by himself and Papen. But, as Meissner informed Quaatz on 28 January, this was acceptable neither to the Reich President, who continued to insist upon the formation of a government that rested upon a formal parliamentary majority in the Reichstag, nor the Centre, which had indicated that it would not tolerate a Papen–Hugenberg 'crisis cabinet'.\textsuperscript{64} Moreover, the concept of a 'crisis cabinet' had also encountered strong opposition among those upon whom Papen was counting most heavily, most notably in the person of Count Lutz von Schwerin-Krosigk, who had served as Minister of Finance in both the Papen and Schleicher cabinets.\textsuperscript{65} Once it became clear that the creation of a 'crisis cabinet' was no longer a viable option, Hugenberg and the leaders of the DNVP tried to salvage
something of the increasingly desperate political situation in which they found themselves by attaching three conditions to their participation in a majority government with the NSDAP: the 'neutralization' of the police and Reichswehr, the creation of a strong conservative bulwark in Prussia, and Hugenberg's appointment as a 'crisis minister' with exclusive responsibility for the economic, fiscal and agricultural policies of the new government. From the Nationalist perspective, the fulfilment of these conditions was essential if the forces of German conservatism were to 'harness' (bändigen) Hitler and the nazi movement.66

Of the three conditions the Nationalists sought to attach to their participation in a government of national concentration under Hitler and Papen, only Hugenberg's appointment as a 'crisis minister' with exclusive responsibility for a co-ordinated national economic policy met with no objection from his prospective coalition partners. In the meantime, the Nationalists had pinned their hopes for the establishment of a strong conservative bulwark in Prussia upon the appointment of Friedrich von Winterfeld, chairman of the DNVP Prussian Landtag delegation, as Prussian Minister of the Interior. These hopes, however, had been effectively thwarted when Papen informed the Nationalist Party leadership on the morning of 28 January that the NSDAP would be receiving both the Reich and Prussian ministries of the interior. This, in turn, held immediate implications for Nationalist hopes of 'neutralizing' the Prussian state police. By 'neutralization' the Nationalists meant that the Prussian state police should be purged of all political influence — in this case, social democratic as well as nazi — so that it could serve the state in an ostensibly non-partisan fashion. The nazis, on the other hand, fully intended to use the state police in Prussia and elsewhere to crush the Marxist threat and were unlikely to surrender the enormous tactical advantage they had gained through their control of the Prussian and Reich ministries of the interior. At their meeting on 27 January, the mere suggestion by Hugenberg that the police must not be used as an instrument of 'street terror' had provoked an angry response from the Nazi Party leader.67

By 29 January it had become apparent to Hugenberg and his associates that none of the conditions they had regarded as essential for containing Hitler were likely to be met. To be sure, Hugenberg could derive some satisfaction from his appointment as 'economic dictator' of the Hitler cabinet, but this, as his party colleagues lamented, was hardly adequate compensation for the precarious
political situation in which the DNVP currently found itself. As a result, the leaders of the DNVP felt isolated and bereft of viable political options. Writing in his diary later that evening, Quaatz reflected upon the dilemma in which the DNVP found itself as a result of the series of events it had set in motion with its ultimatum to Schleicher on 21 January:

Within the party the ultimatum had come as an act of deliverance. With a single blow we stood at the centre of events as a sort of pivot; this position, however, is correspondingly dangerous. If we go with Hitler, we must harness [bändigien] him. Otherwise we are finished, whether he succeeds in grabbing the power for himself or if he fails. If a Hitler government does not come about, then Papen, Meissner, perhaps even Hindenburg . . . will try to hang the blame on us. We must also prevent a Hitler–Centre coalition, but also avoid a complete falling-out with the Centre. It's a game [of Russian roulette] with five bullets [Es ist ein Spiel mit fünf Kügeln]. Fortunately, all the others are dependent on us. Qui vivra, verra.

For all intents and purposes, the Nationalists had manoeuvred themselves into a situation that left them with little, if any, alternative but to join Hitler and Papen in a cabinet of national concentration. Their situation was further complicated by the fact that on the evening of 29 January Hitler had let it be known that, in order to achieve a parliamentary majority in the Reichstag, he would insist upon either new elections or the inclusion of the Centre in the new cabinet. Neither prospect was particularly appealing to the Nationalist Party leadership. It was against the background of these developments that Schmidt-Hannover made a last, desperate attempt to prevent the new government from coming into existence. Early on the morning of 30 January, he and Theodor Duesterberg, nominally the Stahlhelm's second-in-command, drove to Seldte's suite in the Hotel Bristol in an attempt to dissuade him from joining the Hitler cabinet and, should that fail, to persuade him to support Hugenberg in his efforts to prevent new elections and to keep the nazis from gaining control of the Prussian state police. Frustrated by Seldte's equivocation, the two then travelled to the presidential palace, where an audience with Oskar von Hindenburg, the Reich President's son, proved equally futile. From here, Schmidt-Hannover and Duesterberg went to Papen's headquarters, where they found Hugenberg engaged in heavy negotiations. Papen, however, quickly dismissed Hugenberg's objections to the idea of new elections by indicating that this should be decided at some point in the future. As a result, the issue was still unresolved when the two left for the presidential palace for the installation of the new government.
Following the departure of Papen and Hugenberg, Schmidt-Hannover met with General Werner von Blomberg, who had just arrived from Geneva to accept his appointment as Minister of Defence in the new cabinet. Unaware of the extent to which Blomberg had already ingratiated himself with Hitler and other nazi leaders, Schmidt-Hannover tried without success to convince the General of Hitler’s dictatorial aspirations and of the dangers which would result from his appointment as chancellor. If one of the conditions which the Nationalists had originally set for their participation in a coalition government with the NSDAP had been the ‘neutralization’ of the Reichswehr, it now seemed to Schmidt-Hannover that Blomberg’s appointment had effectively delivered the army into Hitler’s hands.74

In the meantime, Hugenberg tried once again to wrest a promise from the Nazi Party leader that he would not order new national elections when the prospective cabinet officers assembled in the presidential palace shortly before noon on 30 January for the formal installation of the new government. By this time, Hugenberg had become so adamant in his opposition to new elections that he apparently threatened to withdraw from the cabinet before it could be formally installed in office. This would have effectively sabotaged the cabinet negotiations just as they seemed to be reaching a successful conclusion. Hitler, who had already instructed Goebbels to begin preparations for new national elections,75 tried to reassure the Nationalist Party chairman that the outcome of the elections would have no effect upon the composition of the cabinet. Steadfastly refusing to accede to Hugenberg’s demands, Hitler indicated that the matter be left to the ultimate discretion of the cabinet.76

The government that took office on 30 January 1933 was a coalition government predicated upon the assumption that the conservatives around Hugenberg and Papen would be able to restrain the radicalism of the nazi movement and thus use it to stabilize their own social and political hegemony. Although profound differences still separated the Nationalists and their coalition partners on the use of the state police to crush Marxism in the streets, the ideological cement that held this coalition together was first and foremost anti-Marxism. Anti-semitism, by contrast, played virtually no role whatsoever in the negotiations that led to the formation of the Hitler government and was important only in so far as neither Hugenberg nor Papen were prepared to let it stand in the way of an accommodation with Hitler. For although Hugenberg was relatively free of anti-semitic prejudice himself, his entourage included outspoken anti-semites like Heinrich
Class and racists like Baron Axel von Freytag-Löringhoven. Moreover, his party had frequently resorted to anti-semitic motifs in its campaign propaganda. Hugenberg's willingness to overlook Hitler's anti-semitism for the sake of a coalition with the NSDAP nevertheless had immediate implications for the political future of Reinhold Quaatz, one of his closest confidants for the better part of a decade. Quaatz was of Jewish descent and the cousin of Ludwig Holländer, a leading figure in the anti-nazi campaign of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith (Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens). Once the Hitler government began to take shape in the last days of January 1933, Hugenberg dropped not too subtle hints that Quaatz's political career was nearing an end and that he might begin to seek suitable employment in the private sector. Hugenberg's apparent eagerness to dissociate himself from those of his confederates whose racial pedigree might have jeopardized his party's co-operation with the NSDAP underscores the extent to which the Nationalists were willing to go along with unspoken nazi assumptions about the existence of a 'Jewish problem' and the need for its solution as part of the overall strategy for Germany's national recovery.

Within the Hitler cabinet, Hugenberg assumed the status of an 'economic dictator' with exclusive responsibility for the formulation and implementation of a co-ordinated national economic policy. In addition to the Reich ministries of agriculture and economics, Hugenberg also held the agricultural and commerce ministries in the Prussian cabinet as well as the post of Reich Commissar for Eastern Relief (Osthilfe). Moreover, the department of social policy and labour law within the Reich ministry of labour was to be transferred to Hugenberg's responsibility, according to a special arrangement he had worked out with Franz Seldte, the Minister of Labour in the Hitler cabinet. During the first months of the Third Reich, Hugenberg confined himself almost exclusively to the task of Germany's economic reconstruction, on the assumption that success in this endeavour would bolster the conservative component of the governmental coalition and thus aid in the containment of nazism. But whatever hopes the leaders of the DNVP might have had of 'taming' and containing National Socialism had been effectively torpedoed when, at the first meeting of the new cabinet on 1 February, Hitler announced that he would dissolve the Reichstag and call for new elections. In the subsequent campaign, the DNVP united with the Stahlhelm behind Hugenberg, Papen and Seldte to form the
Combat Front Black–White–Red (Kampffront Schwarz–Weiss–Rot) in hopes of creating a strong conservative phalanx capable of preventing the nazis from securing an outright majority in the national elections that had been set for 5 March. The outcome of these elections, however, revealed all too clearly that Hugenberg and his associates were no match for the dynamism of the nazi movement and only confirmed the increasingly desperate position in which the conservative members of the governmental coalition found themselves in the first months of the Third Reich.84

Over the course of the next few months, Hitler’s conservative allies found themselves progressively excluded from the corridors of power. In the meantime, Hugenberg’s associates in the German National Front (Deutschnationale Front or DNF) — the DNVP had officially reconstituted itself as the DNF in early May 1933 in hopes of outlasting the end of the party state85 — complained about his neglect of party affairs and became increasingly embittered over the fruits of their party’s coalition with the NSDAP. The more Hugenberg buried himself in ministerial matters, the more isolated he became within his own party.86 To compound his difficulties even further, Germany’s industrial leadership had become increasingly disenchanted with his performance as a member of the Hitler cabinet and was pressing for his replacement by someone more amenable to its own economic interests.87 By the beginning of the summer, Hugenberg’s position within the cabinet had become so precarious that he was no longer able to protect the German National Front against the threat of dissolution. Officials for the DNF and Stahlhelm became increasingly frequent targets of nazi intimidation in the months that followed the passage of the Enabling Act at the end of March,88 thus prompting a number of Hugenberg’s associates to recommend that the Front dissolve itself and merge with the NSDAP so that something might still be salvaged from what was essentially a hopeless situation.89 For his own part, Hugenberg categorically rejected suggestions to this effect and was unwavering in his defence of the DNF’s political and organizational integrity.90

By the summer of 1933 it had become clear that conservative efforts to ‘tame’ Hitler and ‘harness’ National Socialism to the cause of the ‘conservative revolution’ had ended in unequivocal and irrevocable failure. The final confirmation of this came in the form of Hugenberg’s resignation from the Hitler cabinet on 26 June 193391 and the official dissolution of the German National Front the following day.92 These events, however, were for the most part anti-
climactic and only revealed the ultimate poverty of a policy that had effectively delivered Germany into the hands of Hitler and the NSDAP. If Hugenberg had indeed committed 'the greatest stupidity' of his life by joining the Hitler cabinet on 30 January 1933, then this was the result of a strategy that he had conscientiously pursued ever since his election to the DNVP party chairmanship in October 1928 and that in the final analysis left him and his associates with no way out of the political dead-end into which they had manoeuvred themselves. The aim of this strategy was nothing less than the destruction of Weimar democracy and the establishment of a new system of rule that no longer rested upon the will of the people, but sought to restore the dominance of Germany's traditional elites in industry, agriculture and the military. However, that Hitler and not Hugenberg was the principal beneficiary of this strategy is to be explained in part by the fact that from the perspective of Hugenberg and the DNVP leadership the 'backslide into parliamentarism', as it had manifested itself in the formation of the Schleicher cabinet, constituted a far more serious danger to Germany's political future than an alliance with Hitler and National Socialism.

By no means was Hugenberg a naive and unwitting participant in the formation of the Hitler cabinet. He and his associates were, as a careful reading of the Quaatz diary and other primary materials suggests, fully aware of the dangers that were inherent in the course of action they pursued in the second half of January 1933. The ultimatum which the DNVP delivered to the Schleicher government on 21 January was part of a deliberate strategy to bring down the existing cabinet without, however, any clear idea of what might take its place. It was a risky gambit that within six months led to the dissolution of Hugenberg's own party and to his exclusion from any sort of meaningful role in German political life. To be sure, the leaders of the DNVP had hoped to minimize the dangers of their party's alliance with the NSDAP by attaching conditions designed to control and tame the nazi movement, but their negotiating position was too weak to allow them any real influence over the course of events in Berlin. In the final analysis, neither Papen nor Hindenburg's associates in the presidential palace granted much credence to Nationalist concerns over the need for a conservative counterpoise to the NSDAP in Prussia or for the 'neutralization' of the Prussian police force. As it became clear that the conditions they deemed necessary for 'harnessing' and
‘taming’ Hitler were not being met, a handful of Hugenberg’s own colleagues tried desperately to sabotage the negotiations with Hitler before they could reach a successful conclusion. By this time, however, the course of events had assumed a momentum of its own that neither they nor Hugenberg could halt.

If nothing else, a close examination of the events that surrounded Hugenberg’s entry into the Hitler cabinet reveals just how divided the German Right was on the eve of the nazi assumption of power. It would be a serious misreading of the events that led to the formation of the Hitler cabinet in January 1933 to assume that Hugenberg’s gambit enjoyed the full or unequivocal support of even his own supporters. For if the leaders of the DNVP were united in their determination to force Schleicher’s removal from office and to prevent a ‘backslide into parliamentarism’, Germany’s conservative élite had become so fragmented along structural as well as ideological lines that it was no longer capable of formulating any sort of coherent response to the crisis with which it found itself confronted. The fissures that existed within the DNVP, therefore, were part of a much broader pattern of division and conflict that penetrated deep into the ranks of Germany’s conservative élite and that effectively immobilized it in the face of the nazi challenge. In the final analysis, the disunity of the German Right constituted a prerequisite for the nazi assumption of power that may have been every bit as crucial as the collaboration of individual conservatives like Papen and Hugenberg.

Notes

1. Quoted in Gerhard Ritter, Carl Goerdeler und die deutsche Widerstandsbewegung (Stuttgart 1954), 60.
2. On Hugenberg’s role in the formation of the Hitler cabinet, see John A. Leopold, Alfred Hugenberg and the Radical Nationalist Campaign against the Weimar Republic (New Haven 1977), 127–38. See also the dated, but nonetheless useful essay by Friedrich Hiller von Gaertringen, ‘Die Deutschnationale Volkspartei’, in Erich Matthias and Rudolf Morsey (eds), Das Ende der Parteien 1933 (Düsseldorf 1960), 543–652. The most detailed study of the events that led up to the formation of the Hitler cabinet is still Thilo Vogelsang, Reichswehr, Staat und NSDAP: Beiträge zur deutschen Geschichte 1930–32 (Stuttgart 1962), 335–404. For more recent contributions to the historical literature on this topic, see Volker Hentschel, Weimars letzte Monate: Hitler und der Untergang der Weimarer Republik (Düsseldorf 1979), 79–101; Martin Broszat, Die Machtergreifung: Der Aufstieg der NSDAP und die Zerstörung der

3. Reinhold Quaatz (1876–1953) began his political career as a member of the German People's Party (Deutsche Volkspartei or DVP) but seceded from the DVP in the spring of 1924 to join the DNVP. He remained a member of the DNVP Reichstag delegation from 1924 to 1933 and was one of Hugenberg's closest confidants within the party. Following his death, his private papers were deposited in the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, but were closed to the public until 1 January 1983.

4. The Quaatz diary covers the period from 1916 until 1952, the year before he died. The entries for the period from 1928 to 1933 are contained in volumes 16 and 17 of the Quaatz Nachlass and have recently been edited for publication by the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Munich. See Hermann Weiss and Paul Hoser (eds), Die Deutschnationalen und die Zerstörung der Weimarer Republik: Aus dem Tagebuch von Reinhold Quaatz 1928–1933, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, vol. 54 (Munich 1989). Excerpts from the diary for the period of 12 January–1 February 1933 have been published by Larry Eugene Jones, ‘Die Tage vor Hitlers Machternahme: Aufzeichnungen des Deutschnationalen Reinhold Quaatz’, Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 37, 4 (1989), 759–74.


8. For an example of Hugenberg's diatribes against Weimar democracy, see ‘Parteien und Parlamentarisimus’, in Alfred Hugenberg, Streiflichter aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Berlin 1927), 79–82.

9. In this respect, see the exemplary study by Heidrun Holzbach, Das 'System Hugenberg'. Die Organisation bürgerlicher Sammlungspolitik vor dem Aufstieg der NSDAP, Studien zur Zeitgeschichte, vol. 18 (Stuttgart 1981), 167–92. For the best history of the DNVP during the middle years of the Weimar Republic, see Manfred Dörr, ‘Die Deutschnationale Volkspartei 1925 bis 1928’ (PhD diss., Universität Marburg 1964).

10. In this respect, see Robert P. Grathwohl, Stresemann and the DNVP: Reconciliation or Revenge in German Foreign Policy, 1924–1928 (Lawrence 1980). The animosity between Hugenberg and Stresemann has been convincingly traced back to the last years before the outbreak of the first world war. See Dirk Stegmann, ‘Hugenberg contra Stresemann. Die Politik der Industrieverbände am Ende des Kaiserreiches’, Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 24 (1976), 329–78.

11. Hugenberg to Westarp, 17 September 1927, in the unpublished Nachlass of Leo Wegener, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (hereafter cited as BA: NL Wegener), 31. This letter was circulated among the delegates to the delegation just as Westarp was delivering his keynote address at the Königsberg party congress.

12. On Hugenberg’s election to the DNVP party chairmanship, see the entry in


16. For example, see Hugenberg’s report on his trip to Munich and his negotiations with the Nazi Party leadership in Westarp’s memorandum on the meeting of the DNVP Reichstag delegation, 20 September 1929, in the unpublished Nachlass of Kuno Graf von Westarp (hereafter cited as NL Westarp) in the private possession of, Friedrich Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen.

17. On the conflict over the wording of the freedom law, see Friedenthal, ‘Volksbegehren und Volksentscheid’, 36–74, as well as the detailed study by Dieter Gessner, *Agrarverbände in der Weimarer Republik. Wirtschaftliche und soziale Voraussetzungen der agrarkonservativen Politik bis 1933* (Düsseldorf 1976), 221–6.


23. Hugenberg to Hitler, 1 August 1931, BA: NL Wegener, 73/183.


26. Schmidt-Hannover, *Umdenken oder Anarchie*, 280–7. For the most detailed contemporary accounts of the Harzburg demonstration, see Blank to Reusch, 12 October 1931, Haniel-Archiv, NL Reusch, 4001012024/9, and Gilsa to Reusch, 13 October 1931, ibid., 400101293/4b, as well as the reports in *Unsere Partei* 9, 20 (17 October 1931), 246–53, and the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 October 1931, nos. 469–70. For the nazi perspective on these developments, see Levetzow to Donnersmarck, 14 October 1931, in the Nachlass of Magnus von Levetzow (Bestand N239) in the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg in Breisgau, vol. 83, 124–32.

27. For example, see Hugenberg’s speech, ‘Der Sinn von Harzburg’, Darmstadt, 8 November 1931, in *Unsere Partei* 9, 23 (1 December 1931), 275–6, as well as his letter to Hitler, 28 January 1932, BA: NL Wegener, 73/146.

28. In this respect, see Gilsa to Reusch, 3 December 1931, Haniel-Archiv, NL Reusch, 400101293/4b.


31. For further details, see Volker R. Berghahn, ‘Die Harzburger Front und die Kandidatur Hindenburgs für die Reichspräsidentenwahlen 1932’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 13 (1965), 64–82.

32. On the negotiations between the Stahlhelm, Hugenberg and the Nazi Party leadership, see circular no. 44 from Wagener to the Stahlhelm state organizations, 24 February 1932, in the records of the Bavarian Stahlhelm, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich, Abteilung IV, vol. 78/II.

33. Text of an agreement signed by Hugenberg, Seldte and Duesterberg, 18 February 1932, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 29. On the negotiations between the Stahlhelm and the DNVP, see the entries in Quaatz’s diary, 13–19 February 1932, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

34. In this respect, see Hugenberg to Hitler, 20 March 1932, BA: NL Hugenberg,
37/38–47, as well as the circular from Hugenberg to the chairman of the DNVP district organizations, 23 March 1932, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 39.

35. Unsere Partei, 10,13 (1 July 1932), 167–70. See also [DNVP], Nationalsozial — Nationalsozialistisch (Berlin 1932), as well as Irmgard Wrede, Deutsche Nationalsozialisten. Die Unterschiede auf wirtschafts- und sozialpolitischen Gebiete. Vortrag gehalten am 12. Juni 1932 auf der Tagung des Erweiterten Reichsfrauenausschusses der D.N.V.P., Deutschnationale Flugschrift, no. 365 (Berlin 1932), and Anton Scheibe, DNVP und NSDAP. Was uns einigt und was uns trennt, Deutschnationale Flugschrift no. 367 (Berlin n.d. [1932]).

36. Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin, Der Nationalsozialismus — eine Gefahr (Berlin 1932), esp. 7–12.

37. In this respect, see Reinhold Quaatz, Die Wiederherstellung Deutschlands. Unsere Ziele und die Regierung Papen. Vortrag in der Führertagung der D.N.V.P. am 6. Oktober 1932, Deutschnationale Flugschrift, no. 376 (Berlin 1932).

38. Unsere Partei, 10, 21 (1 November 1932), 379–83.

39. DNVP Parteizentrale, circular no. 11, 6 December 1932, in the unpublished Nachlass of Luitpold von Weilnöck, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (hereafter cited as BA: NL Weilnöck). See also the entry in Quaatz’s diary, 2 December 1932, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

40. For example, see Hugenberg, ‘Zum Jahrestag von Harzburg’, Unsere Partei, 10, 20 (15 October 1932), 325.

41. For example, see DNVP Parteizentrale, circular no. 11, 6 December 1932, BA: NL Weilnöck.

42. Entries in Quaatz’s diary, 19, 21 and 23 December 1932, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

43. On Hugenberg’s meeting with Hitler, see the notes by Martin Spahn on Hugenberg’s report to the DNVP Reichstag delegation, 5 December 1932, in the unpublished Nachlass of Edmund Forschbach, Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, Sankt-Augustin, Bestand I-199, carton 4, file 2.

44. For example, see Hugenberg to Schleicher, 21 December 1932, BA: NL Hugenberg, 38/267–9. Much of the DNVP’s antipathy towards Schleicher was rooted in differences over agricultural policy. In this respect, see the letter from v. Winterfeldt, v. Arnim-Kröchlendorff and Schwecht to Schleicher, 13 December 1932, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 75. For an indication of the anti-Schleicher sentiment within the DNVP, see the letter from Kleist-Schmenzin to Hugenberg, 17 December 1932, BA: NL Hugenberg, 37/72–4.

45. See Hugenberg’s remarks before the DNVP party executive committee, 16 December 1932, as reported in Hintzmann, circular no. 4, 30 December 1932, NSSA Osnabrück, C1/3/13–15.

46. See Hentschel, Weimars letzte Monate, 85.


50. In this respect, see DNVP Parteizentrale, circular no. 1, 19 January 1933, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 76/7–8, as well as Rohr-Demmin, ‘Die Klage des Landvolkes’, Der Ring, 6, 3 (20 January 1933), 44.

51. It seems that up until the Lippe state elections Papen had been negotiating with
Hitler on the assumption that he and not the Nazi Party leader would serve as head of
the new government. After the NSDAP’s victory in Lippe, however, Hitler was no
longer willing to serve as a ‘junior partner’ in the government and began to balk at
receiving anything less than the chancellorship. Consequently, an impasse developed
in Papen’s negotiations with Hitler at the same time that the Nazi Party leader
announced his decision to seek the chancellorship to Hugenberg. On the state of his
negotiations with Hitler, see the letter from Papen to Springorum, 20 January 1933, in
the unpublished Nachlass of Fritz Springorum, Archiv der Hoesch-AG, Dortmund
(hereafter cited as Hoesch-Archiv, NL Springorum), vol. B la 82.

52. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 17 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17. See also the entry


54. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 20 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz. See also DNVP

55. The text of the ultimatum may be found in BA: NL Quaatz, 17, and BA: NL
Hugenberg, 38/261–3, and has been reprinted in Akten der Reichskanzlei: Das Kabinett
von Schleicher, ed. Golecki, 282–3. On its authorship, see the entry in Quaatz’s diary,
20 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

56. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 29 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

57. For Meissner’s apologetic and generally unreliable account of his role in these

58. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 21 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

59. In this respect, see the entries in Quaatz’s diary, 22–26 January 1933, BA: NL
Quaatz, 17. For information on the negotiations between Hitler, Papen, and the
presidential entourage, see Ribbentrop, Zwischen Moskau und London, 39–40, and

60. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 27 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

Regierungsbildung’, 18 November 1948, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 30. In his
memoirs Schmidt-Hannover published excerpts from this memorandum, but cited the
diary of his former adjutant Herbert von Bose as the source from which the excerpts
came. See Schmidt-Hannover, Umdenken oder Anarchie, 328–34. Since the Bose diary
is no longer available, it is impossible to check the authenticity and accuracy of this
memorandum. The information contained in the memorandum, however, is consistent
with other sources, so that it may be used, though with considerable care, to
supplement what is already known from other sources.

Regierungsbildung’, 18 November 1948, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 30. See also the
entry for 28 January 1933, in Ribbentrop, Zwischen Moskau und London, 40, and

63. Entry for 28 January 1933, in Schmidt-Hannover, ‘Aufzeichnungen betreffend

64. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 28 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

65. Entry in Schwerin-Krosigk’s diary, 28 January 1933, IFZ: ZS/A-20/4, 12–14,

66. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 28 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

67. Ibid.

68. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 1 February 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

69. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 29 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.

70. Entry in Quaatz’s diary, 30 January 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.


77. Leopold, *Hugenberg*, 185, n. 138. See also the report of the DNVP Sachsen, Nachrichtenstelle, 29 November 1924, with a declaration by the DNVP regional chairman Albrecht Philipp, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 73.

78. For example, see the entries in Quaatz’s diary for 30 January and 1 February 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17.


81. Hugenberg to Seldte, 17 April 1933, in the records of the Vice Chancery (Bestand R 53), Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, vol. 99, 16–18.

82. For further details, see Gustavo Corni, ‘Alfred Hugenberg as Minister of Agriculture: Interlude or Continuity?’ *German History*, 7 (1989), 204–25.


86. The Quaatz diary is rife with indications of the split that had developed between Hugenberg and the leaders of the DNVP Reichstag delegation in the months following Hitler’s appointment as chancellor. For example, see the entries in Quaatz’s diary, 4, 10 and 12 February 1933, and 6–7, 15, 18 and 22 March 1933, BA: NL Quaatz, 17. See also Peter Wulf, ‘Ernst Oberfohren und die DNVP am Ende der Weimarer Republik’, in Erich Hoffman and Peter Wulf (eds), ‘Wir bauen das Reich. Aufstieg und Herrschaftsjahre des Nationalsozialismus in Schleswig-Holstein’, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins, vol. 81 (Neumünster 1983), 165–87.

87. For example, see Walz to Reusch, 27 May 1933, Hoesch-Archiv, NL Springorum, B 1a 78.

88. In this respect, see Winterfeld to Göring, 27 March 1933, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 30, and Hugenberg to Hitler, 19 April 1933, BA: NL Hugenberg, 89/94–6.

89. For example, see Spahn to Hugenberg, 14 May 1933, in the unpublished Nachlass of Martin Spahn, Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, Sankt-Augustin, Bestand I-195, microfilm copy of carton 10, file 5.

90. In this respect, see the protocol of a meeting between Hugenberg, Winterfeld, and Hindenburg, 27 May 1933, BA: NL Hugenberg, 38/170–5.

91. See Hugenberg to Hindenburg, 26 and 27 June 1933, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 76/72–80, as well as Hugenberg’s undated memorandum (7 July 1933), BA: NL Wegener, 74. These documents, apparently collected from another source, have all been reproduced in Anton Ritthaler, ‘Eine Etappe auf Hitlers Weg zur ungeteilten Macht: Hugenbergs Rücktritt als Reichsminister’, Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 8 (1960), 193–219.

92. See the text of an agreement signed by Hitler, Winterfeld, Poengsen and Freytag-Löringhoven, 27 June 1933, in a circular from the DNF to its district organizations, 29 June 1933, BA: NL Schmidt-Hannover, 73. See also the minutes of the DNF leadership conference, 26–27 June 1933, ibid., 30. For further details, see Brosius to Oldenburg-Januschau, 3 July 1933, in the unpublished Nachlass of Gottfried Traub, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, vol. 9, 1–6.

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