

Who killed Henry?



1880- 1937

His name was **Henry van der Waerden**.

This is the true story of that man and how his life came to an unexpected abrupt end.



Henry van der Waerden and Sir Henry Deterding inspecting a Shell refinery in France.

“A heart of gold”.

They said: “To find the laws of God he had to look into himself”.

So, he did. In theory it was easy to follow the right track.

To follow that course in the real world appeared more difficult.

He then developed his own set of values and learned how to stay clear of evil and chaos.

He became a man with a heart of gold.

To my Sons.

This book is dedicated to my mother Lietje van der Waerden,
for all the love she has given me.

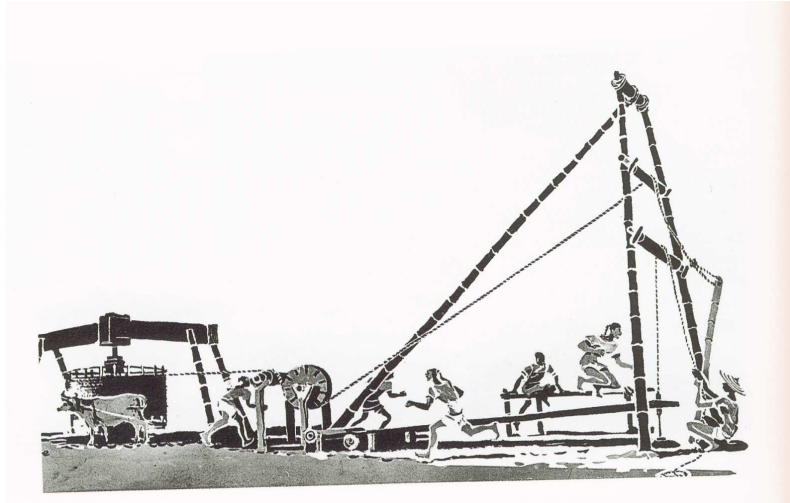
With thanks also to Wim Wennekes, who in 1989 wrote an
enlightening article about Sir Henry Deterding in a leading
Dutch daily newspaper, "N.R.C. Handelsblad."

The book is a mixture of fact and fiction.
Although almost all events are based on reality, fictitious
conversations have been constructed in the context of
documented events and a couple of fictitious characters have
been created for smoother continuity.

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Chinese oil drilling rig, 3rd century AD



Baku, turn off the 19th century, rotary oil drill

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1. Belgium 1999

Traveling from The Netherlands to the South through the beautiful Belgian Ardennes, following the “Route du Soleil” to the sunny beaches of the Mediterranean, just as you leave the forests and mountains behind, quite close to the Luxemburg border, the main road curves to the left.

There, on the right hand side, just before a big roadside restaurant, there is the sudden surprise of an old green airplane, frozen in a perpetual dive. Its propellers reveal that it dates back to the Second World War.

It's the sign of a big war museum that is located there.

A good opportunity to stop for a break, have a snack, stretch your legs and visit the museum.

Hundreds of Second World War fighting vehicles, both Allied and German are on display: The ubiquitous general purpose reconnaissance vehicle that brought the word ”jeep” into the language, the amphibious DUKW, the so-called ”Duck”, the deadly German tanks, the “Tiger” with its 88 m.m. cannon and the “Panther”, the heavy British tank, the “Churchill”, and the faster American “General Sherman” tank, all are on display. Some of the tanks bearing the scars of armor piercing by PIAT anti-tank weapons. There are also 105mm and 155mm mechanized guns, and 3/4 and 2 1/2 ton Bedford trucks as well as aircraft.

All these mute exhibits display the ingenuity and incredible variety of war weapons and vehicles used during the Second World War.

That “Hell on wheels” as it was called.

Even for those, who fear war and detest everything that has to do with it, the museum is an irresistible place.

The variety in technology, the ingenuity, and the sheer scale of the equipment is overwhelming.

Among all this technical evidence the fighting man is not entirely forgotten.

Various war scenes have been re-created and show soldiers in action. There is a field hospital and you can see Rommel's infantry men stalking behind a tank in the dessert near El Alamein as they were in 1942. There are the allied liberators of Paris, making merry with welcoming French ladies. These "human" tableaux contrast markedly with the all pervasive technologies.

Why should this war museum be situated just there, near Bastogne?

The reason is that a terrible battle took place in this area in 1944.

The war in Europe was coming to an end. The Allied Forces that had landed in Normandy in the summer were advancing towards Germany. It was generally believed that Germany's sting had been drawn.

It was winter and icy cold. The forested hills of Belgian Ardennes and sinuous rocky valleys were beautiful and covered with snow.

The Allies were pushing up against the Siegfried Line, herding German forces back into their motherland. The troops' thoughts were turning to Christmas.

It was Saturday the 16th of December 1944, when von Rundstedt broke through the Americans' line with an astonishingly ferocious surprise attack.

Military intelligence had not supposed Germany to be capable of mustering any such force, nor did it expect tanks to be deployed through such convoluted landscape.

Yet at 05.30 a.m. on that ice cold winter morning, all hell broke loose.

Over a front of 100 km, more than 200.000 German soldiers with around 1000 tanks started their surprise attack through the snow white forests and fought their way towards the river Meuse, aiming to break out to the harbor of Antwerp.

It would become one of the most cruel and biggest battles of the war and it would take until the 29th of January 1945 before the tide of the battle would turn, and the allied forces' containment and advance resume.

The German attack had pushed the allies' line back so very far that it became known as the "Battle of the Bulge".

It was to be Hitler's last attempt to turn the tide.

The Ardennes was only held by 80.000 Americans.

The British Field-Marshal Montgomery was fortunately in the area.

Eisenhower, at his headquarters in Versailles, did not expect anything more from the Germans.

Hitler's attack came as a complete surprise .

In the beginning tens of thousands of Americans were taken prisoner. But after the first few days the advance of the frightful 6th German panzer division of Fieldmarshal Dietrich was stopped in the north.

It proved a turning point in the battle. Also the Kampfgruppe of Lieutenant-Cornel Joachim had to give up due to a lack of fuel.

General Von Manteuffel had more success to the south. His 5th Panzer Army advanced as far as Celles, near Dinant, but he was stopped close to the Meuse.

Then the Germans focused on the important traffic centre near Bastogne, with its enormous fuel stocks and other reserves at Stavelot.

The Americans were encircled.

On 22 December 1944 the Germans presented the Americans with an ultimatum to surrender.

The Commander, General Mac Auliffe answered with a vulgar American negative “Nuts”.

The battle continued.

Then the German Luftwaffe bombed Bastogne.

Fortunately on the second Christmas day, General Patton, who was on his way to Germany, freed Bastogne.

But the battle was far from over and went on until the end of January, when the German troops, exhausted, without fuel and ammunition had to abandon their tanks and withdrew.

At least 60.000 Americans were killed in that awesome battle and 100.000 Germans.

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Outside the museum, back in your car on your way to the sun and to the beaches in the South of France, you will almost certainly continue to think of that terrible war and the deadly purpose of all the equipment you saw in the museum.

You will probably feel a cold hand in your neck and shiver from the thoughts and images that go through your mind and you are likely to think that it could only have been the devil himself who inspired it all.

Well, you are not far from the truth.

That war was a period of terrible destruction and beastly killing, but also a period of massive production, technological achievement and mobility.

The enormous human activity and energy that was unleashed was truly astounding.

Having looked at the static vehicles exhibited in the war museum, it is easy to overlook the enormous quantities of fuel all these vehicles needed to remain mobile.

Petroleum products played an important role in that war.

It was the lifeblood of the monster that rampaged in those days.

Why did nobody realize this simple but important fact and deprive the beast of it?

Well some did control that bloodstream and the war brought them more profit than ever before. Others thought of it but were powerless to act upon their knowledge.

It took more than four years of bloody fighting and millions and millions of deaths before the right action was taken. This was when the Allied air forces dropped 3000 bombs on the synthetic fuels plants in Germany.

It was this action and the lack of fuel among the German troops more than anything else that led the war to end in months.

A war that had been planned to give Germany and the so called “Aryan Race” total hegemony over Europe for a period of no less than a thousand years.

This may now sound exaggerated and incredible but the fact is that Hitler almost succeeded.

Crude Oil plays a decisive role in the 20th and 21st century. With every international friction, even when the underlying politics seem unclear at first sight, one should look at the oil interests of the parties involved and invariably the whole picture will come into focus.

Oil is the gold of the 20 and 21st century.

Churchill understood the importance of oil already just before the First World War and planned to conquer parts of the Near East in order to give Great Britain and her empire the oil they needed.

He did not succeed.

Then, fortunately for the Allied Forces, the Anglo Dutch company, Shell was able to provide much of the oil that was needed, especially for the Navy.

Germany learned the same lesson back then and planned as early as 1920 for **the manufacture of synthetic petroleum fuels from lignite in** order to become self sufficient during the next war, an eventuality that the German army high command had begun to plan for pretty well immediately after they signed the Versailles treaty.

The 20th century is not only the century of oil but also the century of the rise and fall of National Socialism and Communism.

The ruling classes saw these systems as a threat to their world, their institutions, and their civilization.

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, these two philosophies were the opposing forces that threatened democracy in Europe. The struggle would penetrate almost every aspect of life.

Unrest in society was promoted by mass unemployment, partly due to post war reparations distorting economic flows and partly from extremes of capitalism that led to the Wall Street Crash and prolonged depression in the later inter-war years. The international tensions were accentuated by the economic crises.

It is little wonder that many in Europe and in Britain saw Germany, where Communism had effectively been eradicated, as a possible buffer against the Bolshevik threat.

They regretted the Versailles agreements with Germany's enormous back payments to the Allies, which had brought that country to a state of total weakness and poverty.

As the tension increased, choices had to be made by everyone. The result was intrigue, tragedy and violence.

1937 was a pivotal year in that respect.

Everyone speculated about the future.

Yet no one clearly foresaw at that time quite, to what extent the crazy actions would lead of an ingenious, unscrupulous megalomaniac, the absolute personification of evil, a man named Hitler, who created himself a society in which brute force without compassion was the key to survival.

This, then is a story of oil, of war and of human tragedy. They often go hand in hand.

2. Henry on the beach at Scheveningen, The Netherlands, 1937

It was peaceful and quiet on the beach in the early morning of one of those rare quiet and clear late autumn days when the air is fresh and the sun has not yet lost all of its warmth.

Looking north, one could vaguely distinguish the silhouettes of the outskirts of Katwijk and looking to the south Frankenslag was visible and beyond, Hoek van Holland.

The Scheveningse Pier stretched out into the sea like a long, tired leg.

The beach seemed deserted. Nothing to be heard, only the hissing and roaring of the sea and the sound of seagulls, gliding low over the waves.

A splendid morning of a splendid day, a day to enjoy.

It was on that morning of the 16th of November 1937 that he was found.

He lay close to the water's edge on his side as if taking a nap after having enjoyed the beauty of the scene.

As he lay parallel to the waves, his body was moved gently by the incoming tide as if rolled over by his partner in a loving embrace.

He was in his early fifties, with short, black, curly hair, not yet graying at the temples. He wore gold rimmed spectacles of the pince-nez type, popular in those days. He had dark brown eyes under heavy dark eyebrows. A sensitive mouth under a strong nose. He wore a dark blue suit with a waist-coat of the best cut, tailored by Kriek, Rue Royal in Paris.

A dark blue tie with pearl tie-pin completed his gentleman's attire.

He was well to do, that was clear. From his jacket sleeves his starched cuffs protruded, showing golden cuff-links set with

diamonds that sparkled with white fire in the early morning sun.

His cuff links were engraved with his initials H.v.d.W.

Two early morning strollers found him.
One of them exclaimed: "What the hell is he doing here, he looks dead!" As if a man of so stylish an appearance was not supposed to be there, let alone to be drowned and dead.

In the Kurhaus hotel, a hundred meters away, a doctor was found and ten minutes later the police arrived.

They confirmed that the man was dead indeed, presumably drowned.

In his pockets they found a wallet with some small change, his car keys and a silver cigarette case with the letters H.v.d.W. embossed.

His driving license revealed his name and address: Henry v.d. Waerden, Violonweg 13, The Hague, Holland, an exclusive villa area at the boarder of the coastal dunes just thirty minutes away. His car, the beautifully curved, red, Mercedes-Benz 370S cabriolet was found later, parked close by, on the boulevard.

His death was a shock and a cause for quite some gossip among the happy few of The Hague.

It was a mystery and added to the uneasy groundswell of feeling that spread through Europe during those days.

"Anything can happen nowadays", people said.

The aftershocks of the Wall Street Crash were still echoing. The Crash had been the cause of total loss for many people.

The biggest enterprises had been toppled, including the biggest men. Employment was hard to come by in Europe.

In Germany National Socialism had brought some stability. The opposing force Communism had been annihilated there. The go-ahead chancellor was providing work for the unemployed with massive state road building schemes. The situation in Holland was much worse.

Nothing that could explain the cause of death of Henry van der Waerden was discovered during the first days. Neither after his death nor during the months and years that followed.

Articles in the Dutch newspapers described the man, his career and his remarkable character, to quote one:

“At 57 years of age H.van der Waerden Jr., engineer with the Bataafsche Petroleum Co. came to a sudden death. The sad news shocked all who knew him, his friends, his acquaintances, those colleagues who worked with him during his long career at the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij.

An honorable and fine career came to a sudden end.”

The articles appeared not only in the Dutch local but also in the national press. They were full of praise and dwelled on his long and fruitful life, as if they were meant to give people some hope in those troubled times.

“He was born on 30 July 1880 in Eindhoven and received his degree in engineering in Delft in 1905. After some years in Paris, he started to work for the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij. (The Dutch Shell) in 1909.

First in Batavia and later in Balikpapan. In 1914 he was appointed director of the refinery in Suez and stayed there till 1916. Then he went to Curacao, where he laid the groundwork for a refinery that would later become the biggest in the world.

In 1919 he came to The Hague, then after a short sojourn in Mexico he was made director of the refinery Astra Romana in Ploesti in Romania.

In 1923 he came back to The Hague and was made responsible for the supervision of all European companies of the group.”

“This short career summary says nothing of the loss for the company or for his friends”: Engineer. J.E.F. de Kok director-general of the B.P.M. said at his funeral.

“The Royal Dutch Shell loses one of its best and most dedicated men with Henry van der Waerden. He was more than an excellent technologist, he was a hard and efficient worker, with an unequalled dedication to his job.

Just enough was never enough for him.

He gave more than his very best to our company.

His energy never diminished during his long and excellent career.

As a person we lose in him a most honorable man.

Those who had his trust could build on him as on a rock.

Inequity and politics were strangers to him.

He was hard on himself and sometimes not easy for others but with only one purpose: be honest, create and do your duty.

Henry van der Waerden was an example for his fellow men, dedicated to his family, dedicated to his friends, an honest comrade, he was truly a man with a heart of gold.”

Nothing was said about the cause of his death for the simple fact that it was a mystery and a mystery it remained for his family until some 50 years later.

3. A plan for an army, Germany 1923.

Karl Meindorf stared at his glass of beer. He expected the beer to have a calming effect. He contemplated its golden color. The way in which little bubbles formed and surfaced to the white head of foam on top seemed to intrigue him.

He looked carefully at how the white foam melted away like a pile of snow in the sun.

But he might just as well have stared at his own hands.

Staring at something very familiar like his glass of beer would help to calm down, he thought. To be in contact with something familiar, that he could hold in his hands and feel.

The cool touch of the glass would confirm that he was alive and well and, awake and not dreaming.

Meindorf was a man in control of his emotions, something one would not associate with the bright red color of his curly hair. But now he was overexcited. Only with great effort could he control his nerves and not shout it out, tell the world the secret that would probably save them all, his country, even the men in the “bierstube” in which he was seated.

It was not a place that he would normally visit but he was so upset and shaken that he had wanted to escape from his normal surroundings, and didn’t want to be seen by anyone whom he knew. He could never have kept his mouth shut. This “bierstube” therefore proved a good choice.

It was clearly in decline and shabby. Only a few men were sitting at the bar. Most of them were out of work, trying to forget the military they were in with a daily quantity of alcohol and with an occasional chat with a neighbor who would admit after a few free beers to be in deep financial trouble but still very much in need of some more drinks.

The place and the men in that “stube” were typical of the atmosphere of misery and apathy Germany was in, in the year 1923.

The economy was in an appalling state. The staggering inflation had resulted in an exchange rate of 4.2 billion Marks to the U.S. dollar.

The post war period with its enormous impost of reparation payments to the allies had cut deep into Germany’s financial reserves.

The economy had collapsed. Germany’s colonies were taken from her. The country was isolated. Poverty was all around.

It was the time of the Weimar Republic. But the republic was falling apart and slipping into total chaos. An atmosphere of distrust pervaded. Most of men were unemployed or were on strike. In various parts of the country individual political groups had taken power.

In middle Germany the situation was so serious that the army had been ordered to shoot striking workers.

As for Meindorf, the last few years had been as if he had been sleep walking through a nightmare. It had taken at least 3 years to recover from the mental pain in which Germany’s defeat in 1918 had given him. This was the case for most Germans. For him as a German officer it had been even more painful. He had not only lost the war but had, as a soldier, been beaten and humiliated as never before, partly by that what had taken place at the home front, in Germany itself.

Also, many atrocities of the war had become public. Stories were no longer tales of heroism such as had been told in the past.

They had been displaced by raw tales of those that had barely survived the massive slaughter and who admitted that they wanted to forget the unprecedented horrors as quickly as possible.

War was on film now for the first time, in black and white with sequences stenciled in carmines and orange, which made those terrible scenes even more sinister. Confronted with the horrible realities of war, people realized that in former days they had been victims of their leaders' propaganda and misinformation.

The unprecedented vast and beastly killing, the pain, the suffering, the filthiness, the futility of it all had become clear for the first time.

After the actual killing had stopped, the enormous emotional loss to individuals and families had added to the general atmosphere of despair.

But that was not all. The inhuman conditions imposed by the allies on Germany with the Treaty of Versailles had taken time to come into effect and filter through into everyone's daily life. Their negative effect on the economy became more clear each year and was felt in every one's pocket.

Being in the military his income was fortunately safe and fixed but he could buy only a fraction of his needs compared with the same sum before the war. What made things even worse was that there was no end of the situation in sight.

The atmosphere in the bar typified the atmosphere in the whole of Germany, depressing, grey, and full of human misery.

But Karl was not thinking of all this. On the contrary, he felt reborn, full of new energy and full of new hope.

The events that had brought this new state of mind about, were just hours away.

It had started with an unexpected invitation. Admittedly it had come through the normal channels, but an invitation for an officer of his rank to a meeting with “the General” in person was unheard of.

Not even for the most important assignments was a direct contact possible between the “Chef Heeresleitung” and him, a simple member of the central planning unit of the former German army.

The form in which the invitation had arrived had been highly unusual as well.

A white envelope embossed with the General’s family coat of arms, its contents, a short, hand written invitation:

” You are invited to attend a meeting, to be held next Friday 22, starting exactly at 13.00 o’clock. The subject of the meeting and this invitation is of the highest confidentiality. Your code name is “Elbe”, my code name is “Maria”. Both names are to be used henceforth. You are to destroy this invitation and not ever to mention it to anybody”.

*H. von Seeckt
Head Army Upper Command*

To keep important military meetings under cover in those days was not so extraordinary.

Germany was full of snoopers and spies who could report to IMKK, an allied military commission who had oversight of the German army and the armaments industry, to ensure that they would comply with the disarmament conditions agreed to in Versailles. Those conditions had been very severe.

The army had been reduced to 100.000 men, which was but one eighth of its' original strength, the navy had been cut to 15.000 men, which was one fifth of its original strength. Moreover the industry was not allowed to produce tanks, planes, submarines and other strategic military material.

The meeting, presided by the general, had just taken place.

It had taken the whole afternoon.

There were about 20 men in total. Most were from the T2, the planning bureau, a leftover of the banned general staff of Bismarck.

They had all received the same hand written invitation.

During the meeting, which had been very formal, they were addressing each other by code names as specified in the letter.

He had never seen Herr General Hans von Seeckt from close by.

Standing in full uniform behind a long mahogany table in front of the wood paneled wall on which hung a huge Old Italian masterpiece, he fully represented the generation of "der Kaiser" in its glory days. However it was not the man who had been described to him as: "an old introvert, an arrogant aristocrat, beaten by the war, more of a statue than of a human being with a meticulously groomed face, with lorgnette and grey moustache, not showing any human emotion".

Instead, the man that had spoken to them, was a man of flesh and blood and very much alive, with a warm smile and sparkling, penetrating eyes.

He was clearly thrilled by the ideas which he laid down before them.

His enthusiasm had been contagious.

He had displayed an unusual knowledge of each of the men present, which showed his sincere interest in them. Obviously they were chosen with great care, each for his specific character and abilities.

He had inspired them by telling about the important role they were going to play in the history of their country “The Fatherland”.

The immensity of the task and its consequences had collectively taken them aback in the first instance, but a feeling of comradeship had quickly replaced their initial trepidation, and had given a feeling of new hope, of enthusiasm and of new life even.

He had spoken of the recent, darkest day in German history, the 11 January 1923, when five French divisions and a Belgian division had entered the Ruhr area and had occupied it.

What a shock for the Germans. After the shameful defeat in 1918 and in 1919, the obligations of the Treaty of Versailles added insult to injury.

And now this surprise attack out of the blue.
They did not even had the weapons to defend themselves.
The situation had been so serious at that moment it was decided to do something to turn the tide. A first step had to be taken and that first step appeared to be their assignment, the subject of that meeting.

He had proudly spoken of the Germans in general and of their superiority as a nation.
They were considered very gifted in many fields of science, in the arts, in literature and in music. One of their special capabilities was the ability to decide upon a future course of action. To plan the future into the last detail and then to move forward according to plan, without allowing anything to make them deviate from their course.
In fact it was this capability of being able to plan ahead that makes men superior to any other living species.
That was what he said.

The Germans were considered to possess that feature in particular.
It was something in the German character. When looked at positively it was called tenacity, strength, when looked at from a negative point of view it was called inflexibility and arrogance.

The assignment was exactly in this field of planning.
His group was considered to be the best.
So, nothing could go wrong.
It was an honorable and far reaching assignment.

The task consisted of making a plan for the biggest army Germany had ever known. Not only to plan for that army into the smallest detail, but also to plan for all its needs and for all the steps to get it together and get it mobilized. It was to plan for an army of not less than 2.8 - 3 million men. 102 divisions, with in total eight army-command centers with no less than 252 generals.

It is important to note today that, when the second world war started in September 1939, the German army consisted of precisely 102 divisions and it is therefore clear, all things considered, that it had been the German army's upper command who was responsible for the build up to the second world war and all that preceded it and that they started their preparations as early as 1923, following the occupation of the Ruhr by France.

Also, that when Hitler was allowed to take power in 1933 and the minister of war suggested him to take one of his first secret decisions, which was intended to reshape the industrial complex of that moment into a military industrial complex, this was all in accord with and based upon that early army master plan dating from 1923.

The plan had in the meantime been refined and updated. It included many sub plans such as a propaganda plan to prepare the German people for war.

Already in 1924 General Dulwich Wurtbacher had been made responsible for the army's industry-plan. It was ready that same year and included plans for the manufacturing of all that an army needs, including the need for the raw materials essential during a state of war.

Germany had her weaknesses, she badly needed iron and steel and last but not least crude oil for the refining of petrol.

The plan was so detailed, that it included recommendations for the production of synthetic fibre such as substitutes for wool and cotton and also, which is of relevance for this story, first for an ingenious method to produce synthetic petrol from brown coal and second for additional imports of oil from abroad.

They realised that having their whole army run on synthetic fuel was too far fetched an idea.

Nevertheless when the war started years later the entire German air force flew on synthetic petrol made in Germany, and part of the regular army was fuelled by it too, an enormous technical success and achievement.

One name to remember is Major General Kurt von Schleiger, Major General, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Defense. Until 1933 he had been the driving force in the German Reichswehr.

In 1924 he had been the executive officer to Von Seeckt. Behind the scenes he oversaw the gradual adoption of the plan. Only in the later years did he came out into the open, but initially he stayed under cover and cleverly placed other people in public posts, like the Reichswehr minister General Groener, then, later Bruning, both were politically killed by him when they had carried out their tasks.

By 1930 Schleiger had become the political representative of the Reichswehr, but when Hindenburg dismissed Bruning, it was not Schleiger but Franz von Papen who, on June 1 1932, became Chancellor of the Reich. Although an excellent man, Von Papen's chancellorship was short and Schleiger was pushed into that position.

Then he wanted to define his own course, but Hitler's Nazi movement was already too strong to be ignored.

Strangely enough Hitler did not want to become chancellor by force; he wanted to be elected into power.

Plot followed after plot and finally together Papen, Hugenberg, and Hitler went together to Hindenburg in the evening of January 29th, 1933 and told the sick old man that Schleiger was going to use the army.

Hindenburg's mental health was very bad, and so was his decision. Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor and Papen vice chancellor. Schleiger was dismissed. But in the meantime one of Hitler's tricks had turned the situation completely in his favor. He wanted to get rid of the communist party which from the 600 deputies in the Reichstag would have had only a 100 seats. The 250 on which the Nazi's could count did not constitute a majority.

This moment became known as Hitler's "trick by fire".

On the night of February 27th, 1933, a few days before the March 5th elections, which were to confirm Hitler chancellorship, the building of the German Reichstag in Berlin was set on fire.

The fire produced the immense Nazi electoral victory of March 5, which was followed by "the brown terror", "the persecution of the communists", "the persecution of the Jews", "the invasion of Austria", "the occupation of Czechoslovakia", "the invasion of Poland", and the radical "Gleichschaltung, or forced assimilation", which came over Germany.

One particular event has to be mentioned as it has to do with Schleiger and the Reichswehr.

It is called "The Purge".

It is perhaps one of the smartest and most dishonest plots Hitler ever pulled off.

The S.A. was Hitler's private Brown Shirt army that had brought him to power. It consisted of 2.500.000 men of the streets, so called "Lumpen Proletariat". Hitler himself always wore a brown shirt, the S.A. army was his creation and it was led by his best and only friend Roehm.

In quality very different from the 100.000 elite troops of the Reichswehr, who were not trained to be simple soldiers but accordingly to the original master plan each of them was trained for leadership, so that the final army could quickly be formed. The officers existed already, so to speak. Roehm wanted his brown shirts to become part of the Reichswehr with him as general leader. This was of course totally against the will of the Reichswehr upper command.

So Hitler was forced to choose between the "Brown Shirts" and the "Reichswehr", not an easy choice. He choose for the Reichswehr, invented a conspiracy and with the help of his SS bodyguards killed Schleiger and his friend Roehm and some 200-300 other men whom he feared. This further putch became known as "the Purge".

On august 2 1933, Hindenburg died and by a last masterstroke Hitler declared himself President and Chancellor. He was now Head of State and not threatened by anyone.

And as far as the Reichswehr was concerned, the very morning of Hindenburgs' death all Reichswehr garrisons took a new oath, which read as follows:
"I swear by God this sacred oath, that I will render unconditional obedience to the leader of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, the commander in chief of the Wehrmacht and that I will, as a valiant soldier, at all times be ready to take my life for this oath".

Until end 1933 when Germany left the League of Nations, Germany's rearmament was proceeded secretly, but in March 1935 Hitler broke with the military clauses of Versailles and introduced subscription.

It then became clear that Germany had become one enormous military camp. The air force had grown tremendously, the navy had expanded.

The Reichswehr was enlarged to a strength of 850.000 men.

By 1938 the country was spending an enormous sum of \$ 800.000.000 annually on arms, in 1939 this amount had grown to \$4,000,000,000. All of this according to the old plan drawn up as early as 1924.

It raises the question to where all the money was coming from?

Well the money was created by the genius of one man called Dr. Schacht.

In 1923 he saved Germany from total bankruptcy and in 1933 Hitler appointed him to the presidency of the Reichsbank.

He was a man with boundless ambition and a total opportunist. He used the German gold reserve until there was nothing left. He increased taxes. He financed the current business of the government with internal loans from banks, insurance companies and the like. These were forced loans. In fact it was the end of the wealth of the German people. Abroad his juggling was even more astounding.

He was able to lend from American banks enormous loans, practically equal to the payments Germany was obliged to pay back in reparations to the Allied Forces.

He is probably the inventor of the idea that being a big debtor is better than being a creditor, because those who lend the money apparently prefer to lend even more in the hope to get it all back later.

There is always hope and taking a loss is too hard for most.

So Schacht made capital out of the huge debts Germany already had.

For instance in 1934, the bank of England gave an additional credit of \$3,750,000, so that Germany could pay off some old debts.

The money was of course used to produce further armaments. Schacht was also a genius in the field of barter deals. This tactic was often used when he needed raw material such as oil and minerals from the Balkans. He would for instance deliver guns and receive oil in return from Romania.

Schacht was replaced by Goering in 1937 and had to give up the presidency of the Reichsbank in 1939.

Soon the war broke out and overt plundering of other nations' wealth became the way to pay the bill.

As has been said one of Germany's weaknesses was her lack of certain raw materials, especially in a time of war. It needed iron, silk, nickel, manganese, chromium, tungsten, tin, copper, rubber, silk and raw textile fibers and last but not least petrol.

The search for substitute materials was an ongoing effort: clothes from chemical fiber, margarine from coal, flour from potato meal, petrol from wood and coal.

German engineers had performed miracles before.

It is strange and sad that only in a time of approaching war these miracles seem possible.

A time of stupendous human effort and ingenuity.

This is how the initiative by von Seeckt, as early as in 1924, ended in the restoration of the self confidence of the German nation, giving her, her recovery, her leader, her army and her war and her victories, but also her falland what a fall it was.