

Background: The following essay was published in *Der Angriff*, 26 November 1928. Goebbels founded the newspaper in Berlin in 1927 shortly after taking over as the party's leader there. Kütemeyer was a Berlin Nazi killed in street fighting, one of several whom Goebbels transformed into a martyr of the movement.

The source: "Kütemeyer," *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., 1935), pp. 256-259. The illustration is the book's dust jacket.

Kütemeyer

by Joseph Goebbels

One day, he walked into the office and asked if there was something he could do. He was unemployed, and he and his wife could barely survive on the dole. He would gladly give his services to the party. He was quiet and shy. He sat down where he was told, saying little at all about his volunteer activity. After four months of diligent labor, the files, which as the result of band and persecutions had fallen into complete chaos, were back in order. He was the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave at night. About all he said was "good morning" and "good evening." If I happened to walk into his department, he jumped up, stood straight, shook my hand, and was as nervous as a child.



"He had been a brave soldier at the front during the war. After the war he was a merchant until he was ruined by inflation. He worked on a farm, but lost his position because of his political convictions. He returned to the city, one of the army of three million unneeded German workers.

The night before the Hitler meeting he joined comrades in hanging posters. He was out until dawn, returning dead tired to his apartment. His loyal wife forced him to sleep for three hours. Then he was back to work.

His heart is bursting. His pale, haggard face is flushed with excitement, for tonight he will see and hear his Führer for the first time. At five he reports for box office duty at the Sport Palace. As he leaves the office, he asks a comrade: "I wonder who we will bury next?"

As I inspected things around 6:30, I saw him at the counter. I do not ever recall hearing him laugh before, but now he did. His face beamed with joy. He yelled something to me, but I could not understand him.

At 8:15 the supervisor said: "Kütemeyer, you have not yet heard Hitler. Add things up a minute and get into the hall!" He added the money up. To the penny. 420.40 marks. He got the receipt, then left. He was in the back row, since the hall was filled to overflowing. He stood by the doorway, with tears in his eyes, joining the over 16,000 who rose to sing "Germany, Germany above all, and in time of need more than ever."

Who can blame him for being reluctant to return to the reality of his everyday life? He engaged in lively discussion for two hours with his comrades. Then he headed home to join his wife, who had left immediately after the meeting.

He was attacked on a street corner. He defended himself. But he was outnumbered 20-1, and they beat him down. His face was smashed into a bloody *Ecce Homo*, his nose broken, the eyes bloodied, the lips torn. He staggered to a quiet spot on the riverbank, hoping to escape the bloodthirsty mob and perhaps to meet one of his comrades who were also being chased through the streets.

A taxi drove through the rain. Filled with red scoundrels. Grinning, the driver stepped on the gas. He was like a wounded animal. A pale man with a bloody face. Go get him! A few blows to the head with a club rendered him unconscious. Throw him over the bank, into the canal! Is he dead already, or is he dying?

Someone heard a loud cry for help as the taxi sped away. A German was drowning in the cold, cold water. He was only a worker. Who cares? One of three million.

The corpse was found at 6 a.m. They found a party membership card and propaganda leaflet in his pocket. That was all. No money, no dagger, no pistol. Only a piece of paper with Hitler's name on it. The party official who went to the morgue could hardly identify him, so badly was his face beaten in.

His wife woke at 4 a.m. She thought she heard her husband shout "Mother, mother!" It was the hour that he died.

"Suicide! An accident! Drunk! Drowned!" That is what the newspapers said.

The police talked about a regrettable misstep on the riverbank. A fatally injured man falls over a meter high barrier. A man of the Jewish race is at the head of the police. The deceased is nothing but a German worker.

The hats are off and the flags are lowered! But only for a moment! Tighten the chinstraps, and begin our revenge on the destroyers of our people. Work, comrades, work!

This dead man has a right to demand that of us.