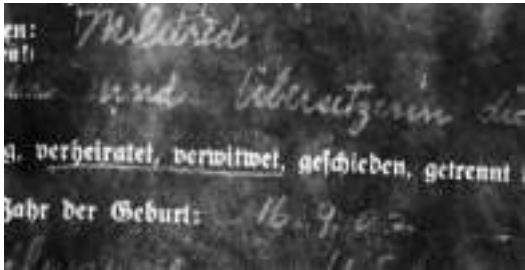


ALL THE FREQUENT
TROUBLES OF OUR DAYS

Fragment

Questionnaire
Plötzensee Prison, Berlin
February 16, 1943

Last name	Harnack
First name	Mildred
Date of birth	9/16/02
Place of birth	Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA
Do you have assets? How much and what do they include?	8.47 (?) in my pocket 1 ship ticket United States Lines \$127 (paid in Reichsmark) in my purse some money in Deutsche Bank Apartment furnishings, especially in the two front rooms, Woyrschstr. 16, Berlin, with two Oriental carpets; a light and a dark one with uneven stars and colors
Why are you punished now? Do you admit committing the crime you are charged with? In which circumstances and for what reason did you commit the crime?	Accomplice in treason



Introduction

HER AIM WAS SELF-ERASURE. THE more invisible she was, the better her chances of survival. In her journal she noted what she ate, read, thought. The first was uncontroversial. The second and third were not. For this reason, she hid the journal. When she suspected the Gestapo was closing in on her, she destroyed it. Burned it, most likely.

She was at the harrowing center of the German resistance, but she wasn't German, nor was she Polish or French. She was American—conspicuously so. The men she recruited acquired code names: Armless, Beamer, Worker. She operated under no code name. Still, she was elusive. The nature of her work required absolute secrecy. She didn't dare tell her family, who were scattered across the towns and dairy farms of the Midwest. They remained bewildered that she, at twenty-six, had jumped aboard a steamer ship and crossed the Atlantic, leaving behind everyone she loved.

Her family is my family. Three generations separate us. She preferred anonymity, so I will whisper her name: *Mildred Harnack*.

In 1932, she held her first clandestine meeting in her apartment—a small band of political activists that grew into the largest underground resistance group in Berlin by the end of the decade. During the Second World War, her group collaborated with a Soviet espionage network that conspired to defeat Hitler, employing agents and operatives in Paris, Geneva, Brussels, and Berlin. In the fall of 1942, the Gestapo pounced. She was thrown in prison. So were her

6 ALL THE FREQUENT TROUBLES OF OUR DAYS

coconspirators. During a hastily convened trial at the Reichskriegsgericht—the Reich Court-Martial—a prosecutor who’d earned the moniker “Hitler’s Bloodhound” hammered them with questions.

She sat on a wooden chair in the back of the courtroom. Other chairs held high-ranking Nazi officers. At the center of the room sat a panel of five judges. Everyone there was German except her.

When it was her turn, she approached the stand. She was emaciated, her lungs ravaged by tuberculosis she’d contracted in prison. How long she stood there remains unknown; surviving documents don’t note the time the prosecutor began questioning her or the time he stopped. What is known is this: the answers she gave him were lies, real whoppers.

The judges believed her. The sentence she received was considered mild: six years of hard labor in a prison camp. Two days later, Hitler overrode the verdict and ordered her execution. On February 16, 1943, she was strapped to a guillotine and beheaded.

AFTER THE WAR, THE U.S. Army’s Counter Intelligence Corps opened an investigation. “Mildred Harnack’s actions are laudable,” one CIC official observed in 1946, noting the “rather extensive file” they had on her. “It is quite possible that investigation will disclose the commission of a war crime,” wrote another. Their higher-ranking colleague later reprimanded them in a terse memo: “This case is classified S/R [secret/restricted] and should *not have been* referred for investigation. Withdraw case from Detachment ‘D’ and *do not* continue the investigation.”

So the CIC buried her case. The reason for this would not come to light for over fifty years.

Still, news leaked out. On December 1, 1947, the *New York Times* ran a story under the headline HITLER BEHEADED AMERICAN WOMAN AS A PERSONAL REPRISAL IN 1943. “With comprehensive knowledge of the German underground movement, Mildred Harnack stood up courageously under Gestapo torture and revealed nothing,” it noted. Later that week, the *Washington Post* praised her as “one of the leaders in the underground against the Nazis.” Readers of the *New York*

Times and the *Washington Post* were probably surprised to learn that an active underground resistance in Germany had even existed.

A central problem for anyone who wanted to write about her group was a lack of documentary evidence. It wasn't until 1989, when the Berlin Wall came crashing down, that a trove of documents stashed in an East German archive came to light. Several years later, Russia permitted historians a peek at foreign intelligence files, and in 1998, under the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, the CIA, FBI, and U.S. Army began to release records once classified as top secret, a process that continues to this day. We now have a more nuanced understanding of the underground resistance in Germany, but factual inaccuracies persist. Details about Mildred Harnack are scant and frequently incorrect. The ashes of the journal she kept can't serve as a corrective.

Despite her wish to remain invisible, she left a trail for us to follow.

Along the trail are official documents—British, U.S., and Soviet-era intelligence files, thick as your wrist. Then there are the unofficial documents, which reveal deeper truths: The letters she wrote. The letters other people wrote to her and about her. Family and friends left behind notes, datebooks, diaries, photographs, testimonials. It can't be said that there was a consensus about the woman they knew, or thought they knew. To many, she was an enigma, inspiring a range of contradictory conclusions about who she was and why she did what she did.

Nearly all the people who knew her are lost to history. Those who are still alive are well into their nineties. One I hoped to find more than any other.

He was just a boy when he met Mildred, young enough to be her son. I tracked him down, and implored him: *What did she tell you? How did she enter a room? Did you hear her weep? Sing? Did she trust you?*

The Boy with the Blue Knapsack

1939

That night I saw a
movie of soldiers. There
was a little speech of
Hitler, which I didn't
believe. There was a dance.



SNOW. FEAR. LIGHT. One morning in December 1939, an eleven-year-old boy bursts out of the arched front door of an apartment building in Berlin, wondering whether he'll get caught. On his back he carries a blue knapsack. Before him, the wide expanse of Schöneberg Park is blanketed in white. He shivers. He wears a wool coat, a black cap. The cap makes him look like a German boy.

Four steps and he's down the stairs; four more and he's crossing the street. The boy heads for the U-Bahn station. He's not traveling far. A ten-minute ride to Nollendorfplatz, a short walk to Woyrschstrasse 16. His father showed him how. His father said: *Pay attention. And: Talk to no one.*

The boy sees a tall man with a handlebar mustache, a woman wearing a fur hat, two boys with red mittens, and a goose-stepping girl. Christmas is soon. Along the sidewalk, merchants stand behind carts, ringing bells. In one cart, charred chestnuts. In another, wilted cabbages. In another, crockery. In another, squadrons of marzipan soldiers. Somewhere, buildings are in flames, bombs exploding. The boy knows the fighting is far away, but he imagines he can smell the war.

Burnt. Like the charred chestnuts.

Headlines blackening the pages of Berlin newspapers that month report ALL BRITISH AIR ATTACKS ARE DOOMED TO FAIL, denounce THE PLAGUE OF JEWS, and promise VICTORY IS CERTAIN! The newspapers are loaded with lies. The boy knows this from his father, who spends most of his waking hours at his desk writing intelligence reports, sending them to Washington by telegram if they are confidential and by diplomatic pouch if they are highly confidential. On several occasions, the boy accompanies his father to Bremerhaven, a port on the North Sea coast, where his father hands the diplomatic pouch to a man in the foreign service, who then boards a steamer ship. Sometimes, the report inside is addressed to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, sometimes to Secretary of State Cordell Hull.

The boy lifts his chin, searches the sky. German bombers. He doesn't see them but he knows they're up there. Their rumbling rattles his teeth, or maybe he's just jittery, thinking about the job he's got to do.

An important job, said his father.

Like yours? asked the boy.

Like mine, yessiree, said his father, a Kansas native who holds two positions, one at the U.S. embassy in Berlin and one in the ranks of a department that has no official name or organizational structure, although soon it will come under the auspices of a hastily cobbled-together wartime intelligence group called the Office of the Coordinator of Information, the precursor to what will eventually become —after several iterations, upheavals, shake-ups, and shakedowns—the Central Intelligence Agency.

At the U-Bahn station, the boy waits on the platform. The train comes; its doors gasp open.

He jumps in, finds a seat. Nollendorfplatz. Only ten minutes away.

THREE AND A HALF months earlier, shortly before the German Luftwaffe dropped five hundred sixty tons of explosive bombs onto Poland, the State Department urged all the men at the U.S. embassy in Berlin to send their wives and children back home to America. The boy and his mother went to Norway instead. They checked into a hotel in Oslo, where they waited for the boy's father to send a message.

The message came in November, early in the morning. They packed quickly.

Where are we going? the boy asked.

Back to Berlin, his mother said.

Why? the boy asked. A war was under way. It didn't make sense to return to Berlin.

We need to help some people was his mother's response.

They boarded a coal-powered train that swept them past farms and fields and ice-caked lakes. Snowcapped mountains lay bunched together, as if huddling for warmth. The boy rested his forehead on the window, watching it all whiz by, wondering, *Help how?*

NOLLENDORFPLATZ.

The boy shoulders his knapsack and exits the train, jumping nimbly over the gap between track and platform. He walks up a flight

of stairs and out a glass door. Once past the U-Bahn station, he counts his steps in German: *eins, zwei, drei*. At *zwanzig* he squats down. His shoelaces are tied, but he fakes that they're loose and ties them again, stealing a glance over his shoulder. Two men. One is bald; one wears wire-framed glasses. He remembers what his father told him: *Make sure no one follows you*.

He crosses the street. At the corner is an enormous department store, the Kaufhaus des Westens. Berliners call it the KaDeWe. He walks in.

The KaDeWe smells of perfume and doughnuts. There are seven stories. It won't be long before an American bomber crashes into the building during an air raid, making a spectacular explosion, but right now the building is as intact as it is inviting. The perfect place, the boy knows, to give someone the slip. He skips every other stair to the second floor, walks past a carousel of winter coats, ducks into an elevator that takes him up to the top and back down to the ground floor, where he exits through a side door. Once outside he breaks into a run, the knapsack banging against his back.

No one follows him that day.

But suppose you did. You would have seen an eleven-year-old boy with a blue knapsack run all the way to Woyrschstrasse 16, a few blocks south of the Tiergarten. If you'd asked him why he was visiting Woyrschstrasse 16, he would have told you that his tutor was giving him lessons there. This is only half true.

He enters the building and races up the stairs, his knapsack heavy with books. At the top floor, a young woman wearing a modest dress typical of Nazi Berliner *Frauen* opens the door. Her honey-colored hair is pulled back into a bun.

You would not guess that she, too, is American. Nor would you suspect that when the boy leaves the apartment an hour later, his knapsack will contain something more valuable than books.

THE BOY IS HER courier, in the language of espionage. An eleven-year-old spy. Twice a week he visits her apartment, where they sit side by side on a sofa with wooden armrests and talk about the books she assigns him. The books are various and unpredictable: classics

and potboilers, Shakespeare and cowboy Westerns. She questions him about the plot, the characters, the themes. She has a low, kind voice. She says, *Tell me what this book is about*. She says, *Tell me what you think, not what you think you should think*. She is unlike any teacher he has ever had.

Their lesson lasts an hour, sometimes two. When it's over, she asks, *Which way are you going home today?*

Every time he takes a different route—she makes sure of it. Looking into his eyes, her gaze steady and solemn, she asks the boy to repeat the street names. If his attention wanders, she will cup his cheeks with her hands, the way his mother does, and ask him to say the names again.

At the door, she helps him with his coat and slips a piece of paper into his knapsack. Sometimes the paper looks like a reading list. Sometimes it looks like a recipe. Sometimes it looks like a letter, which she signs *Mildred* or, simply, *M*.

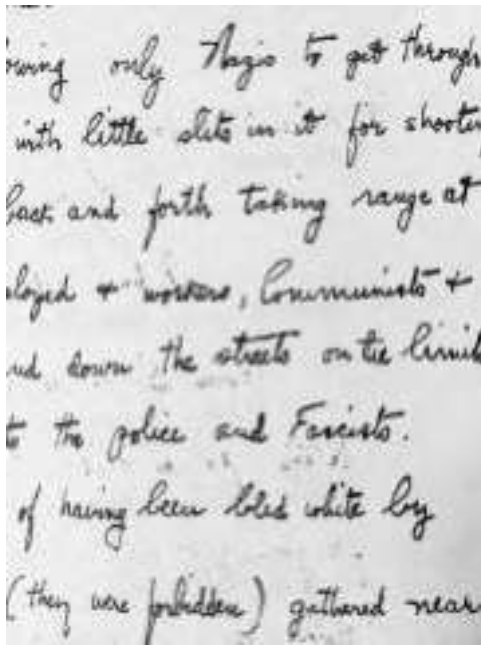
Mildred

I



We Must Change This Situation as Soon as Possible

1932



...ing only Nazis to get through
with little slots in it for shooting
back and forth taking range at
employed + workers, Communists +
and down the streets on the limit
to the police and Fascists.
of having been held white by
(they were forbidden) gathered near

1.

On July 29, 1932, Mildred exits the U-Bahn station and heads north on Friedrichstrasse, a leather satchel in her grip. It's Friday. She's on her way to the University of Berlin, where she lectures twice a week.

Her pace is brisk. Berlin is bustling; the sidewalks are clogged with pedestrians, the streets swarm with cars, trams, buses, bicyclists. Everywhere she looks, she sees people, young and old, rich and poor. Mainly poor. Begging, sleeping, fighting, selling shoelaces,

scraps of newspaper, passing between them cigarette butts scrounged from a gutter.

Two years ago, the University of Berlin hired her to teach a course called American Literary History. The department head may have expected her to lecture about authors of the previous century—Herman Melville or Nathaniel Hawthorne or James Fenimore Cooper—but Mildred doesn't want to discuss books about sailors or adulteresses or frontiersmen. She wants to talk about books written by people living *now*, especially those who write about what it's like to be poor. Facing a roomful of German undergraduates, she wants to deepen their understanding of the downtrodden at a time when so many in their own country are caught in a daily struggle to put bread on their tables. And so for four semesters she has lectured about American farmers and factory workers and immigrants, about William Faulkner and John Dos Passos and Theodore Dreiser. She doesn't hide her political views. Her lectures move fluidly from American novels to the prevalence of the poor in Germany and the troubling ascent of the Nazi Party.

"Germany is going through such very dark hours," she wrote in a recent letter to her mother. "All feel the menace but many hide their heads in the sand."

She reaches a wide boulevard: Unter den Linden. She turns right.

The boulevard takes its name from the profusion of linden trees flanking it, trees that are in full bloom now, cascades of tiny white blossoms perfuming the air she breathes. But all this beauty can't mask the ugliness here. Swastikas are cropping up like daisies everywhere: on posters pasted to the walls of U-Bahn stations, on flags and banners and pamphlets. A white-haired, walrus-mustached man is leading the country right now, but just barely. President Paul von Hindenburg is eighty-four, tottering into senility. A politician half his age is growing in popularity, a high-school dropout named Adolf Hitler who, Mildred predicts, will bring "a great increase of misery and oppression."

She turns left. Before her is the University of Berlin.

She enters the building. The hallways swarm with students. She

approaches the door of her classroom knowing that today's lecture will be her last. An administrator has already informed her that she will not be invited back to teach in the fall.

Mildred can hardly believe it. All along, she has taken for granted that she can speak her mind.

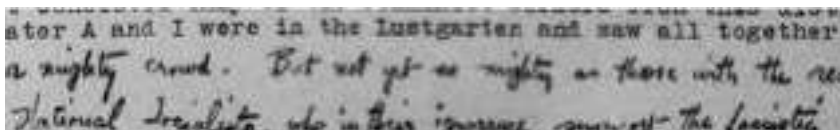
2.

In letters to her mother, Mildred writes plainly and simply, knowing that Georgina Fish's tenth-grade education hasn't prepared her for the complexities of German politics.

There is a large group of people here which, feeling the wrongness of the situation—their own poverty or danger of poverty—leaps to the conclusion that, since things were better before, it would be a good idea to have a more absolute government again.

The official name of the Nazi Party is the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), Mildred explains, or the National Socialist German Workers' Party, "although it has nothing to do with socialism and the name itself is a lie. It thinks itself highly moral and like the Ku Klux Klan makes a campaign of hatred against the Jews."

Mildred writes most of these letters with a black-ink pen. Sometimes she writes part of the letter while she's on the U-Bahn, on her way to teach a class, and finishes it on the typewriter at home. Sometimes it's the reverse; she types the letter first and finishes it on the U-Bahn, apologizing for her messy handwriting.



after A and I were in the Lustgarten and saw all together
a mighty crowd. But not yet as mighty as those with the new
National Socialists who in their ignorance saw off the fascists

Mildred doesn't tell her mother right away about losing her job at the University of Berlin. She will wait awhile. Maybe a week. Maybe two. She doesn't want to worry Georgina Fish, who lives in

a small, brown-wallpapered room across the Atlantic and is prone to worrying.

3.

Fired. Booted. Axed.

Whatever word you choose, the outcome is the same. The officious administrator refused to articulate a reason. Contracts are not renewed for various individuals for various reasons at various times.

Mildred is twenty-nine, still a graduate student, halfway through her dissertation. She had planned to teach American Literary History until she got her PhD. What now? She can take classes at the University of Berlin, but she's not permitted to teach them anymore. A group of students have circulated a petition urging the university to reconsider its decision. It's no use, though. The bustling hallway, the shuffle of footsteps, the doorknob in her hand, the cold metal feel of it—they're all tokens of her time here, conspiring to remind her that she can't return.

She opens the classroom door and strides in.

Her students, seated in rows before her, rise to their feet. This is the custom in German universities, a gesture of respect. When she sees what they've done to her desk, she's overcome with emotion. They have covered it with flowers, a profusion of lavender and golden blooms, a big, beautiful pile. Eyes brimming, she makes a clumsy joke.

It's so high I can't see your faces!

4.

Within spitting distance of the University of Berlin is Opernplatz, a large public square. Students carrying satchels of books mingle here between classes, strolling past the grand butterscotch columns of the State Opera. In the evening, wealthy operagoers spill out onto the square, and beggars trail raggedly alongside them, stretching out open palms. Opernplatz is the whole of German society, condensed.

Next year, students in a Nazi fraternity will burn twenty-five thousand books here, throwing them into a massive bonfire at the center of the square. The fraternity will stage similar bonfires in universities across Germany, circulating a list of authors deemed deviant, impure, “un-German.” The list will include Nobel Prize winners and obscure writers, philosophers and playwrights, novelists and physicists. Books by Jews and Christians and atheists will be condemned alongside books by Communists, socialists, and anarchists. Nearly every book Mildred assigned in the two years she taught at the University of Berlin will be burned.

5.

The Reichstag—Germany’s parliament—is a cornerstone of democracy, acting as a check and balance to the executive authority of President Paul von Hindenburg. Seats in the Reichstag are open to a dizzying array of political parties, from the well established to the lunatic fringe.

In 1928, the Nazi Party got less than 3 percent of the vote in a Reichstag election.

In 1930, it got 18 percent.

And in 1932? Fascism is on the rise in Germany, but it still seems possible to defeat it. Left-wing politicians outnumber Nazis by a wide margin.

On July 31, 1932—two days after Mildred is ousted from the University of Berlin—there will be another election. Walking around Berlin, Mildred sees Nazi propaganda wherever the poor and unemployed congregate: parks, plazas, train stations, public urinals. Posters stamped with swastikas promise “Work! Freedom! Bread!” Hitler used the same slogan when he ran for president in March, and lost. President Hindenburg has just started his second seven-year term. What Hitler will do next is unclear.

Mildred waits for the Reichstag election results with mounting anxiety. Her neighbors wait, too, clustering around the newspaper kiosks dotting the block.

6.

The Nazi Party gets 37 percent of the vote. For the first time in history, it's the largest party in the Reichstag. The Social Democratic Party trails behind, with 22 percent. The Communist Party trails even further, with 15 percent. The remaining 26 percent is divided among a squabbling hodgepodge of parties. Every imaginable point of view is represented. They have names like "Radical Middle Party" and "Reich Party of the German Middle Class" and "National Middle Party Against Fascism and Socialism" and "German Farmers Party" and "Christian Social People's Service Party" and "Justice Movement Against All Parties and Wage Cuts and for Provision for Unemployment" and "Highest Salary for Civil Servants, 5,000 Marks for the Unemployed and Victims of the War, Hitherto Trodden Underfoot."

On the heels of the Nazi Party's victory, Hitler commands President Hindenburg to name him chancellor of Germany. President Hindenburg refuses.

7.

Mildred reads *Mein Kampf*. Hitler's book has been published in two volumes, the first in 1925, the second in 1926. In 1932, it isn't read widely in Germany—not yet. An English translation hasn't been published yet either. Mildred worries that Americans don't understand how dangerous Hitler is.

Germans don't understand either. Too many are dismissive. Most major German newspapers declined to run reviews of *Mein Kampf* when the book was published. One newspaper predicted that Hitler's political career would be "completely finished" after people read his ramblings. Another mocked Hitler's "fuzzy mind." Even Nazis and right-wing nationalists took potshots. The pro-Nazi newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung* sneered at Hitler's "illogical ranting." The nationalist newspaper *Neue Preussische Zeitung* fumed: "One seeks ingenuity and finds only arrogance, one seeks stimulation and reaps boredom, one seeks love and enthusiasm and finds platitudes,

one seeks healthy hatred and finds insults. . . . Is this the book for the German people? That would be dreadful!" When Hitler bragged that all of Germany was eagerly anticipating his book, the anti-Semitic newspaper *Das Bayerische Vaterland* scoffed at Hitler's egomania. "O how modest! Why not the entire universe?"

Cartoons gleefully mocked Hitler. The popular magazine *Simplicissimus* ran a derisive front-page caricature of Hitler peddling *Mein Kampf* to uninterested customers in a beer hall.

It was at a beer hall in Munich, the Hofbräuhaus, where Hitler, age thirty, delivered one of his first significant speeches. The occasion was a meeting held on February 24, 1920, by the German Workers' Party, an obscure political party with only 190 members, Hitler among them. Hitler had fought in the First World War and was still in the army, working in the intelligence department of the Reichswehr. He had a dim view of the German Workers' Party steering committee, a bickering bunch of drones who chose a priggish doctor to deliver the first speech.

When the doctor was done, Hitler leaped onto a long table positioned smack in the middle of the crowd. His oratorical style was provocative, his language colloquial and at times coarse. He hollered insults at politicians, capitalists, and Jews. He castigated the Reich finance minister for supporting the Treaty of Versailles, a humiliating concession to the victors of the war that would bring Germans to their knees, he warned, unless they fought back. "Our motto is only struggle!" Hitler cried. The beer-hall crowd, a fizzy mix of working-class and middle-class men, erupted—some cheering, some jeering. His controversial speeches fueled attendance at future meetings of the German Workers' Party, which grew to 3,300 members by the end of 1921, at which point it had a new name, the National Socialist German Workers' Party, nicknamed the Nazi Party. It also had a new chairman, Hitler, who gave himself a new title: Führer (Leader).

Simplicissimus skewered the Führer as a minor player on the stage of German politics. From 1921 through 1932, Hitler appeared in the magazine as a harmless imbecile. A cartoon in 1930 lampooned Hitler as a doltish schoolboy copying passages from *Das Kapital*

while the ghost of Karl Marx scolds him (“Adolf, Adolf! Give my theories back to the Socialists!”). Another showed two policemen raiding the cavernous interior of Hitler’s empty head and finding a brain so small they needed tweezers to lift it out.



For over a decade, the *Münchener Post* published mocking screeds against Hitler and his band of bootlicking cronies, linking them to sex scandals and binges at luxury hotels. “Hitler,” the paper gloated, “has no secrets from us.” Hitler claimed to enjoy the publicity (“It makes no difference whatever whether they laugh at us or revile us,” he wrote in *Mein Kampf*, “whether they represent us as clowns or criminals; the main thing is that they mention us”), but the paper’s ridicule irked him so much that he dispatched a group of thugs to raid the offices of the *Münchener Post* in 1923 and smash everything in sight. The thugs were Hitler’s personal bodyguards, the Stoss-trupp Adolf Hitler—the Adolf Hitler Assault Squad.

As Hitler’s popularity increased, the *Münchener Post* sounded an

alarm about his murderous agenda. Under the headline *THE JEWS IN THE THIRD REICH*, a 1931 article reported a “secret plan” for “the solution of the Jewish question.” An unnamed Nazi source had leaked a detailed list of restrictions that would be imposed on Jews if the Nazi Party got its way; there was also a plan “to use the Jews in Germany for slave labor.” Now, in 1932, the paper runs a story about “Cell G,” a secret death squad within the ranks of the Nazi Party that murders Hitler’s opponents. The journalists at the *Münchener Post*, known to readers as a mouthpiece of the Social Democratic Party, take Hitler seriously, even as many others don’t.

8.

In Alexanderplatz, Mildred sees a bloody confrontation. A ragged procession of unemployed factory workers march in the public square shouting, “We are hungry!” as police officers bludgeon them with batons. A military tank appears—a monster of a vehicle, Mildred recounts later, “with little slits in it for shooting and an automatic gun which swung back and forth taking range at the crowd.”

The tank is driven by men known as *Schutzstaffel*—or simply the SS. They wear black uniforms and are not members of the German police or in any way affiliated with the German government. They’re an elite corps of officers in a private paramilitary force run by the Nazi Party. The size of this private army—which includes a number of the bodyguards in the assault squad who protected Hitler when he was hollering speeches in beer halls—has been building steadily since the mid-1920s. So has another private paramilitary army of men, in brown uniforms, known colloquially as *Brown-shirts* and more formally as *Sturmabteilung*—Storm Troopers—or simply the SA. In 1932, the number of Storm Troopers is a staggering 400,000. Both paramilitary forces stand armed and ready to carry out orders issued by the Nazi Party, which, to all appearances, is preparing for a violent right-wing revolution in Germany.

9.

Everywhere Mildred looks, she sees signs of brutality and suffering.
She writes:

*Many of the unemployed have the look of having been bled white
by hunger and cold.*

And

They eat potatoes day after day and nothing else.

And

The situation grows steadily worse.

While walking to the U-Bahn, she spots a German woman who
looks about the same age as her own mother

*standing on the street-corner in the bitter wind. She had no coat on,
and her clothes were thin and threadbare, and she was trying pitifully
to sell papers. Whenever I see such a sight, and there are many such
to be seen, I think We must change this situation as soon as
possible.*