

# The Nizkor Project

## **Nazi Conspiracy & Aggression** **Volume I Chapter VI** **The Organization of the Nazi Party & State** **(Part 2 of 2)**

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### 2. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE THIRD REICH

The prosecution has prepared another chart (Chart No. 18) delineating substantially the organizational structure of the government of the Third Reich, as it existed in March 1945, and "the chief leadership personnel of the Reich Government and the Reich Administration during said years." This chart has been prepared on the basis of information contained in two well known official publications: The Taschenbuch fuer Verwaltungsbeamte, and the Nationalsozialistischer Jahrbuch, above mentioned, of which Robert Ley was publisher. The chart has been examined corrected, and certified by Wilhelm Frick, whose affidavit is submitted with it. It seems plain that Frick, a former Minister of Interior of the Reich from January 1933 to August 1943, was well qualified, by reason of his position and long service in public office during the National Socialist regime, to certify to the substantial accuracy of the facts disclosed-in this chart.

It may be useful to commence with consideration of the Reichsregierung, a word which may not be translated literally as "government of the Reich." The word Reichsregierung was a word of art applied collectively to the ministers who composed the German cabinet. The Reichsregierung, which has been named as a defendant group in this proceeding, includes the following:

- a. Members of the ordinary cabinet after 30 January 1933, i.e Reich ministers with and without portfolio and all other officials entitled to participate in the meetings of this cabinet.
- b. Members of the Council of Ministers for the Defense of the Reich (Ministerrat fuer die Reichsverteidigung).
- c. Members of the Secret Cabinet Council (Geheimer Kabinettsrat).

Unlike the cabinets and ministerial councils in countries not within the orbit of the former Axis, the Reichsregierung, after 30 January 1933 when [Adolf Hitler](#) became Chancellor of the German Republic, did not remain merely the executive branch of the Government. In short order it also came to possess, and it exercised, legislative and other functions in the governmental system developed under the domination of the National Socialist party.

It is proper to observe here that, unlike such NS party organizations as the SS and the SA, the Reichsregierung before 1933

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was not a body created exclusively or predominantly for the purpose of committing illegal acts. The Reichsregierung was an instrument of government provided for by the Weimar Constitution. Under the Nazi regime, however, the Reichsregierung gradually became a primary agent of the party with functions formulated in accordance with the objectives and methods of the party. The party was intended to be a Fuehrerorden, an order of Fuhrers, a pool of political leaders; and whole the party was -- in the words of a German law -- "the bearer of the concept of the German State," it was not identical with the State. Hence, in order to realize its ideological and political objectives and to reach the German people, the party had to avail itself of official state channels. The Reichsregierung, and the agencies and offices established by it, were the chosen instruments by means of which party policies were converted into legislative and administrative acts binding upon the German people as a whole.

In order to accomplish this result, the Reichsregierung was thoroughly remodelled so as to coordinate party and state machinery, in order to impose the will of the Fuehrer on the German people. On 30 January 1933 the Reichsregierung contained but few National Socialists. But as the power of the party in the Reich grew, the composition of the cabinet came to include an ever-increasing number of Nazis until, by January 1937, no non-party member remained in the Reichsregierung. New cabinet posts were created and Nazis appointed to fill them. Many of these cabinet members were also in the Reichsleitung of the party.

To give a few examples: Rosenberg, the Delegate of the Fuehrer for Ideological Training and Education of the Party, was member of the Reichsregierung as Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories (Reichsminister f. d. b. Ostgebiete). Frick, the leader of the National Socialist faction in the Reichstag, was also Minister of the Interior (Reichsinnenminister). Goebbels, the Reichsleiter for Propaganda, also sat in the cabinet as Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsminister fuer Volksaufklaerung und Propaganda).

After 25 July 1934 1934, party participation in the work of the cabinet was at all times attained through Rudolf Hess, the Deputy of the Fuehrer. By a decree of the Fuehrer, Hess was invested with power to take part in the editing of bills dealing with all departments of the Reich. Later this power of the Fuehrer's Deputy was expanded to include all executive decisions and orders published in the Reichsgesetzblatt. After Hess' flight to England in 1941, Martin Bormann took over, as his successor,

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the same function and, in addition, was given the authority of a Reich minister and made a member of the cabinet.

On 30 January 1937 Hitler accepted into the party those last few members of the cabinet who were not then party members. Only one cabinet member had the strength of character to reject membership in the party; he was the Minister of Ports and of Transportation, von Eltz-Ruebenach, who stated at that time he was unable at that time to reconcile membership in the NSDAP with his beliefs in Christianity. But such was not the case with Constantin von Neurath. He did not reject any party membership. And if Hjalmar Schacht was not already a party member at that time, then he too did not reject membership on 30 January 1937.

The chart shows many other instances where party members on the highest as well as on subordinate levels occupied corresponding or other positions in the organization of the state.

a. [Hitler](#)

himself, the Fuehrer of the NSDAP, was also the Chancellor of the Reich, with which office the office of the President of the German Republic was united after the death of President von Hindenburg in 1934.

b. [Goering](#), the successor designate of Hitler as Fuehrer of the NSDAP, was a member of the cabinet as Minister for Air (Luftfahrtminister), and he also held many other important positions, including that of Commander of the Luftwaffe, the German air force, and Delegate for the Four Year Plan (Beauftragter f. d. Vierjahresplan).

c. [Heinrich Himmler](#), the notorious head of the SS (Reichsfuehrer SS), was also Chief of the German Police, reporting to Frick. He himself later became Minister of the Interior after the attempted assassination of Hitler on 20 June 1944, which event also catapulted him into position of Commander in Chief of the German Reserve Army.

The Reichstag, which was the German parliament, presents an anomaly in this picture. Under the Republic it had been the supreme law-making body of the Reich, subject only to a limited check by the Reichsrat (Council of the Reich), the President, and the German people themselves, by way of initiative and referendum. Putting their opposition to all forms of parliamentarism at once into effect, the Nazis proceeded to curtail these legislative powers of the Reichstag, the Reichsrat, and the Reichspraesident.

By the Act of 24 March 1933 the cabinet was given unlimited legislative powers, including the right to deviate from the constitution. Subsequently the Reichsrat was abolished; and later,

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upon the death of President von Hindenburg in 1934, the posts of Chancellor and President were merged.

The development of the Reichstag into an emasculated legislative body was an intermediate step on the road to rule by Fuehrer decree, the ultimate goal of the National Socialist party-and one which it achieved.

The Nazis then proceeded to delegate some of the functions of the Reichsregierung to various newly-created agencies. Cabinet functions were delegated:

1. To the Reichsverteidigungsrat, the Reich Defense Council, possibly as early as 4 April 1933 but certainly not later than May 1935. This was a large war-planning group of which [Hitler](#) was chairman and Goering alternate. The group included many cabinet members, and a working committee, presided over by Fieldmarshal Wilhelm Keitel, was also composed of cabinet members and Reich defense officials, the majority of whom were appointed by the cabinet members and subordinate to them.
2. To the Plenipotentiary for War Economy (Generalbevollmaechtigter f. d. Kriegswirtschaft) [Hjalmar Schacht](#) (and later Walter Funk), who by the Secret Reich Defense Law of May 1935 was authorized to "begin his work already in peacetime."

3. To the Plenipotentiary for Administration (Generalbevollmaechtigler f. d. Reichsverwaltung), [Wilhelm Frick](#), whose deputy Himmler, later succeeded him, and who was appointed by a Secret Reich Defense Law. Subordinate to Frick as Plenipotentiary were the ministries of the Interior, Justice, Education, Church Affairs and Raumordnung (Spatial Planning).
4. To the Delegate for the Four Year Plan (Beauftragter f. d. Vierjahresplan), Goering.
5. To the Dreierkollegium, the College of Three, consisting of the two Plenipotentiaries for War economy and Administration, and Fieldmarshal Keitel as chief of the OKW. The duties of this Drierkollegium appear to have included the drafting of decrees in preparation and for use in war.
6. To the Geheime Kabinettsrat, the Secret Cabinet Council, created by the Fuehrer decree in February 1938, of which von Neurath was President; and
7. To the Ministerrat f. d. Reichsverteidigung, the Council of Ministers for the Defense of the Reich, established by Fuehrer decree on 30 August 1939 and responsible to him alone. Its membership was taken from the Reich Defense Council. It had broad powers to issue decrees with force of law insofar as the Reichsregierung itself had not legislated on the subject.

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It should be stressed that this delegation of cabinet functions and authority to various secret and semi-secret groups composed largely of its own members, helped to conceal some of the most important policies of the Reichsregierung, particularly those relating to preparation for war.

Thus, step by step, the National Socialist party succeeded in putting its policies into effect through the machinery of the state, the Reichsregierung, in its revised form.

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