

André Postert

**Hitlerjunge Schall**

**The Journals of a Young Nazi**

Translated by Rachel Hildebrandt

## I. Introduction

### The History of the Journals

The passport photo shows a student from Jena, and at first glance, there is certainly nothing unusual about it, at least in terms of the time period. The viewer is met by a serious gaze, only the hint of a smile in view. The lips are pressed tightly together, and the close-cut hair with its side part, obviously fresh from the barber's chair, corresponds with contemporary taste back then. The artificial sternness is somewhat disconcerting, but this was the photographic ideal at the time. One detail stands out: A gold-rimmed badge bearing a swastika is pinned to the lapel of the otherwise unadorned jacket. The Jena student wore this badge with pride, might have even donned it especially for the appointment with the photographer. His vanity was not completely unwarranted. The pin was a so-called "Badge of Honor in Gold," which the National Socialist dictatorship started awarding in 1934 to former and still-active members of the *Hitlerjugend* who had been involved in the Nazi movement as early as the Weimar Republic. Although, based on his age, it had been a long time since the student had been a *Hitlerjunge*, he was still under the Nazi youth organization's spell. Another photo taken during his university years shows him as an active leader in full combat uniform: brown shirt with kerchief, badge and armband with swastika, hair parted precisely down the middle, and the expression no less stern. There were more than a few Nazi students like him in the 1930s, but this one in particular attracted the attention of his professors. When he moved to Jena at the beginning of the 1936 winter semester to start his studies in the field of vocational education, seven substantial journal volumes were packed in his suitcase. These comprised almost a thousand pages of personal experiences and notes from the Weimar Republic period, as well as the early years of the Nazi Reich.

During the years of the dictatorship, the University of Jena rightly earned its reputation as an intellectual bastion for National Socialism. The eugenicist Hans F.K. Günther - commonly known as the *Race Pope* - had started his university career here. Numerous professors, including the physician Karl Astel, the folklorist Max Hildebert Boehm, and the theologians Wolf Meyer-Erlach and Walter Grundmann, were NSDAP members, and their shared goal was to make their fields compatible with Nazi ideology. The young student was quite intentional in his decision to

attend this university, where many young Nazis enrolled during the 1930s. Shortly before the declaration of war in 1939, Friedrich Sander, a professor in the Institute of Psychology, arranged for the transcription of the journals, having quickly recognized their value: Here the ascent of the Nazi movement during its decisive early years was documented from the perspective of a young man who had dedicated himself fanatically to the cause of the Hitler movement already as early as 1930. This fact made the journals truly unique. Of course, Nazis - both functionaries and more minor figures - had been extensively recording their memories of the Weimar Republic period in countless speeches, articles, and books since 1933. However, these memoir-type accounts always served the interests of the state propaganda machine and of self-glorification (at the very least), which often set them far apart from historical authenticity. A journal penned by a boy and starting during the Nazi *Kampfzeit* seemed to be a unique exception. In addition, the writing was quite compelling in certain sections. It is possible that the ambitious Sander - who had taken over as chair in 1933 after the firing of a Jewish professor, and who had joined the NSDAP in 1937 - sensed a golden opportunity to make a name for himself in the academic sphere of the Nazi state. This was also the motivation behind his engagement as the publisher of the *Journal for Youth Research (Zeitschrift für Jugendforschung)*, which he had founded in 1934. This periodical was meant to establish the psychological and pedagogical foundation for the embedding of the new Nazi philosophy in the minds of Germany's young people. It is quite plausible that he had great intentions for the journals belonging to that Jena student, but nothing came of these plans.

Although the originals mysteriously vanished during the war, Sander preserved about 500 pages of the transcription. After the bombing raid on February 9, 1945, the Institute of Psychology resembled a mountain of rubble. Sander's secretary hid the last surviving documents, including the journal pages, before she herself was killed a few days later in another air attack. Following the military collapse of the Nazi dictatorship, Sander was fired by the new university administration in December 1945 due to his Nazi past. He relocated to Potsdam and took the manuscripts with him, before moving to West Berlin in 1951 and to Bonn in 1954. After this final move, the documents sat in a box in his attic and were practically forgotten. In the early years of the Federal Republic, very few Germans possessed enough courage to critically analyze their roles during the Nazi period. Numerous academics who had diligently worked to promote the goals of the Nazi state refused to divulge anything in the postwar years about their involvement. Others simply lied outright or attempted to falsify the nature of their activities

during the Reich. Sander was able to continue his career at the University of Bonn until his retirement in 1958, and he would have had little reason to want to dust off the journals during this time. They would have set off some very unpleasant questions for him. In 1966, he returned the documents to the former student who had written them and had passed them along to him in Jena: Franz Albrecht Schall.

Personal journals hold a special fascination for scholars, as well as interested individuals. Through them, that which is rarely, if ever, recorded in officially printed materials becomes tangible and vaguely “real”: the subjective, personal, and sometimes highly emotional side of the bigger story, the one whose opaque framework and countless names and dates are initially incomprehensible to the interested layperson. Perhaps this is why the interest in such documents from the Nazi period is so great - because the private writings, at least at first glance, seem to help explain the the unfathomable. These documents are human, not bureaucratic or abstract, often tragic, occasionally moving. Journals seemingly convey a human face to the moral catastrophe that overcame the younger German generation. Historians are justified in their concern about the pitfalls that can lie in the process of reading such texts. Since journals only reflect the perspectives and opinions of their authors, they cannot provide an objective or even slightly comprehensive reflection of the events they describe. Of course, this reality does not decrease their historical value. Accounts like Anne Frank’s diary have touched generations of readers worldwide, because they move the crimes and genocide committed by the Nazi regime from the no-less-important sphere of scholarly facts, names, places, and statistics into the plane of human experience. Even the journals kept by the perpetrators and criminals - such as Joseph Goebbels and Alfred Rosenberg - have a rightful place in the scheme of things. They demystify the Nazi leadership’s shrill propaganda, expose the chasms that existed in the Nazis’ conceptualization of civilization, and reveal the narrow-mindedness of the fanatical party functionaries that came to sharply define the Nazi system itself. Their journals, however insufferable they may occasionally be, have significantly expanded our understanding of the mechanisms and power structures of the Nazi state.

Franz Albrecht Schall’s journals are different in nature, because they view National Socialism from the perspective of, first, a deluded teenager and, later, a committed partisan. His accounts span the years of 1928 to 1935, and they record the ascendancy of National Socialism out of the crisis created by the Republic’s collapse, as well as the establishment of the

dictatorship. Upon joining the *Hitlerjugend* (HJ) in late 1930, an unwaveringly straight path into the ideology and structures of the Nazi movement was set for the then 17-year-old, a path he never veered from through the very end.

In comparison to the years after 1933, relatively little is known about the Nazi youth organization during the *Kampfzeit*. At this time, it functioned quite differently from the bureaucratic apparatus that developed as a result of the *Gleichschaltung* policy which came into effect after Hitler's seizure of power. Starting in 1939, the so-called *Jugenddienstpflicht* made membership in the organization compulsory for every child in the Reich. The earlier HJ was significantly smaller. Its structures were occasionally quite fragile, and its development took a chaotic course. At the same time, it was definitely more dynamic and might have struck the teenagers who joined it as more lively than the regulated, post-1933 organization of the same name which indoctrinated the nation's youth on the basis of countless rules and orders.

More than a few of the individuals who held influential positions in the Nazi dictatorship were significantly shaped by this period in the HJ's history. In order to honor the movement's "Old Guard," the Nazi government bestowed over 120,000 HJ honorary badges on those who had remained committed to the movement during its struggle against the democratic government out of Weimar. Franz Albrecht Schall was one of these recipients, and this background history is the reason why his rediscovered journals are so intriguing. First of all, they reveal the fascination that National Socialism could exert on children and teenagers. Secondly, they document the dangerous formative power of a political movement which, already early on, knew how to cleverly exploit the younger generation's need to construct identities and formulate meaning in their lives.

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## Schall's Journals as Historical Documents

Franz Albrecht Schall's journals reveal that National Socialism was, at times, very appealing to children and teenagers. Similar to the *Bündische Jugend* and *Wandervogel* movements, the HJ intentionally cultivated a sentiment of rebellion against the world of the older generation. Comradely solidarity, a cult based on ceremony, clear concepts of the enemy, and an oath to pursue the almost messianic task of mastering (at least, superficially) all aspects of the National Socialist agenda intersected with the distinct need among teenagers and young men to create meaning in their lives and to discover their unique identities. The "HJ experience" was irrational and sentimental. What was staged in the successful 1933 UFA propaganda film *Hitlerjunge Quex* is actually and consistently reflected in Schall's journals: gullibility, great emotionality, ecstasy (even during strenuous physical drills), effusive idealism, and devotion to the point of extremely dangerous irrationality.

The desperate economic situation in Germany during the early 1930s is not the sole explanation for the rise of National Socialism. A significant role was played by a political culture that was shaped primarily by something other than reason. Instead, the collective emotional experience functioned as a gauge for political decisions. The arguments centered around the highly emotional attraction exerted by Nazi ideology are certainly not new, but they are being confirmed by recent research, in particular by the accounts left behind by eyewitnesses. Franz Albrecht Schall's journals resemble an arsenal of masculine yearnings and adolescent emotions. In this context, the Nazi *Weltanschauung* was not an ideological whip but rather a heady narcotic that, once taken, promised instant meaningfulness, power, and greatness - a soaring feeling of being important and contributing to the bigger picture. What is astonishing is the relatively frequent lack of boundaries between high ideals and unfathomable resentment, love and sheer hatred, friendship and enmity. It seems that the effect of the ideology on Schall resembled the feeling produced by drugs. As the nineteen-year-old once wrote, "I am constantly thinking about our Germany and the movement and Adolf Hitler."

Such descriptions will undoubtedly be a challenge to today's readers, perhaps even frequently irritating or disgusting to them. Hatred, Anti-Semitism, chauvinism, and political fanaticism are common threads that run through the increasingly agitated entries. At no point

does the young man critically question his convictions. The teenager never seemed to actually recognize the numerous logical contradictions that he encountered with increasing frequency. For this reason, Franz Albrecht Schall certainly does not function as a sympathetic figure. Nonetheless, his journals offer important, possibly even one-of-a-kind opportunities: His writing reflects a thoroughly representative picture of the HJ during the *Kampfzeit*, and provide access to the thoughts and mental life of a teenager who dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the Hitler movement during a decisive period in Germany's history. The reader will experience how Nazi ideology and the Führer cult could - first gradually, then abruptly - cloud the youthful mind.

Franz Albrecht Schall's journal entries fall into two phases. The passages from the time of his most active involvement in the HJ predominantly take the form of event reports. Some of the descriptions read like meeting minutes that he jotted down after his Altenburg HJ social evenings. These often contain extensive reports about marches, publicity campaigns, and propaganda trips - accounts that were presumably based on notes he had taken. Schall recorded the speeches by Hitler and other leading Nazis at the time as direct quotations. In these instances, he jotted down the speeches in notebooks, perhaps occasionally pulling quotes from reprinted passages in Nazi newspapers. During this time, *Hitlerjunge* Schall appeared only as a player in between the lines. Starting in April 1932, after his move to Dresden, the entries begin to take on the character of a more traditional private journal. In his new environment, he initially lost his connection to the HJ, and the passages become more distinctly personal in nature. Despite his fanaticism, Franz Albrecht Schall consistently remained a very acute observer, one who attempted to record in detail the impressions and moods of the masses. Even though he was no longer primarily concerned with documenting political developments and processes, he did occasionally write about these with his customary thoroughness. What appears in the forefront of his entries are emotional states and the impact of the collective exhilaration. The fact that these impressions are presented from the perspective of a young person - Franz Albrecht Schall was sixteen when he began his journal and twenty-two when he stopped writing - makes them all the more valuable. Over the course of the writing process, the young man had to be more and more aware that he was creating a document of some significance. This theory is supported by the fact that the vanished original ended up being typed up in the mid-1930s at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Jena. This took a great deal of effort, considering there were almost one thousand handwritten pages. Since not all of the entries would have been useful for

Nazi propaganda purposes, publication might not have been the intended goal of this work - or if so, only on a selective basis. It is more likely that the transcription was meant to be used in party-affiliated research and educational institutions.

We will naturally be reading the journals for different reasons and with different eyes than those who lived during the Nazi dictatorship. It is exactly because the journals are completely subjective in nature that they can contribute to the tracing of the mentality tied to this particular historical period. At the same time, our knowledge of the destructive consequences of and the crimes perpetrated by the Nazi regime will prevent us from losing our intellectual distance from Franz Albrecht Schall's descriptions. His journals are fascinating, but they also provide evidence of the indoctrination, the racial hatred, the recklessness, and the wrong track taken by German society prior to 1945.

The passages reprinted here have been lightly edited for style, and the orthography has been altered to bring it in line with today's standards, in order to provide readers with a better point of access. This editing influenced the earlier passages in particular, those written between 1928 and late 1931. As for the document in its entirety, some sections had to be shortened and others deleted altogether. Various mistakes and defects, which likely came into existence during the transcription of the original manuscript, were simply corrected or fixed. These corrections primarily impacted the numerous misspelled names of individuals and places, and did not diminish the document's historical authenticity. Thanks are owed to Helmut Reitberger, who provided access to Franz Albrecht Schall's papers and assisted in the editing of the text, as well as to Dieter Schall, who gave his permission for its publication. Dr. Martin Rütter from the City of Cologne's Nazi Documentation Center was responsible for introducing the editor to a copy of the Schall journals. He deserves a special thank you for this. At least five copies of the Jena transcription currently exist in private ownership. In the late 1960s, these copies were supplemented with additional commentaries provided by an employee of the *Stätte der Begegnung* in Vlotho. These comments were, to a great extent, left out of the current publication due to their apodictic nature. As an employee at the Hannah Arendt Institute for Research on Totalitarianism, the editor would like to express his gratitude for the support and assistance provided from early on by the institute in terms of research, materials, and revision. Additional thanks go to the employees of the archives who supplied access and advice on the materials related to Franz Albrecht Schall's family history. Special assistance was provided by Dr.

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Franz Albrecht Schall never categorically or comprehensively distanced himself from his involvement with the *Hitlerjugend*. Even in his later years, he read quite selectively from his journal entries. That was perhaps characteristic for many individuals of his generation who found themselves involved at an early age in National Socialism. They were shaped by the *Hitlerjugend* experience and could never really shake off that influence for the rest of their lives. However, Schall was capable, from time to time, of admitting the erroneous path of his youth, as well as the criminal and inhuman nature of the Nazi dictatorship. Thus, his journals function for today's readers as not only an interesting period account, but also as a warning. Late in life, Schall commented: "These are not 'memoirs,' but documents that reveal what I did and thought during this turbulent time, the five years before and two years after Hitler's *Machtübernahme*. [...] It is possible that never before in history has an entire young generation ever been as betrayed and inflamed as it was by that megalomaniac despot and psychopath Hitler and his treacherous helpers and henchmen!" The question of whether he had not also been a helper, if even only on a small scale, is a question with which Franz Albrecht Schall never seemed to have grappled.

[...]

1933

### *Hitlerjunge* in the Nazi Dictatorship

The year 1933 changed everything. On January 28, after less than two months in office, Kurt von Schleicher was forced to resign as chancellor. His political goal of splitting the NSDAP had failed. The only option that remained to him in the end was to declare a state of emergency, and to recommend that President Hindenburg dissolve Parliament and postpone the new elections for an indefinite period of time. This is exactly what his predecessor Papen had unsuccessfully proposed less than two months earlier. Hindenburg once again declined to take this course of action. He refused to continue to ignore the Nazi movement, which was still the strongest faction in the Reichstag. Secure in its position, the Nazis were confidently highjacking the discussions about national leadership. The apparent political solution urged onto the President by the nationalist conservative groups and Franz von Papen in particular was presented in the form of a “Cabinet of National Concentration,” which would fall under Hitler’s leadership. The political stalemate was supposed to finally come to an end. The relevant pre-negotiations were settled between Hitler and Former Chancellor Papen on January 4. The foundation for the new government had now been laid.

On January 30, President Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor. Besides himself, only two other Nazis, Göring and Frick, belonged to the right coalition cabinet chaired by Hitler. All of the other members came from the nationalist conservative camp, and some of them also possessed experience in government leadership positions. Franz von Papen, who was now Vice Chancellor, the DNVP chairman Alfred Hugenberg, a radical right media mogul, and *Stahlhelm* director Franz Seldte conveyed the illusion that together they could control Hitler and break the spell of his almost mythic popularity in the public sphere. There were occasional stirrings of concern, but the prospect of power and a new political restructuring was too tempting. The conservatives underestimated Hitler’s charisma, as well as his tactical shrewdness. On the other hand, he knew the weaknesses of his new partners and continued to capitalize on his popularity in the public realm. The policy direction of conservative containment shattered within just a few months. The partners from the political right lacked unity and had no clear strategy or notion of where an alternate path should lead. Papen - whose only political advantage rested on

Hindenburg's precarious favor - proved to be relatively weak-willed, and for his part, Hitler had little compunction about exploiting the new opportunities to strengthen his position of power. Across the country, Hitler's *Machtergreifung* was celebrated jubilantly by the majority of Germans. In the March 5 parliamentary elections - the last one that involved the leftist and democratic opposition members - the NSDAP won in a landslide, just as Hitler had predicted, while the nationalist conservative cabinet members suffered a bitter defeat. The German populace remained unconvinced by their "*Kampffront Black-White-Red*" electoral coalition. In contrast, Hitler found new strength to mobilize the masses.

On January 30, the Nazi dictatorship was, thus, not established via a political revolution, although subsequent events bore the characteristics of such. The hordes of Germans who now jumped into the political arena with a mixture of enthusiasm and opportunism were later dubbed the *Märzgefallene* ("March casualties"). Large numbers of supporters abandoned the DNVP, *Stahlhelm*, and other parties and organizations in the nationalist conservative corner. Hitler's conservative right competition was already a shadow of its former self before its final incorporation into the Nazi apparatus. Any group that did not voluntarily submit to the Nazi movement's claim to power was banned or threatened with violence. This primarily impacted the Communists and the Social Democrats, who were harassed and threatened from the very beginning, then later imprisoned, tortured, and murdered in the newly constructed concentration camps. Following the Reichstag Fire Decree of February 28 and the Enabling Act of March 24, Hitler's dictatorship was able to establish a legal foundation for the suppression of the political opposition and for the *Gleichschaltung* of both the government and society at large. The new regime revealed its tyrannical nature in other respects early on. Many Germans reacted with relative passivity to the so-called Jewish boycott on April 1, which focused on Jewish business owners, as well as independent entrepreneurs and industrialists, and which escalated to violent altercations and murder in many places. The Germans primarily just accepted the state-promoted Anti-Semitism, rarely reacting with widespread resistance or even protest. On the basis of the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* of April 7, political opponents and Jewish civil servants were removed from their positions in public offices. Step by step, the governmental apparatus was being appropriated. By the end of 1933, Hitler's power was still far from being absolute. Nonetheless, the prospects for success of any political resistance movement had diminished considerably by this point.

*Reichsjugendführer* Baldur von Schirach promptly used the changing political situation to further the totalitarian claims of his HJ organization. Already as early as April 5, Schirach took occupation of the Berlin offices of the *Reichsausschuss der deutschen Jugendverbände*. Unpopular socialist competitors and Jewish organizations were excluded, while leading figures in the *Bündische Jugend* movement were removed from their offices. Hitler rewarded Schirach's radical maneuvering by naming him *Jugendführer des Deutschen Reiches* on June 17. The model set by the National Socialist *Machtergreifung* repeated itself in this context: Children and teenagers joined the Nazi youth organization *en masse*. Through this process, competing organizations were severely weakened, before being forced by the regime to submit to the *Gleichschaltung* process. During the summer of 1933, the youth sections of the DNVP and *Stahlhelm*, as well as the occasionally powerful *Grossdeutsche Bund*, which sought to function as an umbrella organization to help secure the survival of the *Bündische Jugend* movement, were absorbed into the HJ. The only groups that resisted the Reich's youth leadership circle around Baldur von Schirach were the confessional youth organizations, particularly the Roman Catholic ones. These forced Schirach and the others to make unexpected concessions. It would take years before the confessional youth groups were fully incorporated into the HJ structure. Regardless, the Nazi youth organization grew to giant proportions. By the end of 1933, the organization had approximately 3.5 million members.

Franz Albrecht Schall not only documented this political revolution across Germany, he enthusiastically participated in it. He took part in various demonstrations and parades. In Dresden, he restlessly searched for new opportunities to be involved in the exhilaration tied to the victories and advances being achieved by National Socialism. The violence that occurred immediately after Hitler's *Machtergreifung*, even in Saxony's capital city, did not disturb him. He saw this as a necessary evil in order to fully attain the goals of the revolution. On March 9, Schall wrote: "Occasional hardness and deficiencies do not in any way diminish the flawless execution and precision of the measures." Around this time, Schall almost despaired in his efforts to find an authentic connection to the National Socialist movement. He believed that he needed to help shape the new state, the one for which he had fought so fanatically in the HJ. More critically, he perceived the value and purpose of his own life as linked to the Nazi movement, and he was convinced that even his contentment and personal happiness depended on it. Despite the time commitments required by school and apprenticeships, the young man

gradually worked his way back into intense engagement with the HJ. He eventually published his own *Unterbann* newspaper and was promoted to *Gefolgschaftsführer* (Escort Leader) in Dresden. Another opportunity for engagement presented itself in the National Socialist *Jugendbetriebszellenorganisation* (NSJB). The Nazi trade union offered him a public relations position that covered the Saxon region, but Franz Albrecht Schall chose to decline it.

At home in Altenburg, his parents' marriage came to an acrimonious end. Communications between his father Franz August Schall and his mother Caroline were soon running exclusively through their attorneys. Although politics was not the cause for his parents' conflict, political concerns did increasingly polarize the family. His sickly father, who refused to mince any words in his letters when it came to his opinions about the developments in Germany, soon moved out, taking up residence in a small apartment in the *Fouriergebäude* located in the Altenburg City Castle. It was "a bachelor's quarters high in the gable," practically "a castle keep," as he wrote to his friend Hermann Hesse. He must have felt desolate and completely abandoned up there. Nevertheless, his exile in the castle offered him another opportunity to pursue his literary interests. He wrote poems that he sent to Hesse and other authors in Germany and abroad, hoping to find a renowned press to publish them. In return, his old classmate wrote back from Switzerland about the various émigrés and Nazi opponents he met there.

At this point, Schall Senior entered a phase that gradually brought him into open confrontation with the new government. Since she could no longer afford the house in Altenburg on her own, Mother Caroline also managed to find a new place to live. Unlike her husband, she supported her three sons' political engagement. This disparity created a background against which the family conflict was colored by politics in more than just a casual manner. Schall Senior refused to give up hope that he could convince his sons to reconsider their positions, and he wrote letters to his son Franz Albrecht with this express purpose in mind. He also used the financial support he provided to his son as leverage. He occasionally halted his tuition and financial support for the technical schools as a means of exerting pressure on Franz Albrecht's political activities. He was unsuccessful in his efforts though. His son remained firmly entrenched in his convictions.

Politically speaking, Franz Albrecht Schall experienced an emotional roller-coaster ride in Dresden. Following a period of tumultuous enthusiasm came a time of slowly cooling sobriety. The devoted *Hitlerjunge* felt that his ideals were betrayed in the transformation of the

HJ, within the span of a few months, into a powerful bureaucratic apparatus, whose regional and local leadership positions were hotly disputed. As an “*Alter Kämpfer*,” he counted as one of the avant-garde in the young Nazi movement. In his opinion (and not without some justification), the hordes that now flooded into the Nazi youth ranks were mere tag-alongs, freeloaders, and spineless turncoats. Established HJ leaders in Dresden were dismissed and stripped of their influence, while new, unknown faces took over coveted positions. Franz Albrecht Schall’s discontentment was shared by many *Hitlerjungen* and veteran HJ leaders, some of whom grew to be extremely critical of the decisions being made by the *Reichsjugend* leaders. *Hitlerjunge* Schall viewed anyone whose rise to power was sudden and seemingly effortless with something akin to jealousy. His vision of a new *völkisch* (ethnically and racially “pure” German) state most closely resembled a romantic-radical dream, corresponding in only a limited manner to the reality of Hitler’s *Machtergreifung*. Of course, this disparity did not seriously impact Franz Albrecht Schall’s zeal. By the end of that year, he was more convinced than ever about Hitler’s divine calling.

### **January 15, 1933**

It is cold and dry. I went over to *Spielschar* member Fischer’s place at 10:00, where I stayed until 6:30, printing the U.B. newspaper. I ate lunch in the old *Klosterkeller von Leutnitz*. The package from home arrived yesterday.

### **January 16, 1933**

Class. I made it to Wiedemann’s. Was totally lost, because the material I was supposed to discuss had been covered during the time I missed during the last class, when I arrived thirty minutes late. To make up for it, I will write an essay on economic history, which we were planning to do anyway.

### **January 17, 1933**

Class with Mörlin. Stylistics, almost fell asleep. A sharp, dry east wind is blowing outside. No snow.

### **January 18, 1933**

Wood staining with Heller. A bleak mood everywhere. Was infected with it myself and started worrying about my future. However, I keep coming back to our collective fate to which the individual is so tightly bound. There is no reason to mourn or muse, which is why we have to keep looking up, over and over again, both feet planted on the ground. And we must keep the faith that constantly provides new strength and confidence.

### **January 19, 1933**

On my way to school, I saw the blue shirts of the *Reichsbanner* again, the first time in quite a while. Large demonstration. At school, Hönicke was sick. Everybody was talking about the pranks they'd pulled and other jokes. Some people worked, while others left immediately - a pretty lax affair. After school, I could hear the distant bum-bum-bum-bum-bum of a third-rate band and the shrieks of a choir. The streets were relatively busy. However, all the tam-tams in the world won't help if no revolutionary ideas are present. The political situation keeps swinging back and forth, a really wretched situation. Something will happen soon!

### **January 20, 1933**

The teacher was sick, so no school. Snow. The parlor was cold. Tomorrow I will turn 20!

### **January 21, 1933**

Birthday and Saturday! Tons of snow! Fetched money from the post office. Replied to Papa's letter. Wrote a card to Hermann. Packed up my package. I spent the evening at Mälzer's until 11:00. It was just the two of us. Once again, it was really nice.

### **January 22, 1933**

Walked through snowy Dresden to the Göring gathering, which turned into a marvelously uplifting rally. A frenzied, glorious mood - *Volksgemeinschaft* and *Kampflust*. A wonderful parade past the Ministry of Finance through heavy snow. A huge number of people turned out.<sup>1</sup> Ate at Klemm's and then belatedly celebrated my birthday a little back home. Cut my hair for the HJ *Jungzug*.

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<sup>1</sup> On January 22, 1933, at the Sarrasani Circus, Göring sharply attacked Chancellor Schleicher in particular. His speech was followed by a parade of SA, SS, and HJ members through the center of Dresden.

### **January 23, 1933**

After class: HJ roll call at Hammer's Hotel.<sup>2</sup> My U.B. newspaper was distributed! Schinzinger was there. Was really encouraging!<sup>3</sup>

### **January 24, 1933**

Class with Veidl. It is freezing outside! Politically, things are still in flux. What could possibly be in the works?

### **January 25, 1933**

It is still unbearably cold. My colleagues are really depressed. No wonder! Uncertainty.

### **January 26, 1933**

Technical drawing with Hönicke. Everybody was talking about the fight between the KPD and the police. Around 11:00, the count was 9 dead and 11 seriously injured here in Dresden.<sup>4</sup>

### **January 27, 1933**

Class. The cold makes you tired. The police are now all out in pairs!

Otherwise you freeze solid.

### **January 28, 1933**

Saturday. Drove to the U.B. clubhouse around 3:30, quickly fetched a HJ cap, and stayed until 8:00 in the clubhouse, where I spent a long time talking with my comrades about our struggle.

With Schleicher's resignation, we are suddenly once again faced with the question:

"What now?" What was the indirect cause of this? I always feel so bitter about the deep anguish

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<sup>2</sup> Located in the Striesen neighborhood, Hammer's Hotel was known for its dances, theatrical performances, and film screenings. It was used as a gathering place for the SPD and KPD after 1918, and after 1933, it was the site of various NSDAP cultural events. Destroyed in 1945.

<sup>3</sup> Gathering of the Dresden HJ group under the leadership of *Bannführer* Schinzinger to plan a cultural rally, which was to take place on February 11, 1933, at the Dresden clubhouse and to involve *Reichsjugendführer* Schirach. The flags of *Schar* 28, which Franz Albrecht Schall led at this time, were to be dedicated as a declaration of loyalty to Hitler, in accord with the *Freiheitskampf* from January 26, 1933. This dedication was accompanied by these words from the *Bannführer*: "Our symbol - the blood red swastika banner - will wave before us in our struggles. Whoever takes an oath to this flag no longer possesses anything he can call his own."

<sup>4</sup> The Nazi press used the violent altercation between the police and the KPD supporters that followed the police dispersal of a KPD gathering as anti-communist propaganda. Numerous policemen announced their sympathy for the NSDAP at this time.

of our urban youth, an agony with which you cannot help but be infected. The fate of our youth is grim. Who knows what I would be today, if I had been raised from the very beginning in the bleak and friendless world of a working class boy, whose father and mother had to toil and hunt for every piece of bread! You fat cats, do you still not see where we are heading? Can you not see the bony ribcage of the coming genocide, you reckless lot? You think we are joyous, happy youths, who possess an abundance of youthful energy! Nobody can grow strong on bread with margarine or cocky on cold soup! You have made sure to leave to us the gray present. We know this, and whenever you court our favor, it leaves us cold. We have taken it upon ourselves to find a new, true existence.

We will let you fall, because you left us in a lurch, although it was your highest calling to take care of the future. And when you claim that we are shady reprobates and Bolsheviks, all we can ask is: "Who is the real reprobate?" Is it not the one who was once raised in a faith in God, but who forced the voice of his heart to be silent when personal advantage and "profit" made it "necessary"? Is it not the one who raves about *Vaterland* and *Volk* in great speeches and at celebrations, and who presents himself as "enthusiastic," but who in the *Lebenskampf* only thinks about himself and his well-being, disdainfully thrusting aside the *Volk* and the *Volksgenossen*? You do not not want to acknowledge this, and when someone does point it out, you reveal your true colors as the most brutal destroyers of every essence of freedom and progress. This is when your pathetic, self-indulgent nature leers out.

We know this today as young fighters, and this is why we loathe you! Your blubbering no longer upsets us. Our path is called Struggle, and our goal is called Germany! Go hide somewhere, you babies, the young Germany is following a Führer who has brought light into our gray existence, who is pulling us onward into a holy battle. We know what faith is: the strength to move mountains. We despise today's sinking world, because it possesses no value or content: Our love, however, is devoted to our movement, which is Germany's final summoning, its last power and strength!

**January 29, 1933**

Visited the apartment of an old classmate, Werner Dornburg, who is also a furniture maker. Yet another Altenburger in Dresden!

**January 30, 1933**

**Adolf Hitler, Chancellor!**

I could not get hold of a single newspaper. Swastika flags aloft! Frick is supposed to be the Minister of the Interior! Our Minister Frick who wanted to do a spring cleaning in Thuringia two years ago! Yes, and Hugenberg<sup>5</sup> has a minor post or is supposed to have one! He will be kept in check, that much is certain, or he is out! What will the SPD and the commune do now?

This all happened rather suddenly for us. I can still hardly believe it. What amazing opportunities are now opening up! Hitler at the pinnacle of the Reich, a spot for which he has struggled for 14 years, fanatically and doggedly. A fresh wind will soon be blowing across Germany, and some things will be done differently now, despite what we have been made to think by the ongoing lies fabricated by the media.

Germany will now meet a man who will forge a nation out of its anguish and disgrace, a nation that will finally defy the world.

Flags high!

Heil Hitler!

**January 31, 1933**

Everything now falls under the control of Hitler's chancellorship. What will he do? Will things be better? What will our enemies do? The work now begins for real, and it will still be some time until a purely National Socialist cabinet and Hitler's dictatorship will be set up. In any case, our motto: Full steam ahead!

**February 1, 1933**

A glorious march through Dresden! Torchlight procession. Huge masses of people. Marched right past the city hall. Behind us, the *Stahlhelm* in smaller numbers.

**February 2-5, 1933**

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<sup>5</sup> Alfred Hugenberg (June 19, 1865 - March 12, 1951): industrial magnate, media mogul; co-founder and chair (starting in 1928) of the DNVP; co-initiator of the consolidation of the right and extreme right parties and organizations in 1931 into the so-called "Harzburger Front"; a member of Hitler's cabinet and the Minister of Economics, Agriculture and Nutrition until his resignation on June 29, 1933; after that, largely inconsequential in the political sphere.

I have been in bed since Thursday! The flu. However, I am now feeling better again. On Sunday, the 5th, I read some more in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Our very dangerous future, lack of space, strife, interracial mixing and weakness - all of this returned to me, sharply clear in my consciousness. The view across the entire whole is always the main thing! This is what the German, caught up in his daily cares, forgets all too easily. There is still a tremendous amount of work to accomplish! If only I could help with this! Will they possibly institute fatigue duty?

### **February 6, 1933**

I stayed home today in the interest of further recuperation. This afternoon, I went out to look at apartments, and found a nice room by a fellow party member, not far from my current apartment, at Behrischstrasse 32. The landlord is also nice, has a radio, etc. No more worries now! Wrote a letter this evening to Leo. My old classmate visited me afterward. The furniture maker from Dornburg. He showed me a half-bound book that interested me greatly. I ate supper with him as well, and showed him my pictures and photographs. Back to work tomorrow!

### **February 7, 1933**

There are now more people at work. Mass hiring. Tax vouchers. Back to school in the evening. Exhausted!