

THE REICHSTAG FIRE

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"A few moments later they witnessed the miracle. The man with the Charlie Chaplin mustache, who had been a down-and-out tramp in Vienna, an unknown soldier of World War One, a derelict in Munich in the first grim postwar days, the somewhat comical leader of the Beer Hall Putsch, this spellbinder who was not even German, but Austrian, and who was only forty-three years old, had just been administered the oath as Chancellor of the Reich...."¹

And so began the Third Reich - a Reich that unilaterally repudiated the Treaty of Versailles, humiliated the British and French at Munich and perpetrated the greatest holocaust ever seen by man. But, in January, 1933 the fate of the new Reich was uncertain.

President Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor with the proviso that Hitler obtain a majority of the seats in the Reichstag. The Nazi-Nationalist coalition controlled barely thirty-five percent of the Reichstag seats after the November 6, 1932 elections. Hitler needed the support of a party that held a large number of seats in the Reichstag to maintain his position. A few hours after Hitler became Chancellor, he and Goering began talks with the Centrists (who held seventy seats), in hopes of achieving a coalition with them. The Centrists in return for their support, sought guarantees that Hitler would rule constitutionally. Hitler would not give that guarantee. He announced that he could not reach agreement with the Centrists and asked Hindenburg to call new elections. Hitler hoped to obtain a Reichstag majority in that manner. Hindenburg agreed to call for new elections. He dissolved the Reichstag and set March 5, 1933 as the date for the new elections.

In the campaign that followed the Nazis used every resource and tactic at their disposal. Industrialists such as Krupp and Farben were induced to contribute heavily to Hitler's campaign. The Nazis closed Communist meetings and muffled the Communist press. They declared Social Democratic rallies illegal or used the S.A. to break them up. Nevertheless, prospects for a Nazi majority in the new Reichstag were not good. "Unless something unforeseen happens, the Chancellor cannot win the election."²

On February 24, 1933, the police raided the Karl Liebknecht Haus-Communist headquarters in Berlin. The police reported finding stacks of pamphlets and other types of propaganda in the cellar. Hermann Goering immediately issued a communiqué stating that the material found in the cellar proved that the Communists had plans to launch a revolution in the near future. The public and even some of the con-

servatives in the Government reacted to that news with skepticism.

A little past 9:00 P.M. on February 28, 1933 Hans Floter was walking home after a visit to the State Library. As he passed the main entrance of the Reichstag he heard the sound of breaking glass. He turned to see where the noise came from. He saw a man with a burning object in his hand on the first floor balcony near the main portal of the Reichstag. Floter ran to find a police officer. He found Sergeant Hail Buwert and told him what he had seen. Buwert rushed to the front of the Reichstag. Another passerby, Werner Thaler, also attracted by the noise, joined Buwert near the main entrance. Buwert took out his gun and at the insistence of Thaler, fired a shot at the figure inside the Reichstag. The shot missed its target. Buwert turned to another bystander and sent him to the Brandenburg Gate police guardroom. "Tell them the Reichstag is on fire and to call the fire brigade..."³ The fire brigade arrived quickly as did Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels.⁴ In the meantime police entered the Reichstag to search for the arsonist. At 9:27 P.M. Constable Poeschel arrested Marinuis Van der Lubbe. The Reichstag was beyond hope. The fire had spread so rapidly that all attempts to control it were futile. The once proud Reichstag became a pile of smouldering rubble.⁵

Hitler appeared on the balcony of the nearby Chancellory shouting that a Dutch Communist was under arrest and that his confession would be forthcoming. Rudolf Diels quoted Hitler's exact words:

"Now we'll show them: anyone who stands in our way will be mown down. The German people have been soft too long. Every Communist official must be shot. All Communist deputies must be hanged this very night. All of the friends of the Communists must be locked up. And that goes for the Social Democrats and the Reichsbanner as well....."⁶

A short time later hundreds of Communists were arrested. Four suspected arsonists (all Communists) - Reichstag deputy Ernst Torgler and Bulgarian Communists Georgi Dimitrov, Blagoi Popov, and Vassili Tanev were also arrested. They along with Lubbe were tried at Leipzig on charges of arson and treason.

There are three theories as to the true identity of the Reichstag arsonists. The Nazis insisted that the Communists set the fire. The Nazis argued that the fire was the opening salvo of a Communist uprising throughout Germany.

The Communists contended that the fire was another Nazi propaganda trick for which the chief Nazi propagandist, Goebbels, was notorious. Their theory was that Goebbels, Goering and Hitler planned the whole episode. The burning of the Reichstag and blaming the Communists for it gave them an excuse to arrest thousands of

Communists and to also prevent Communist delegates from being seated in the new Reichstag.

A third theory holds that neither the Nazis nor the Communists were responsible for the fire but that Lubbe set the fire on his own as a personal protest against the new Nazi government.⁷

At first glance this seems to substantiate the Nazi allegation that the Reichstag fire was a Communist plot. Lubbe claimed to be a Communist and he did confess to setting the fire as a protest against the Nazi government.

But it is improbable that the Communist Central Action Committee for the Revolution would choose Lubbe for such an important job. Lubbe had not been an official member of the Communist party since 1931,⁸ and he had arrived in Berlin on February 19 - only nine days before the fire. He knew no one in Berlin at the time - including his four co-defendants at Leipzig - all of whom insisted that they had never seen him before.

People in Germany acquainted with the tactics of the German Communists were not convinced of Communist responsibility for the fire. For example, Rudolf Breitscheid, a former Social Democratic leader, felt it "improbable" that the Communists had anything to do with the Fire. "The Reichstag Fire was advantageous to those who said the Communist Party was a grave danger to the nation...in the view of many the fire was the work of someone else - not the Communists - and was a very clever move..."⁹

Otto Wels, Chairman of the German Social Democratic Party, stated:

"Hitler's assertions about the Reichstag fire are even crazier. It is impossible that he himself can believe them. I have fought the German Communist Party since it came into existence...It is only because of a natural sense of justice that I say before the whole world that Hitler's accusations against the Communists are nonsensical invention. There has never been any Communist plan to burn down public buildings in Germany...The Reichstag fire was not laid by the Communists..."¹⁰

To date there is still no conclusive evidence that the Communists were at all involved in setting fire to the Reichstag.

The suggestion that Lubbe was a Nazi agent is ludicrous. Fritz Tobias eloquently repudiates this suggestion:

"Had van der Lubbe been associated with them (the Nazis) in any way, the Nazis would have shot him the moment he had done their dirty work, blaming his death on an outbreak of 'understandable popular indignation'. Van der Lubbe could then have been branded a Communist without the irritations of a public trial and foreign critics would not have been able to argue that, since no Communist accomplices were discovered, the real accomplices must be sought on the Government benches..."¹¹

Ernst Torgler's attorney at Leipzig, Dr. Sack, astutely observed:

"Only a fool would have allowed the intended arsonist to wander about alone, in rags and tatters, begging for food in the streets, and sleeping in the public shelters in Glindow, Berlin, and Henningsdorf. Only a fool would have instructed van der Lubbe to scale up the wall of the Reichstag, to break windows, and thus expose the whole plan to so many risks of discovery.....They (the Nazis) did not know where van der Lubbe had spent the previous day..."¹²

In sum then, there is no evidence whatsoever tying Lubbe to the Nazis.

The third theory contends that Lubbe acted on his own, setting fire to the Reichstag as a personal protest against the Nazi government. The chief proponent of this position is Fritz Tobias, author of The Reichstag Fire. Until Tobias published his book most observer-historians agreed that Lubbe was a half-crazed Dutchman with feeble intelligence and in poor physical condition. Lubbe's conduct during the Leipzig Trial tended to substantiate this. During the proceedings he giggled, or sat unmoved failing to answer many of the questions directed at him. The New York Times trial observer recorded that "during this testimony van der Lubbe sat doubled up in his chair with his head between his knees..."¹³

Tobias concluded that Lubbe's actions resulted from the long trial, harsh confinement in jail, and the fact that he was forced to wear chains throughout the court proceedings. In actuality, Lubbe was at least of average intelligence, a good swimmer and spoke German reasonably well.

During the Trial Lubbe admitted setting other fires in the three days preceding the Reichstag Fire. He set fire to a welfare bureau in a Berlin suburb, Berlin's City Hall and the former Kaiser Palace. He used the same firelighters (a sawdust and petroleum mixture) as he did in the Reichstag. But each of these fires was quickly ex-

tinguished even though there were more flammable materials in those buildings than in the Reichstag.¹⁴

Tobias admits "the fourth fire differed from the other three by only one - admittedly essential - factor: it was the only one not detected in time..."¹⁵ This is rather a strange point for Tobias to make for he established the fact that the Reichstag fire was discovered at precisely the same moment that Lubbe entered the building. Testimony at Leipzig established that the fire that destroyed the Reichstag hadn't really gotten under way until after Lubbe had been apprehended by the police.¹⁶

How effective was the fire that Lubbe set in the Reichstag? Lieutenant Latiet, the first police official on the scene stated at the time: "there may have been some twenty or thirty burned little pieces (of cloth) - remnants of tablecloth the size of a glove. We thought at first they were footprints..."¹⁷ It is strange that the immense fire that followed "Lubbe's" actions was the result of "footprints".

Chief Wagner of Berlin, testified at Leipzig that the conditions of the Reichstag had to have changed from what they had been in order to produce such a huge fire in so short a time.

Pablo Hesslein recorded Fire Chief Gempp's reaction to the fire:

"Chief Fire Director Gempp, who spoke first, was visibly excited. He stated quite openly that the fire was a well planned affair involving a number of people, and that he counted some 25-30 special areas which were meant to catch fire but did not. A Dutchman had been caught in the act, and had been described as the sole incendiary, but it was quite impossible for a single man to have started so many fires within so short a space of time..."¹⁸

At Leipzig, experts testified that Lubbe's firelighters would only have burned some holes in the floors and in the curtains.

The New York Times observer at Leipzig noted that three mysteries about the fire remained:

- 1- traces of supposedly incendiary fluid found in the Reichstag building,
- 2- the torch torn out of a burning club chair on the spot where a fire department torch was found later,
- 3- the incredibly rapid expansion of the fire in the Plenary Chamber which, according to the testimony of the fire department, suddenly burst into flames all over...¹⁹

But, further investigation into the question of who was responsible for the Fire was stifled by Lubbe's silence at the trial. Lubbe's sparse testimony only

"entirely repeated his previous insistence that he had set the Fire all alone and that no one had either instigated him or helped him. To this story he stuck despite grueling cross-examination by judges, prosecutor, lawyers and defendants engaged in a battle in which each side seeks to put the blame for the fire on the other...If there were any accomplices then he is apparently determined to take the secret of their identity with him to the grave..."²⁰

Georgi Dimitrov, a co-defendant of Lubbe at Leipzig, stated the case in this manner: "Van der Lubbe set fire to the restaurant - 'they' fired the big hall...Perhaps he did not even know they were doing it - perhaps he did not know what it was all about. I asked him repeatedly during the trial, but, he did not seem to understand or care..."²¹

"Prosecutor Werner admitted that Van der Lubbe might have had no knowledge of accomplices and might still think that he did the deed alone..."²²

The New York Times report of the trial accurately summarized the situation:

The trial itself failed to clear up the mystery of the fire. While Torgler and his Bulgarian fellow defendants presented alibis that were believed to have cleared them of the indictment, the question of who did set fire to the Reichstag was not cleared up. Van der Lubbe insisted that he alone had done it, yet at several points during the trial he left room for the belief that he had accomplices...experts testified that it was physically impossible for one man to set the fire...Yet on another occasion, he said (Lubbe) "I set fire to the Plenary Hall, the others must have..." Pressed to tell who the others were he lapsed into silence..."²³

The evidence is quite conclusive that Lubbe could not have set the fire alone, nor did he. Why didn't Lubbe tell the Court who his accomplices were? Lubbe did not reveal the names of his accomplices because he could not! He did not know he had any. Lubbe's "accomplices" were the only people in Germany that stood to gain from

the fire - the Nazis!

The Nazis planned the fire weeks in advance. The Nazis knew that they had little chance of obtaining a majority in the Reichstag in the forthcoming elections. Something spectacular had to happen in order to stir up enough favorable public sentiment to achieve that goal. They chose to set fire to the Reichstag as the "spectacular". The Nazi command believed that it would shock the public considerably and that they could easily blame it on the Communists. The fire would be the excuse the Nazis needed to arrest Communist leaders and to expel the Communist members of the Reichstag. Lubbe had no part in this plan at first because the Nazis did not know he even existed. But when Lubbe, a Communist was found at the scene of the fire he was easily made a scapegoat for the whole affair.

Not all of the Nazi high command knew of the plans for the Reichstag fire. Which Nazis were responsible? Many Nazis have willingly implicated each other. Much evidence points to Joseph Goebbels as the man chiefly responsible. His primary helpers were Goering and the S.A.

In 1933 many were convinced of Nazi responsibility for the fire. Otto Strasser observed on the evening of the fire: "To the intelligent person there was never any doubt but that the Nazi Party itself had set the fire..."²⁴

A German newspaperman of the conservative review Der Ring, wrote sarcastically:

Where are to be found the promoters of this attempt of which the results show with what certainty of aim they went to work?...We do not possess a secret service like the English and other nations...If we had it, one would know today in what direction to seek for the Reichstag incendiaries - indeed one would know the names of the men themselves. They are, perhaps, members of the least social circles in Germany...²⁵

Newspaper editor Franz Hollering of the Montag Morgan reported a telephone conversation that he had with the "clairvoyant" Erik Hannussen moments after the Fire was discovered. Hannussen was a good friend of Storm Troop Leader Karl Ernst and Chief of Police Count Heldorf.

Hannussen- "How much of a fire is there at the Reichstag?"
Hollering- "Where are you calling from?"
Hannussen- "From my apartment." His apartment was miles away from the Reichstag.
Hollering- "How did you find out about the fire?"

Hannussen- "I want to warn you all. Be on guard tonight. No one knows what may happen. The Communists have set fire to the Reichstag."
Hollering- "The Communists? Ridiculous! They wouldn't dream of it. They don't want to commit suicide. Their policy..."
Hannussen- "Wait and see! And better be careful!"²⁶

A few weeks later Hannussen was found murdered.

Joseph Goebbels was a natural choice for this assignment. The German Press Officer at the time, a close friend of Goering's, Martin Sommerfeldt wrote:

If we look back across the ruins of Germany at the ruins of the Reichstag, we realize that an act of arson was no more than an act of malice and a "masterpiece of agitation" of the kind for which Dr. Goebbels was so well known. Today I am convinced of what I could only suspect at the time: that Goebbels administered this act of incendiarism as a shot in the arm of the floating or lazy voters...With this alleged signal for Communist uprising, Goebbels flung Hitler and Goering into a whirlpool of profound and irrevocable decisions, and this master-psychologist showed that he knew what he was doing...²⁷

Sommerfeldt records a conversation that he had with the head of the S.A., Roehm:

I dropped a gentle hint that the Reichstag fire trial had led to personal differences between Goering and myself, and Roehm asked in surprise: "What on earth did Goering have to do with the whole business?" When I replied, "Who else?" he said furiously "Well who but that devil, Jupp (Goebbels)." I must have evinced too much curiosity, for he quickly changed the subject...²⁸

Karl Ernst, head of the Berlin S.A., in a letter to another S.A. official, Edmund Heines, also implicated Goebbels. Ernst wrote: "the 'limper' (Goebbels)...I shall never forget it was he who pushed me into the business of the Reichstag fire and has now deserted me..."²⁹

The most damning bit of evidence in the case against Goebbels came from the memoirs of Hans Gisevius, a member of the Berlin

Secret State Police. He wrote:

The most sensational thing for us was that not Goering but Goebbels was the real incendiary. Goebbels had the original idea. Goebbels understood very well what the silencing of the press of the Left would mean at the time. Goebbels had worked closely with Goering intimating to him somewhat mysteriously that the Fuehrer agreed - something had to happen, perhaps an attempted political murder, perhaps a fire, but Hitler wished to be surprised...³⁰

The case against Hermann Goering is not as strong as the case against Goebbels. Yet, the evidence indicates that Goering did know of the plans for the Fire, and, did in some way take part in it. Much of the evidence implicating Goering comes from testimony at Nuremburg. At Nuremburg Goering was content to vacillate in his testimony - first to deny personal responsibility for the fire and then to implicate other Nazis, calling them the real culprits. For example: (Kempner counsel for the Prosecution)

Kempner- What do you think in this connection, for example, of Police President Ernst. Tell us frankly your opinion of Ernst.

Goering- Yes, I had him in mind - if there was another hand in the game. So far as Ernst is concerned, I believe that anything was possible. I would like to know what interest Ernst could have had in it. Supposing that he said to himself 'Let us set fire to the Reichstag and say that it was the Communists'. Perhaps the S.A. expected then to be able to play a bigger part in the government...³¹

At the scene of the fire Goering was equally willing to blame others for the fire. Martin Sommerfeldt observed:

Goering was standing in the smoke-filled lobby, surrounded by officers of the fire brigade and the police. I reported to him, and found him quite calm. I gained the impression that, though he was worried about the fire, he did not attach too much importance to it. He told me quietly and briefly to get out full reports on the course and extent of the fire, and to draft an official communique...³²

A little later in the evening:

Rather than convince his stubborn press attaché, he seized a blue pencil and, shouting: 'This is sheer rubbish' again, he went on: 'One hundredweight of incendiary material? No ten or even a hundred' 'and he added two noughts to my modest one.'

Now Sommerfeldt, too, felt annoyed:

'This is quite impossible, Minister! No one can possibly believe that a single man could have carried that load...'

Goering snapped back:

'Nothing is impossible! Why mention a single man? There were ten or even twenty men! Don't you understand what's been happening? The whole thing was a signal for a Communist uprising!...³³

Some of the German war criminals who testified at Nuremburg were equally willing to blame Goering for the whole affair. One such man was General Franz Halder who testified:

On the occasion of a common meal on the birthday of the Fuehrer in 1942 the people around the Fuehrer turned the conversation to the Reichstag building and its artistic value. I heard with my own ears when Goering shouted into the conversation: 'The only one that really knows that Reichstag is I, because I put the fire to it!' With that he took his flat hand and hit his thighs...³⁴ I sat in Hitler's immediate vicinity, and on his right side sat Goering. Every word was clear and easy to understand. Also the effect of Goering's words proved the importance of his stagement. There was complete silence at the table. Hitler was obviously annoyed. Several minutes went by before the conversation was resumed slowly by the company...³⁵

Hans Gisevius testified that Goebbels first came up with the idea of setting fire to the Reichstag. He and Karl Ernst decided to use ten hand-picked S.A. members, who would enter the Reichstag through the subterranean tunnel that connected Goering's home with the Reichstag. Once inside they would smear self-igniting chemical substance all over the building and then exit through the tunnel.

Goebbels informed Goering of the details of the plan. Goering assured Goebbels that as soon as the fire broke out, he would see to it that the Communists were implicated. Gisevius testified further: (Jackson - assistant to the prosecutor)

Jackson- What became of the ten S.A. men who carried out the Reichstag Fire?

Gisevius- As far as we are aware, none of them are still alive. Most of them were murdered on June 30, (1934) under the pretext of the Roehm revolt. Only one, a certain Heini Gewehr, was taken over by the police as a police officer, and we tracked him down as well. He was killed on the way, while a police officer on the Eastern Front.³⁶

Ironically, at Nuremburg, after Gisevius testified, Gewehr showed up. Goering's defense attorneys wanted to use Gewehr as a defense witness - in an attempt to prove that Goering was not at all involved in the fire. Werner Bross, as assistant defense attorney, told Goering of their plans. In his memoirs, Bross recorded Goering's reaction to the news:

But Goering, far from being happy, became rather disturbed. 'This matter must be handled extremely carefully,' he said. 'With such witnesses you have to be careful. Even if the S.A. actually did set fire to the Reichstag, this is not to say that I knew anything about it...'³⁷

Naturally, Goering did not allow Gewehr to testify on his behalf.

The plan used in setting fire to the Reichstag was an elaborate one. It was typical of Goebbels - well-conceived and carefully planned. Two of the actual participants, Karl Ernst and Storm Trooper Kruse confessed their involvement. Ernst when asked if he was involved in setting the fire stated: "If I said yes, I did it, I'd be a bloody fool; if I said no, I'd be a bloody liar..."³⁸

The Storm Troopers drilled mightily. One of Goering's porters, Paul Adermann, so testified at the Leipzig Trial:

He admitted, first, that men in their stockinged feet might pass through the tunnel unnoticed; second, that he had heard mysterious persons moving in the tunnel several times at night in the weeks preceding the fire, and the test seals he had put on the tunnel doors had been broken...³⁹

The Storm Troopers were to smear a self-igniting chemical sub-

stance on various predetermined places in the Reichstag and then to return through the tunnel to Goering's residence. On February 28, 1933, however, fate disturbed their plans. A man with radically different motives decided that he, too, would set fire to the Reichstag - as a protest against the Nazi government. The man was Marinuis van der Lubbe. As Lubbe broke into the Reichstag, and began tossing his firelighters about, Storm Troopers had finished their task, and had begun to make their way out of the Reichstag. But, Lubbe's actions had laid them open to discovery...

In the process of questioning his men after the fire, Chief of the Fire Brigade, Ludwig Wissel received the following information:

In order to provide light for the firemen who were following, one of the firemen examined the possibility of switching on the electric light. He went into a lumber room. From there, some steps led downward. When the fireman descended these steps, groping with his hands along the wall, his left hand touched a small light switch, which he turned on. He then saw a fanlight from which some panes, about 15 by 20 inches in size, had been broken out. Looking out, the fireman saw several revolver muzzles being aimed at him; the weapons were held by men dressed in brand-new police uniforms who ordered the fireman to retire at once or they would shoot. The fireman retreated...40

Lubbe's ill-timed entrance into the Reichstag might have upset the Nazi's plans. But Lubbe turned out to be a godsend. Lubbe, without knowledge of the actual situation, was used by the Nazis in the subsequent months as a tool in their attempt to blame the Communists for the Reichstag fire. The Nazis intended to blame the fire on the Communists in any case. The fact that Lubbe, an admitted Communist, was caught at the scene made things easier for he provided tangible proof to substantiate Nazi allegations.

Why try the arsonists at all? At first Nazi plans probably did not involve a trial - just blanket condemnation of the Communists. The fact that Lubbe was found in the Reichstag, by people other than Nazis, and that Lubbe's arrest was reported to the world, complicated matters. World opinion demanded a fair trial.

The Nazi government, at that time was too weak to defy world opinion. To be sure Hitler and others wanted Lubbe disposed of as quickly as possible. But, cooler heads quickly saw the advantage of a trial especially if the charges stuck. As the New York Times

observed:

Up to the very last minute, the Nazi rulers, led by General Hermann Goering, Premier of Prussia, and the entire coordinated German press, anxious to strengthen the foundation of the Nazi regime, dinned into its ears (the Leipzig Court) the refrain: 'Hang these scoundrels!' (the defendants)⁴¹

These people were disappointed by the results of the Trial. But, no matter, the Reichstag fire had served its purpose - Hitler was in full control of Germany.

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Footnotes

1. William Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959) p.4.
2. Montag Morgan, (Berlin), 26 February 1933.
3. Quoted by Fritz Tobias, The Reichstag Fire, (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1964) p. 25.
4. The New York Times account of the fire is somewhat different. It reads: The fire was discovered soon after 9 o'clock, when a patrolling policeman, smelling smoke, hurried toward the parliamentary chamber...Other policemen rushing to the help of their comrade found the great hall afire in a dozen places..Rugs and chairs had been piled together over bundles of rags and excelsior and the whole set afire, an alarm was promptly sent, but the firemen were some time in coming.. The New York Times, (New York), 23 February 1933.
5. Most of this account is taken from Fritz Tobias, The Reichstag Fire, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964).
6. Quoted by ibid. p. 85.
7. Fritz Tobias is today the major proponent of the theory that Lubbe acted alone in setting fire to the Reichstag. Two authors - Hans Mommsen (Republic to Reich) and John Pritchard (Reichstag Fire, Ashes of Democracy) generally accept and reiterate Tobias' theory, basically without questioning it. Mr. Tobias feels that he is quite impervious to Nazi and Communist propaganda. He does not allow the subjective arguments of these ideological opposites to disturb his 'objectivity'. He boldly asserts that neither one of these two groups had a real hand in setting fire to the Reichstag. The author of this paper cannot allow herself to be dissuaded by the 'facts' that Tobias has presented, from the conclusion he must draw from the facts. This author respects the fine research that Tobias has done, but feels that Tobias, in his zeal to prove his theory, has overlooked some very important material or has branded

it as propaganda, rather than fact. There is no question that Tobias did exhaustive research on the subject. But the problem I found with his book is that he left important material out of the book. Despite the fact that Tobias's book is supposed to be the "last word" on the subject, I am afraid it is not. Tobias's book is as prejudiced against material that does not fit into his theory as he has accused others of being. In my research I have found material that Tobias conveniently neglected to discuss in his book or that he quoted only portions of, thereby changing the intended meaning of the quotation. An example of this is General Halder's affidavit at Nuremburg, set out on page thirteen. There Tobias implies that Goering was merely joking and that the people at the party took it as such. But, from the material that Tobias omitted one can see that no one believed it to be a joke.

8. The New York Times, (New York), 21 September 1933.
9. The New York Times, (New York), 16 September 1933.
10. ibid, 12 August 1933.
11. Fritz Tobias, The Reichstag Fire, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964) p. 72.
12. Quoted by ibid, pp. 124-5.
13. The New York Times, (New York), 14 October 1933.
14. ibid, 27 September 1933.
15. Fritz Tobias, The Reichstag Fire, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964) p. 52.
16. The New York Times, (New York), 16 September 1933.
17. ibid, 12 October 1933.
18. Quoted by Tobias, op. cit., p. 161.
19. The New York Times, (New York), 30 September 1933.
20. ibid, 24 November 1933.
21. ibid, 28 February 1934.
22. ibid, 15 December 1933.
23. ibid, 23 December 1933.
24. Otto Strasser and Michael Stern, Flight From Terror, (New York: Robert McMurrie & Co., 1943) p. 219.
25. Quoted by Heiden, A History of National Socialism, pp. 246-7.
26. Franz Hollering, II, "Fire in the Reichstag", Nation, (February 12, 1936).
27. Quoted by Tobias, op. cit., p. 136.
28. ibid, p. 30.
29. The New York Times, (New York), 9 December 1934.
30. Quoted by Heydecker and Leeb, The Nuremberg Trial, (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1958) p. 100.
31. ibid, p. 109.
32. Quoted by Tobias, op. cit., p. 83.
33. ibid, p. 90.
34. Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, op. cit., p. 635.
35. Heydecker and Leeb, op. cit., p. 108.
36. ibid, p. 110.
37. ibid, p. 112.
38. Manvell and Fraenkel, Goering, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962)
39. The New York Times, (New York), 19 October 1933.
40. Quoted by Heydecker and Leeb, op. cit., p. 100.
41. The New York Times, (New York), 23 December 1933.