



THE GANG'S ALL HERE: Goebbels, Hitler, Goering, Hess, Himmler.

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enormous trouble to retell it now, especially as the most interesting portion must necessarily be omitted. I mean, of course, the end of the story. Though the Blood Purge of 1934 is certainly not the climax of Hitler's career, it is in the film. After that, the whole thing just fizzles out in a few pompous sentences.

Even more debatable, however, is the film's interpretation of Hitler, his motives, and the forces which created him. There is much the same psychological mistake made here as occurred in *The Great Dictator*, when Chaplin made light of Hitler: in fact, treated him as a joke. *The Hitler Gang* certainly does not regard him as funny, but it still refuses to treat him with proper seriousness. He is presented as just a theatrical little egomaniac, a mountebank, strong in the lungs but weak in the head, who appeared almost out of the blue, collected a gang of ruffians around him and, with some encouragement from the German High Command but mostly by force and cunning, imposed himself on the German people. To treat Nazism in this shallow fashion and Hitler and his followers as nothing but political opportunists and gangsters is to make nonsense of world history and to ignore those spasms of world malaise which threw up Hitler and his kind. According to this screen interpretation, Hitler threw himself up: he is not just a symptom of general disease, but the whole disease itself. Destroy Hitler and Europe will be well again—or so the film suggests.

So, while *The Hitler Gang* will be viewed with interest by students of the cinema and may even be enjoyed by those who find comfort in the idea of a personal devil, others may not find it so reassuring—especially if they regard what has just been happening on the Western Front as another example of what is to be expected when we are guilty of over-confidence and oversimplification; when we look upon Hitler as merely a cheap and nasty little maniac.



CORPORAL SCHICKELGRUBER receives funds from Captain Roehm with which to organise the German Workers' Party as part of the plans of the High Command. This scene comes at the beginning of the picture, following the capitulation of 1918.



THREE BIG SHOTS IN CLOSE-UP: Himmler (Luis van Rooten), Goebbels (Martin Kosleck) and Goering (Alexander Pope).

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