

# The History of the Twentieth Century

## Episode 266

### “After Hitler, Our Turn”

#### Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

*[I]t is not true that Fascism is only a fighting organization of the bourgeoisie...Fascism is a fighting organization of the bourgeoisie dependent upon the active support of Social Democracy. Objectively, Social Democracy is the moderate wing of Fascism. There is no ground for supposing that a fighting organization of the bourgeoisie can reach decisive results in its struggles, or in a government of a country, without the active support of Social Democracy. There is just as little ground for supposing that Social Democracy can achieve decisive results in the struggles or in the government of a country without active support by the fighting organization of the bourgeoisie. These organizations do not exclude but complement one another. They are not poles apart, but twins.*

Joseph Stalin.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening Theme]

Episode 266. After Hitler, Our Turn.

I've mentioned the Communist Party of Germany, the KPD for short, many times now in this podcast. After the failures of leftist workers' uprisings in Berlin and Munich in 1919, the Ruhr region in 1920 and Hamburg in 1923, uprisings that had been put down violently by the Weimar Coalition parties, the KPD shifted strategy in 1924, abandoning revolution to compete electorally against the bourgeois political parties.

In 1925, the 39-year old Ernst Thälmann became Party chairman. Thälmann was originally a dock worker from Hamburg. He had participated in the 1918 revolts against the Kaiser's government in the final days of the war. In 1923, he had helped organize that year's uprising in Hamburg. Afterward, he fled to the Soviet Union for a time. Under Thälmann's leadership, the KPD aligned closely with the Communist International, with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and with that Party's chairman, Joseph Stalin.

As you know, Thälmann was a candidate in the 1925 German presidential election, taking 6% of the vote in a race where retired Marshal Paul von Hindenburg narrowly upset the frontrunner, Wilhelm Marx, supported by the Weimar Coalition, including the Social Democratic Party, or SPD.

Had Thälmann and the KPD dropped out of the presidential election after the first round, as had the other center and left candidates, his 6% support would likely have been enough to tip the election to Marx and away from the conservative monarchist Hindenburg. So why did Thälmann and the Communists persist in running a presidential campaign that had no hope of winning but could and did give the German presidency to Hindenburg, a 75-year-old aristocrat and monarchist who wanted to restore Kaiser Wilhelm to the throne? Who more than anyone else was responsible for prolonging the misery and bloodshed of the Great War long past the point when a German defeat was assured? And who shirked any responsibility for the suffering of the German nation, instead blaming the Communists for Germany's woes? Why would the Communists cooperate in allowing this man to become the *Reichspräsident*?

There were two reasons. The first was the personal reason. As I mentioned a few moments ago, the Communists had tried at least three times to bring the Revolution to Germany, and three times the Weimar Coalition parties had sided against them and with the most reactionary elements of German society, even though the largest party in the Weimar Coalition was the SPD, which was officially a socialist party and by all rights should have been partnering with the Communists, not with bourgeois centrist parties. And this same Weimar Coalition that had sent the Army to crush worker uprisings multiple times, just as often looked the other way when the right wing turned violent.

As far as the Communists were concerned, the SPD had proved again and again that it could not be trusted.

The second reason was an overlapping ideological one. To a committed Marxist-Leninist, the seeming contradictions between the SPD's stated ideological leanings and its behavior when workers actually took to the barricades was easily explained. The SPD was a wolf in sheep's clothing. It was an organization just as committed to preserving the capitalist status quo as were its coalition partners, but it talked socialism to delude the workers into supporting it. The SPD was, therefore, not a potential friend or ally, but the most insidious enemy of them all: a party that sweet-talks the proletariat at election time, then stabs them in the back. Social democracy was not the opposite of fascism, it was fascism's twin, as Joseph Stalin argued in the article I quoted at the top of the episode.

In the topsy-turvy world of Marxist-Leninist theory, the SPD is actually a greater enemy than a monarchist like Hindenburg. Say what you like about the right wing—at least they're honest about who they are and what they believe. The SPD are just as bad, but cloak their betrayals of the working class behind socialist rhetoric. By contrast, Hindenburg becoming President was

actually good news, a dose of bracing honesty that exposed the existing German political order for what it truly was: a lie intended to preserve the privileges of the capitalists, the aristocrats, and the militarists.

So for these reasons, Thälmann and the KPD ran in every election but never entered government or ever supported one. The goal was not to make the system work, but to bring it down.

Under Thälmann's leadership, the KPD's vote share in national elections slowly grew from 6% in 1925 to an astonishing 13% in the most recent federal election in 1930, which gave the KPD 77 seats and made it the number three party in the Reichstag.

This slow-but-steady increase in the vote share of the German Communist Party made it by 1930 the largest Communist Party in the world outside of the Soviet Union and it was a loyal follower of the Communist International, or Comintern, making it the USSR's biggest success in spreading Marxism-Leninism abroad.

Speaking of Comintern, in 1928 at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, Marxism-Leninism's greatest theoreticians presented their analysis of Communism's biggest ideological puzzle: why was it that the Revolution had come to Russia in 1917, but instead of then spreading outward and engulfing the entire world, as most Communists had expected, it fizzled out, leaving the USSR as the only socialist country in the world?

It had once seemed that the Great War heralded the final collapse of the old capitalist order, as Marx had predicted, but the postwar revolutionary chaos had subsided and the capitalist order had reasserted itself. But Marxism is supposed to be "scientific socialism," right? Modern Marxists could examine the evidence and deduce the truth scientifically, just as Marx had. And so, the theoreticians spent years pondering this problem and now had come up with their answer. It was true that the First Period of capitalism had degenerated into the Great War, but then a Second Period of renewed capitalism had emerged. But, said the theoreticians, the old contradictions of capitalism had not been remedied. They remained as Marx had first identified them.

That meant that there must inevitably come a Third Period of capitalism, when those same contradictions would end the capitalist renaissance and bring the system crashing down a second time. Workers would become immiserated and radicalized, and revolution would follow.

Comintern adopted this framework in 1928. Barely a year later came the 1929 stock market crash, followed by bank failures in Europe and the United States, and the onset of the Great Depression. This was bad news for the capitalists, but it was a huge opportunity for the Communists. Moscow's theoreticians suddenly seemed like geniuses; they had predicted the economic crisis that had blindsided capitalism's greatest minds. Support for Communism surged, in Germany and many other countries. Even in the United States, the citadel of capitalism, the Communist Party of the USA grew by leaps and bounds.

This distinction between the Second Period now ending and the Third Period just beginning was useful in domestic Soviet politics. Remember that 1927 was the year Stalin began the first Five-Year Plan, ending the pseudo-capitalist New Economic Policy and bringing central planning to the fore. This domestic policy shift could be explained as corresponding to the changeover from Second Period capitalism, when capitalists flourished and it might be necessary to work with them, to the Third Period, when capitalism was collapsing, and it was the duty of every good Communist to bring it down forever.

The Communist International was sending the same advice to Communist parties abroad: the time for cooperation with the capitalists is over; the time for confrontation had arrived. This message was warmly received in Germany; it meshed with what the KPD were already thinking. The Social Democrats were not allies; they were an obstacle. The goal was to heighten the contradictions of capitalism, not to smooth them over. The Social Democrats were derided as the “social fascists.” They were socialism’s biggest enemy, more so even than the actual fascists.

In that 1930 German federal election, the one that saw a dramatic upswing in the Communist vote and saw the Communists become the number three party in the Reichstag, you can attribute that increase in the Communist vote to unhappy workers reacting to the economic collapse, just as Comintern had predicted. The number one party in the Reichstag was still the SPD, as always. But the number two party was the result of an even more dramatic upswing. It was Adolph Hitler’s party, the National Socialist German Workers Party, the NSDAP, growing from 2% of the vote to 18% and picking up a staggering 95 seats.

In the blink of an eye, the NSDAP had gone from being a fringe party led by a kook to the main right-wing opposition party in the Reichstag, and Adolph Hitler had become a force to be reckoned with in German politics. Although his party held almost one-fifth of the seats in the Reichstag, Hitler, the party leader, refused to entertain any talk of joining a coalition government. This strategy met with some opposition even within his own party, but Hitler was adamant. All of the other political parties, left and right, had failed Germany, Hitler declared. The NSDAP would not vote to prop up any of them. The party would only enter government if it led the government. In other words, if Adolf Hitler were made chancellor.

This was exactly the same position taken by Thälmann and the KPD. The onset of the Great Depression had led nearly a third of German voters to vote for one or the other party that refused to join any coalition. As you know from episode 260, Heinrich Brüning of the Centre Party remained chancellor, leading a minority government. The Brüning government would impose an austerity plan on Germany, and Brüning would come to be known as the “Hunger Chancellor.”

The SPD opposed these austerity measures. They were antithetical to the social democracy the SPD had worked to build since 1918. The leaders of the SPD begged the Communists to join them. An SPD-KPD coalition would get most of the way to a majority. It would not be very difficult to pick up one or two smaller parties and form a socialist coalition that would deal with

the Great Depression in a humane, socialist way. But Thälmann would not compromise. His critics on the left warned that if the socialist parties could not work together, you would wake up one morning to find that Adolf Hitler, of all people, had become chancellor of a right-wing coalition.

Thälmann, true to form, dismissed this suggestion as a scare tactic. Fighting fascism meant fighting the SPD just as fiercely as fighting Hitler or Brüning. The prospect of Hitler as chancellor was a straw man. Communists had nothing to fear from a Hitler government, Thälmann told his party. That would just heighten the contradictions of capitalism still further. “*Nach Hitler, kommen wir,*” he told them. You can render that in English as, “After Hitler, our turn.” In Moscow, Comintern approved Thälmann’s strategy, but Leon Trotsky, from his exile in Turkey, warned the German Communists, “Should fascism come to power, it will ride over your skulls...”

[music: Beethoven, *Egmont Overture*]

Speak of the devil, what *is* Adolf Hitler up to these days?

There isn’t a lot to say about Hitler’s personal life. He turned 40 in April 1929, and as of that moment in his life, there is no evidence he had ever been in a romantic relationship. Back when he served in the Army, his buddies used to tease him over his lack of interest in women. Hitler lived quietly and modestly, claiming he had forsworn private pleasures for the sake of his public duty.

He did have one close relationship: with his niece, Angela Raubal. Angela was a child of Hitler’s sister Angela, whose husband had died when the younger Angela was just two years old. In 1927, when Angela was 19, she began attending public events with her Uncle Alf, as she called him. She moved from her native Austria to Munich, where Hitler lived, to attend college. A few months later, Hitler’s chauffeur confessed to him that he and Angela had gotten into a relationship. The chauffeur asked permission to marry her. Hitler responded by firing his chauffeur.

For the next few years, Hitler was seldom seen in public without Angela by his side. By all accounts, she was a pretty and charming young woman and Hitler doted on her. In 1929, she moved into his apartment. She attracted the attention of many young men, but Hitler was a strict guardian, and seldom allowed her to go anywhere except in his company or in the company of a chaperone. Then, in September 1931, Angela asked her uncle for permission to visit Vienna. Hitler refused. They argued, and Hitler stormed out of the apartment. Afterward, Angela shot and killed herself with her uncle’s pistol. She was 23 years old.

Hitler’s political opponents, then and ever since, have accused him either of being physically abusive toward Angela or having been involved in an illicit incestuous relationship with her. While we can’t rule out either of these possibilities, it seems simpler to conclude that Hitler was

attempting to be a proper guardian to his fatherless niece and to provide her with support and guidance, but that, being Hitler, he was far too harsh and authoritarian. What he likely regarded as setting appropriate boundaries for a young lady under his supervision led to him exerting a degree of control we today would view as emotional abuse and it drove his niece to despair and suicide.

At the time, the incident and the rumors that swirled around it probably won Hitler more sympathy than anything else. He had no wife or children and the one family member with whom he had been close had died tragically, allowing Hitler more than ever to depict himself as the man with no private life, dedicated solely to the welfare of the German people.

It was shortly after the death of Angela that Hitler began a relationship with 20-year-old Eva Braun, a model and photographer's assistant. This relationship would continue for 13 years, until their deaths in 1945, and it was the inverse of the relationship Hitler had had with Angela, by which I mean that the relationship was certainly romantic and sexual in private, but in public they were discreet and never appeared together as a couple, though Eva's role as a photographer's assistant and later as a photographer provided a cover story for her to travel with his entourage and attend events where Hitler made appearances. Hitler believed that making the relationship public would be bad for his image, and so it was kept private until after their deaths.

In the 1928 German federal election, Hitler's party, the NSDAP, took less than 3% of the vote, which earned it a mere 12 seats in the Reichstag. Hitler and his party were at this time marginal figures in German politics, but that was about to change.

In 1929 came the Young Plan, and as you know, it was opposed by Germany's principal right-wing opposition party, the German National People's Party, or DNVP. The DNVP was now led by media magnate Alfred Hugenberg, an old-school German conservative who, like President Hindenburg, dreamed of restoring Kaiser Wilhelm to the German throne. Kaiser Wilhelm is still with us, by the way, turning 70 years old in 1929 and still holding out hope of a restoration. But restoration of the Kaiser is an old person's passion in Germany. The younger generation of Germans did not see the appeal in bringing a 70-year-old who had ruined the nation the first time around back for a second try.

The younger generation of right-wing Germans was more attracted to Hitler and the NSDAP. Here was something new, something that hadn't already been tried. Maybe the NSDAP has the answers. Hence, Hugenberg and the right wing reaching out to Hitler to join forces in the 1929 referendum campaign.

On October 3, 1929, the German foreign minister, Gustav Stresemann died suddenly of a stroke. Stresemann has to be credited as the wiliest figure in German diplomacy since Otto von Bismarck. In the six years he led the German Foreign Office, he had helped negotiate the Dawes Plan of 1924, which reduced Germany's reparations payments, then the Locarno Treaty of 1925, under which Germany and the Western powers guaranteed Germany's western borders, followed

by the Treaty of Berlin with the Soviet Union. In 1926, Germany was admitted to the League of Nations and granted a permanent seat in the League Council, which is as good a place as any to draw a line and declare that Germany had re-joined the community of nations as an equal partner. That same year, Stresemann won the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1928 came the Kellogg-Briand Pact and in 1929 the Young Plan.

Despite Stresemann's international outlook and his service to the Weimar Republic, it's important to bear in mind that he was in government as a member of the German People's Party, a center-right party more moderate than the DNVP, but still a party pretty far to the right, anti-socialist and pro-monarchy. Stresemann would not enter into any negotiations to reaffirm Germany's borders with Austria or Czechoslovakia or Poland, because he hoped that Germany would one day peacefully annex the German-speaking regions of those countries. In his view, if Germany could maintain membership in good standing of the international community (not to mention veto power at the League of Nations), the other major powers would eventually have no choice but to concede Germany's rightful claims to those territories.

Stresemann's service as foreign minister drew criticism from within his own party for his diplomatic concessions to Germany's former enemies abroad as well as his cooperation with the Weimar Coalition parties at home. After Stresemann's death, his party moved farther to the right.

Later that October came the stock market crash in New York. December 1929 saw the referendum on the Young Plan. The referendum was defeated, but the campaign against the Young Plan raised the profile of Adolph Hitler and the NSDAP, now an accepted member of the right-wing opposition to the Weimar Coalition, along with the DNVP and the German People's Party.

Three months later, on March 27, 1930, the coalition government of Chancellor Müller collapsed when Stresemann's party, the German People's Party pulled out of the government in a squabble over austerity measures, although it more likely reflects the party's movement to the right after Stresemann and its unwillingness to continue to support the socialist SPD, especially during a time of economic crisis. Müller would be the last Social Democratic Party chancellor in Germany until 1969.

The new chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, led a minority coalition that did not include the Social Democrats. This suited President Hindenburg just fine. Hindenburg and his advisers played a complicated game here. When the old man had run for president back in 1925, the Weimar Coalition parties had opposed him and warned the voters he would seek to undermine the Republic and restore the monarchy. In fact, Hindenburg did hope to see the end of the Republic and a restoration of Kaiser Wilhelm, but he also took seriously his obligations under the constitution and laws of the Republic, so you won't find the old general leading any coups or anything.

But he did have his own ideas of how Germany should be run. He wanted less power in the hands of the Reichstag and more in those of the president, that is to say, his own. Hindenburg was never happy seeing socialists in the government, and was quite pleased to see the SPD pushed out of the governing coalition, although he was unhappy to see Brüning's own Centre Party still in the coalition. The Centre Party was essentially a Catholic party, and Hindenburg didn't think Catholics had any more business in German government than socialists had. And don't forget that the Centre Party was one of the parties that had agitated for peace in the latter days of the war. Hindenburg certainly hadn't. In his view, the Centre Party were virtually traitors.

The new government imposed harsh austerity on Germany, meant to get the German balance of payments under control and make good on Germany's debt and reparations obligations. But this kind of austerity is the worst possible response to an economic slowdown and it came just as the Great Depression was beginning to bite. The unemployment, low wages, and high prices that resulted were hugely unpopular and drove millions of Germans into poverty. When the Reichstag would not approve the budget, Hindenburg exercised his emergency powers as president and imposed it by decree. When the Reichstag voted against Hindenburg's emergency decree, he dissolved it and called new elections.

The collapsing world economy suddenly made the Communists, who had predicted all this in 1928, look like geniuses. But you know who else looked like a genius? Adolf Hitler. Hitler had been the face of the 1929 referendum campaign to block the Young Plan. He had denounced the plan as an Allied ploy to impoverish Germany, and look where we are. Remember that the referendum had passed by an overwhelming margin among those who voted, but not enough people had voted for the referendum to take effect. Now Hitler and the NSDAP could argue that a) they had foreseen the problem with the Young Plan and b) had pushed the referendum as a way to block it and c) the vast majority of German voters were with them, as evidenced by the vote in the referendum. Unfortunately, not enough Germans had voted to make the referendum binding and this voter apathy had brought on the current economic crisis. The solution was for Hitler and the NSDAP to carry on with their campaign against the Treaty of Versailles and the Western plutocrats who wanted to bankrupt Germany, only this time we need more Germans to take up the cause and rescue the country.

And there was more than that one referendum to indicate the Nazi message was catching on. The party had also done very well in the 1929 state elections, particularly in Thuringia, in central Germany, which includes the cities of Erfurt, Jena, and Weimar, the city where the Republic was born. The NSDAP took enough seats in the state parliament to force the conservative People's Party to choose between the SDP and the Nazis as its coalition partner. They chose the Nazis; Party Leader Hitler's demand was that the NSDAP be given control over two state ministries: interior and culture and education. Both ministries were given to Wilhelm Frick, a high-ranking police officer who had been with the Party since the beer-hall putsch of 1923. Control of the interior ministry gave him control over the state police. His other portfolio gave him control over

the schools, and this would be the first time a member of the NSDAP would take charge of state government ministries.

If anyone was unclear about what a Nazi government would look like, Frick's 14-month tenure in Thuringia brought sharp clarity. Ministry officials with SPD leanings, or suspected of SPD leanings, were fired and replaced with Nazis. Prayer in school was made mandatory, in Frick's words, to "prevent the people being swindled by Marxism and the Jews." The University of Jena was made to create a chair in race science, and a notorious anti-Semite and Nazi favorite, Hans Günther, appointed to it. In Weimar, modernist works of art were removed from the Royal Museum. This in the German region that had once been home to Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang von Goethe, and Friedrich Schiller, and where Walter Gropius' Bauhaus was located. Hitler praised Frick's work; Frick would go on to become interior minister in the national government in 1933, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Anyway, all indications were that 1930 would be an even better year for the Nazis, so when elections were called, Hitler and the NSDAP leadership were ecstatic. Hitler barnstormed the country, giving speeches in which he outlined the Nazi manifesto. Democracy had failed Germany, he declared. The other political parties represented special interests, not the good of the German people. Giving them rule over the country for the past 12 years had reduced Germany to "an object of exploitation and made it the laughingstock of the world."

The NSDAP was different. As the party of all Germans, it alone could overcome the selfishness that had divided Germany, because it alone recognized the German people as a whole, not as a collection of competing interests. "What we're promising is not an improvement in material conditions for an individual class of people, but rather the multiplication of the strength of the nation, since only this will put us on the path to power and to the liberation of the entire people." Also, the German people were too numerous for the territory they lived in, he said. "We want the German people to fight for its living space."

Today's young people bore no responsibility for the war, Hitler said, but under the terms of the Young Plan, Germany would be paying reparations until 1988, when today's schoolchildren would be grandparents. As a result of the Treaty of Versailles, "international high finance is Germany's lord and master" and "international finance spiders" were feasting on German economic suffering. As for Communism, it "only exists to promote the interests of a certain race that is not part of us and only aims at the destruction of everything national so that it can rule internationally." Everyone understood what he was getting at. Sometimes he dispensed with the euphemisms and spoke plainly. Jews in Germany were above the law, he complained, and got away with anything, while Marxism was a Jewish plot, which he and his party would "unmask."

When the votes were counted, the Social Democratic Party, the SPD, lost a few seats but remained the largest party in the Reichstag. The Centre Party held steady, while the right-wing DNVP and People's Party had substantial losses. The Communists saw major gains, but the eye-

popper was the NSDAP, which had won just 2.6% of the vote in 1928, two years ago. Now it won 18.3%, catapulting it into second place, behind the SPD, in the Reichstag. There was no precedent in German political history for such a sharp upsurge in support for one party. It would be hard to find one in the political history of any country.

NSDAP gains had not come from any one demographic. The party picked up support among the middle class, professionals and business leaders yes, but it also gained substantial working-class support. The Communists got more support from workers in heavy industry, but workers in smaller businesses, artisans, and agricultural workers broke for the Nazis. And although the NSDAP styled itself the party of the young and idealistic who sought a better future, it also did just fine among older voters.

The election results were taken as a huge setback by anyone who supported German democracy. The Weimar Coalition parties responded to the shocking result by drawing together. The SPD was not part of the Brüning government, but it agreed to support the government in the Reichstag, at least for now, as the only alternative would be for Brüning to seek Nazi support, possibly entering into coalition with the Nazis. Brüning went so far as to meet with Hitler to discuss the possibility of a coalition. As was typical of Hitler in private meetings, the talks began cordially enough, but within a few minutes, Hitler launched himself into a long harangue, raising his voice and offering Brüning no opportunity to reply. Brüning said later he was reminded of Mussolini, which Hitler would have taken as a compliment although that was not how Brüning intended it. Brüning left the meeting convinced that Hitler was unreasonable, unstable, and had no constructive role to play in government.

President Hindenburg felt the same way. He had no use for socialists or Communists; he still believed it was they who cost Germany victory in the war. He wasn't very keen on the Catholics of the Centre Party either, but neither did he approve of Hitler, whom he dismissively described as "a Bohemian corporal." Hitler was not in fact from Bohemia, though Hindenburg thought he was, or perhaps found it amusing to pretend he thought so.

The trouble was, if you ruled out the SPD and the KPD and the NSDAP, you've ruled out more than half the seats in the Reichstag and now you've made forming a majority government impossible. What to do? Brüning still had Hindenburg's support, and the SPD's support—or at least tolerance—but the Brüning policy of hard-nosed economic austerity was anathema to socialists, and opened the SPD to attacks from the Communists and other hardliners on the left that the party that claimed to support the working class was selling them out yet again.

As for Adolf Hitler, as I said, he maintained his position that the price for the National Socialists to join a government was that it be the leading party and he be chancellor, because the NSDAP was the largest of the right-wing parties. Didn't it stand to reason that the largest party in the government get to pick the chancellor?

But no one in political leadership in Germany was ready to hand over the chancellorship to someone like Adolf Hitler. This was in part because they could tell he was dangerous, and in part because of class distinctions. They distrusted someone from an obscure family with little education, who spoke German with an accent and who didn't know how to use a salad fork properly. Hitler himself was well aware of the class prejudice against him and he resented it.

But how long could the political boycott of Hitler and his party hold? Yes, he was extreme, and yes he was embarrassing, but how long can it be before someone succumbs to the temptation to use this odd little man with his big bloc of votes for their own political purposes?

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd especially like to thank Neal and Alan for their kind donations, and thank you to wergle for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Neal and Alan and wergle help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, just visit the website, [historyofthetwentiethcentury.com](http://historyofthetwentiethcentury.com) and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

The podcast website also contains notes about the music used on the podcast. Sometimes it's my own work, sometimes it's licensed, but many times, the music you hear here is free and downloadable. If you hear a piece of music on the podcast and you would like to know more about it, including the composer, the performers, and a link to where you can download it, that would be the place to go. While you're there, you can leave a comment and let me know what you thought about today's show.

Next week is a bye week for the podcast, but I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time, here on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we remain in Germany and take a closer look at Adolf Hitler. We've already covered the political and economic developments in Germany in the early Thirties, but now we'll zoom in on how Hitler and his movement were responding to the Great Depression and meet Horst Wessel, the Nazi Party's most famous martyr. The Brown Battalions, in two weeks' time, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. The KPD, the Communist Party of Germany enjoyed a substantial uptick in support in the 1930 election, from 10.6% of the vote two years ago to 13.1% today. As I mentioned earlier, the KPD's support had been increasing slowly but steadily for six years now. Had it not been for the Nazi Party's amazing result, the big story of the 1930 election might have been the Communist surge.

As far as Ernst Thälmann was concerned, it was the big story anyway. One Communist vote, he told his Party, was worth ten or twenty Nazi votes, because every Communist vote came from a committed revolutionary, not a bourgeois dilettante.

After Hitler, our turn.

[music: Closing Theme]

© 2022 by Mark Painter. All rights reserved.