



## Spectacle at Nuremberg

Just as devout Muslims made a pilgrimage to Mecca, so faithful Nazis attended the annual Party Rally at Nuremberg. There, in a delirious round of music, parades, speeches, and pagan pageantry, all party members, from Hitler down to the shabbiest little village block leader, regenerated their enthusiasm and faith. The rallies were held in early September and lasted a week; the first was in 1933, after Hitler became chancellor, and thereafter they remained the high point of the Nazi calendar until the war, when Nuremberg became a popular Allied bombing target. Nothing was spared to make a rally a memorable experience. Torchlight parades and other night spectacles were frequent, for Hitler believed that "in the evening the people's will power more easily succumbs to the dominating force of a stronger will." The climactic finale of each rally was a speech by Hitler that sent both speaker and his hundreds of thousands of listeners into emotional frenzies. The world listened too, for here Hitler often gave the first hints of what he planned for the future.

*Hitler strides down the center aisle of Luitpold Arena (left) with storm-trooper chief Ernst Röhm at the first Nuremberg Party Rally in 1933. The next June, Hitler had Röhm and other brown-shirt leaders killed after the Army had demanded, as the price of its support, the suppression of the semiautonomous storm-troop army. At right, Hitler is portrayed as a white knight by a German artist. Millions of Germans saw nothing ridiculous in such idolatry, and certainly it was not discouraged by Hitler, who had ranked himself with Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon as a man of destiny. The picture was captured during the war, and in the process, the head and the face were slashed by a G.I. who obviously was left unawed by the entire Hitler mystique.*



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