

Bauer, Max

By [Mahon Murphy](#)

Bauer, Max Hermann

German Colonel, Artillery Expert, Military Adviser

Born 31 January 1869 in Quedlinburg, Germany

Died 06 May 1929 in Shanghai, China

Summary

Max Bauer was a German artillery expert and a key subordinate in the German Supreme Command. A loyal supporter of Ludendorff, Bauer intrigued against Falkenhayn and consistently pushed for the further militarisation of German everyday life. He played a role in the Kapp-Putsch and died in Shanghai in 1929.

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Early Career and relationship with Ludendorff

Colonel Max Bauer (1869-1929), born in Quedlinburg, Germany, was a militarily gifted political adventurer who was not reluctant to use radical means to serve reactionary purposes. His career began in 1888 with the Second Prussian Foot Artillery (Danzig) and he was appointed to the General Staff in 1905. He served continuously in the Operations Section of the [German Supreme Command](#) from August 1914 to October 1918. He had a long professional relationship with General [Erich Ludendorff \(1865-1937\)](#) and was one of his most trusted advisers in handling relations between the [army and the civil authorities](#) and industrialists.

Tactical Innovation

Bauer was a specialist in heavy [artillery](#) and sieges, receiving an honorary PhD from the

University of Berlin in 1915 for his work on the development of 17-inch howitzers. His theory on the hurricane bombardment of fortresses followed by [infantry](#) attacks was deployed at Liege, Antwerp and in the Vistula. He was an astute tactician who was very aware of the significance of the development of [tanks](#). His main task in the Operations Section during the war was the in organizing the supply of munitions and [equipment](#), particularly in creating the munitions supply programme known as the "Hindenburg Programme". Through his close connections to [Fritz Haber \(1868-1934\)](#) Bauer was one of the driving forces behind the introduction of [poison gas](#) to the battlefield in 1915. After August of 1916 he was the most important of [Paul von Hindenburg \(1847-1934\)](#) and Ludendorff's subordinates in the Supreme Command.

Political Views

Bauer was politically active, radically [anti-Semitic](#), viewed democracy as the root of [Germany's](#) problems and took the [Social Democrats'](#) support for peace as a sign of their infiltration by international elements. He described German Jews as shirkers and claimed they were responsible for the crumbling strength of the German army. Before the war, he played a significant role in agitation for more troops and technical improvements of Germany's armed forces. In 1916 he intrigued against the Supreme Commander [Erich von Falkenhayn \(1861-1922\)](#) and was a loyal supporter of Ludendorff. He constantly pushed for all questions related to the [war economy](#) to be placed under the authority of the Supreme Command and his calls for the militarisation of civilian life became more outspoken. To this end and in conjunction with the "Hindenburg Programme" he sought to gain control over the [German labour force](#). Additionally he supported the opening of unrestricted [submarine warfare](#), but doubted its effectiveness in stopping the shipments of American troops to Europe. Towards the end of the war he fully supported the [Dolchstoßlegende](#), the idea that Germany's armed forces had been stabbed in the back by political actors in Berlin away from the frontlines.

Post-War Career

After the war Bauer joined the *Nationale Vereinigung*, a group instrumental in organising the Kapp Putsch in March 1920. Surprisingly, Bauer's political views leaned towards an alliance or understanding with Soviet Russia as a necessary starting point for the revision of the [Treaty of Versailles](#). After the Putsch Bauer fled to [Austria and later Hungary](#) and did not return to Germany until 1925. During this time in exile he visited [Russia](#) in 1922 in order to coordinate post-Rappallo Russo-German military talks.

China

Bauer, in lieu of the ageing Ludendorff, went to [China](#) in 1927 to become military advisor to

[Chiang Kai-Shek \(1887-1975\)](#) and assisted the reorganisation of the Nationalist Army. He is supposed to have drawn up campaign plans for the National Army's Northern Expedition. Bauer helped to create closer military contacts between Germany and China before his death in 1929.

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