

Rauschning, Hermann

(1887-1982), Nazi politician who broke away from Hitler and Nazism before World War II.

Born in West Prussia, Rauschning studied history and music before volunteering during World War I. After the war, he was active in ethnic German organizations. In 1926 Rauschning bought an estate in Danzig, a city on the Baltic Sea that for centuries had been a point of conflict between Germany and Poland, and after World War I was designated as a "free city" that did not belong to any specific country. In 1931 Rauschning joined the Nazi Party.

In June 1933 the Nazi Party won a majority in Danzig's parliamentary elections and Rauschning was named president of the Danzig senate, making him the city's governor. However, Rauschning quit the post in November 1934; he had lost his enthusiasm for Nazism after getting to know Hitler and the local Nazi leader, Albert Forster. In 1936 Rauschning fled to Switzerland; two years later the Danzig senate stripped him of his Danzig citizenship.

At that point, Rauschning began writing books in which he hoped to reveal the true character of Nazism, and warn the world about Hitler's evil plans. In 1948 Rauschning moved to the United States, where he continued writing about German politics.