

Background: The *Völkischer Beobachter* was the Nazi Party's daily newspaper. Besides covering the general news from a Nazi perspective, it also reported on party activity. This is a typical report of party activity. Such accounts reported almost constant Nazi successes. Elsbeth Zander (1888-1963), a rare Nazi women speaker, later became a top official in the Nazi women's organization.

The source: "Kampf um Harburg, die Marxistenstadt. Wie hier, so überall." *Völkischer Beobachter*, 8 November 1929, p. 3.

The Battle for Harburg, the Marxist City

As it is here, so is it everywhere

This is Harburg! It sits on the lower Elbe River. It is not far from the fishing village of Finkenwärder, the birthplace of the unforgettable Gorch Fock. It is close to the North Sea.

It is surrounded by forests and hills. The land of the "Black Hills." Harburg, an industrial city. It is surrounded by smoking factory chimneys. There is a citadel of the Marxists. And — one may never forget this — Harburg is the Red city where brave Captain Berthold was beaten to death by a whipped up mob. Literally beaten to death.

The battle is raging here. Bitterly. The local group has held firm. The banner flies. The lads are holding fast! They hold on to the banner. Harburg's citizens are paying heed.

Meeting after meeting. Hand in hand, the tireless educational work continues, using leaflets and newspapers.

And now there is more of it. It is more evident.

The city is livening up. Something must have gotten people excited. People talk about it in the factories. Groups gather in the streets to read the posters. The talk of the hour: Those hated National Socialists, always attacked and cursed by the *Harburger Volksblatt*, these National Socialists are announcing yet another public meeting.

For days, their "familiar" vivid posters have hung in prominent locations.

Automobiles with police drive through the city. They are heading for the train station to "greet" the S.A. men from Hamburg who are arriving for the meeting.

Are they getting nervous? So much bother, so many worries — so much advertising. Party comrade Elsbeth Zander and the Hamburg *Gau's* business officer Burat are to speak. The meeting is to start at 8:30 p.m. The large hall in the Schützenpark opens punctually at 7:30 p.m. The usual thing happens. It is only 8 p.m. The Schützenpark is filling up. By 8:15 the hall is full, and by 8:30 there is not an empty seat left. Whether sitting or standing, the attendees are packed close together. This time 1500 people have heeded the invitation. Poverty, bitter poverty, makes clear to our people's comrades the direction in which we are heading. Every group is represented. There are people from the middle class, craftsmen, shopkeepers, and in the overwhelming majority, workers from Harburg's factories.

Press reporters have come, too. One can no longer ignore the constantly growing movement. One is forced to take notice of the National Socialists. Sometimes in a friendly way, sometimes with uncertainty, and from the left, as is to be expected, particularly from the Marxist *Harburger Volksblatt*, with every form of calumny. What time is sacrificed for Adolf Hitler's hated movement.

Party comrade Stummeyer opens the meeting. In a few words, he announces the theme, mentions important events in Harburg, touches on the coming election, and introduces our party comrade Elsbeth Zander.

There is dead silence in the hall as E. Zander begins to speak. The past, and the wretched present are made clear. Pictures come and go **[on the screen]**. Germany as it was, Germany as it is today, Germany as it must be within a few years.

The audience is deeply moved. One no longer is sitting in a hall listening to a lecture. The pictures carry one along, from one point to the next.

It is nearing 10 p.m. The speaker is still talking. She speaks to women and mothers. She arouses them. She warns them: Raise your children to be heroes, fighters for freedom. German women, take sides in the today's battle for freedom. There is breathless silence. Her words have reached them all. The audience catches its breath. Thundering applause shows that here one heart spoke to other hearts.

The applause has not yet ceased as party comrade Burath **[the spelling is inconsistent]** begins to speak. Hard, sharp, accusatory are his words. The system, this System, is examined. Nothing is left but lies and betrayal, miserable cowardliness. One by one, they step onto the stage. The ones now sitting on the throne. Their complete absurdity is revealed. These are the "men" who want to be thought of as the next "Bismarck." Tiny men who would be great. No, a thousand times no. One must constantly fight this system. In legal ways, of course. Germany awake. It is late. Nonetheless, the discussion begins. "Someone" wishes to speak. People had hoped that one of the bigwigs from the SPD would appear, or at least one of the scribblers from the *Volksblatt*. That is not to be. It is safer at home, and one can write better there. One also cannot be held accountable for one's calumnies. Fine and good. A woman communist wishes to speak.

It is interesting in so far as she says that the KPD knows whom it will one day have to point its weapons at. The Red Front and the KPD are also fighting against the Young Plan **[an international agreement on World War I Germans reparations payments]**. And there is the usual litany about the brotherhood of peoples and class struggle.

The meeting is over. Soon, the doors will open again, and we will preach once more, until Harburg, the Marxist city, has become National Socialist Harburg.