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The SS: The End Result

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Master's Thesis

THE SS: THE END RESULT

by

Barry J. Klazura

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INTRODUCTION

The Third Reich of Germany was born in revolution. It had a highly effective police organization and because of the personalities involved and the international situation, the Schützstaffeln (SS) grew at a rapid rate and strove not only to secure its position in a new and victorious Germany, but also to found its roots deep in German culture.

The SS was a huge organization whose power extended into every aspect of German life, and this paper will show that because of its size and organization, it controlled the State machinery by the end of the war. To do this, the various branches of the SS must be examined to see if its personnel could keep an accurate pulse and eye on the people; it must be determined whether the NSDAP could offer any resistance, whether the use of naked power for a seizure of the State's machinery was feasible and who or what organizations could effectively oppose the SS if it wished to act in any field.

This paper will be descriptive to a large degree, at least until the conclusion, for it is only by seeing the extent of the SS, both physically and psychologically, that we can realize its power.

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS OF THE SS

The SS grew out of the SA or Assault Sections headed by Ernst Rohm. Originally formed as squads of men who were to beat up and terrorize political opponents, Rohm saw the SA as it grew in strength, as the future German Army steeped in the National Socialist ideology. To Rohm and his lieutenants, the SA was a trained manpower reserve for the Reichswehr¹ and he often spoke of someday absorbing the Reichswehr into the SA. Hitler however, because of his precarious position, did not want to antagonize the Army who while not giving him active support in the beginning, at least did not move against him. Hitler was also worried about the enormous size of the SA and its continual grumblings. For him, the SA was merely a tool which he used in a variety of ways and which also served as a rallying point for lower class, traditionalist Germans. The uniforms, banners, marches, etc. could all serve as points of reference in a chaotic world. At no time did Hitler envision the SA as replacing the Reichswehr.² As time went on, Hitler realized that the

¹J.W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power; The German Army in Politics, 1918-45 (London: MacMillan and Co., 1964), p. 204.

²Ibid., p. 203-4.

unpredictable character of the SA and the ambitious Rohm were negative factors in his dealings with the Reichswehr who saw the SA as a threat, and with the middle and upper-classes who saw the SA as hoodlums and street rabble.

To counter the SA, Hitler could not use the Army who never the less was exerting pressure on Hitler to limit the SA. Hitler thus turned to the Schutzstaffeln (SS) under the direction of Himmler. Out of an organization of 280 men, Himmler had gradually built up an organization which numbered in the tens of thousands. The purpose of this formation was to create originally, an organization, "...composed of the best physically, the most dependable, and the most faithful men in the Nazi movement."³ It is this organization which with the passive aid of the Army, decapitated the leadership of the SA in the famous "Night of the Long Knives." It is with the Rohm Purge that the order which Himmler had been dreaming of for so long began to take shape.

³George H. Stein, The Waffen-SS; Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1939-45 (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. xxvi.

CHAPTER II

PURPOSE OF THE SS

On November 7, 1930, Hitler wrote that, "The task of the SS is primarily to carry out police duties within the Party."⁴ As time went on, however, the concept and role of the SS was in a constant state of flux, until Hitler reached the stage where the SS was the only organization he trusted. Both Hitler and Himmler saw the SS as a double-edged sword;

...an unconditional tool in the hands of the Fuhrer for the implementation of the true aims of his policy--the safeguarding of an eternal sovereign life of the Germanic-German Reich by settlement-conquest on the one hand, by annihilation of the mortal enemy on the other; but at the same time also the highest goal of this policy, as that racial nucleus of the best that is, soldier-peasant-blood destined to be the ruling class of the Reich.⁵

The idea of a ruling elite was closely linked to the philosophy of the Reich concerning the superiority of the Aryans and the myth of Blood and Soil. This idea briefly held that the Aryans were the chosen people and that to maintain their purity, they must not associate with the non-Aryans; they must also be

⁴Heinz Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head; The Story of Hitler's SS (New York: Coward-McCann Inc., 1966), p. 58-9.

⁵Ernst Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 393.

and maintain a soldier-peasant attitude. To Himmler's thinking, the soldier-peasant was the ideal toward which he strove, and the SS was to fulfill this role. The SS was to be a new order, an order which would embody a tradition so that it could;

....march forward into the future young and strong, revolutionary and efficient, to fulfill the task of giving the German People, the superstructure of society which will combine and hold together this German People and this Europe, and from which the brains the people need for industry, farming, politics, and as soldiers, statesmen, and technicians will emerge.⁶

In an address to German Army Officers, Hitler echoed and reinforced Himmler's words. During a speech Hitler said that the Greater German Reich would include individuals who are not well disposed towards the Reich and that therefore, a State military police would be necessary to keep them in line. This task could not be left to any group however, but rather could only be carried out by;

....a State Police which has within its ranks men of the best German blood and which identifies itself unreservedly with the ideology at the base of the Greater German Reich...such a formation---proud of its racial purity---will never fraternize with the proletariat and with the underworld which undermines the fundamental idea...Returning home after having proved themselves in the field, the units of the Waffen-SS will possess the authority to execute their tasks as State Police.⁷

⁶Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. II (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 189.

⁷Allan Bullock, Hitler; A Study in Tyranny (London: Odhams Press Ltd., 1952), p. 640.

The racial selection and standards of the SS were part of Himmler's idea to create within 120 years a "pure race" of blond haired, blue eyed individuals who could rule the Reich and be a living proof of Germanic superiority. Himmler believed that every State needed an elite who could lead the way for the masses. Himmler took the view that;

The SS was to provide the elite, the constructive political force in the National Socialist state. That could only come about if its members brought to the social requirements of the present day the genuine military tradition, the distinctive outlook, bearing and breeding of the German nobility, the knowledge, ability and creative efficiency of the industrialists and the profundity of German scholarship, on a basis of racial selection.⁸

Some scholars often debate the point that the philosophy which Hitler espoused in Mein Kampf was merely a sugar coating for the masses and that he was primarily interested with the acquisition of and maintenance of his personal power. A look at his concern for the destruction of the Jews, the war against the Soviet Union, and his views concerning the SS will disprove that viewpoint. Hitler came to view the SS as his personal tool and he had complete faith in the SS. Perhaps if Reinhardt Heydrich had been able to replace Himmler, Hitler would have displayed more caution, yet because Himmler displayed more interest in organizational matter, Hitler exhibited complete confidence in the SS. This confidence was reflected during the war by his orders that the "SS Fire Brigade" on the Eastern Front receive

⁸Willi Frischauer, Himmler; The Evil Genius of the Third Reich (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953), p. 245.

top priority for equipment. For the future Hitler said;

I do not doubt for a moment, despite certain people's scepticism, that within a hundred or so years from now, all the German elite will be a product of the SS--for only the SS practices racial selection.⁹

Because Hitler firmly believed in the racial policy which he spoke of, the Aryans, "constituted an elite within the nation," and these Aryans were, "represented by the Nazi Party and especially by the SS." Hitler often referred to the Nazi seizure of power as a racial revolution, "since it represented the replacement of one ruling caste by another."¹⁰

Himmler took great efforts to insure that the SS men remained aloof from society in general--except for the Gestapo and SD divisions--so that their elite character would be reinforced. Himmler also attempted to make the SS organization financially independent by soliciting funds from the industrialists, the old nobility and by setting up separate SS industries. Hitler went along with this idea of separateness when he said;

As soon as peace has returned, the SS will have to be given its independence again--a complete independence. There has always been rivalry between troops of the line and guardsmen. That's why it's a good thing that the SS should constitute, in relation to the others, an absolute distinct world.¹¹

⁹Joseph Nyomarkay, Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), p.87.

¹⁰Bullock, Op. Cit., p. 363-4.

¹¹H.R. Trevor-Roper, ed., Hitler's Secret Conversations, 1941-4 (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1953) p. 138.

As time went on, Himmler's dreams for the SS expanded to such a degree that eventually the SS was to someday, for all practical purposes, be the State. It was to form the elite, the technocrats of the Germanic Reich, and his order was to be the new knights of Europe.¹² With the SA removed as a threat to his order, and with the Party all but leaderless, Himmler began to cast eyes in the direction of the Army and saw an important field for his expansion. Himmler once privately said that, "Every revolution tries to control the army and infuse the men with its own spirit. Only when that has been achieved is a revolution finally triumphant."¹³ Here, then, Himmler picked up the dream of the deceased Rohm; the SS was to be the vanguard of the National Socialist Army.

To this end, Himmler said that Hitler had two choices, he could scrap the officer corps which he distrusted anyway, but the drawback was that their technical expertise would be lost until a new ideologically orientated corps could be formed and this clashed with Hitler's expansion policy. The second choice was that the SS could be used as "...an armed force to embody the views which National Socialism had to introduce into the Wehrmacht."¹⁴

¹²Eugen Kogon et. al., Totalitarianism; Temporary Madness or Permanent Danger? (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1967), p. 62.

¹³Felix Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs, 1940-5 (New York: MacMillan Co., 1957), p. 247-8

¹⁴Stein, Op. Cit., p. 17.

This alternative was much more feasible and thus the Verfügungstruppe SS was formed. This branch of the SS was nearly cut off from the rest of the organization and its units were the most heavily armed. Unlike the Gestapo which was concerned with internal police duties, the Verfügungstruppe--later known as the Waffen-SS--was concerned with fighting enemies beyond the German frontier. Himmler maintained that these two units should be separated as strictly as possible so that what the Gestapo did should not affect the Waffen-SS in any way.¹⁵

I would next like to discuss the recruitment policies of the SS and show how the high standards were maintained within the SS.

¹⁵Kersten, Op. Cit., p. 249-50. This view of Himmler's differs from a statement of his made in 1936. At that time, he said that the SS was to, "...guarantee the security of Germany from the interior, just as the Wehrmacht guarantees the safety of the honor, the greatness, and the peace of the Reich from the exterior."

CHAPTER III

RECRUITMENT AND STANDARDS

Up until the war, the SS was a voluntary organization based on long term service; as late as 1938, resignations were accepted by Himmler if the individual felt that he could not live up to what was expected of him. Indeed, Himmler encouraged such resignations since he felt that it would improve morale and negate the need for purges of the SS ranks.

When the SS was first formed, Himmler accepted practically anyone who applied since his main interest was in building up an impressive enrollment which would justify his requests for increased funds. Soon after January, 1933, there were over 50,000 members and the only purge which would take place expelled many members "...on grounds of physical or social inadequacy..." as well as on geneological grounds.¹⁶

Many of the early joiners were ex-soldiers, middle-class shopkeepers, ex-academics who during the difficult economic period had no place and in short felt that the concept of an "elite" was for them.¹⁷ As time went on, and as the Party

¹⁶John Keegan, Waffen-SS; The Asphalt Soldiers (New York: Ballantine, 1970), p. 34-6.

¹⁷Hohne, Op. Cit., p. 53-4.

gained strength at the polls, many members of the old nobility joined the SS and they were especially welcomed. This was again due to the aura of an "elite" as opposed to the lower-class SA. The nobility beside bringing their titles also contributed heavily to the organization's coffers. Some of the more notable members included the Grand Duke of Mecklenburgh, Prince zu Waldeck und Prymont, Prince Christof and Prince Wilhelm of Hesse, Count Bassewitz-Behr und von Pfeil-Burghauss, Reichsfreiherr von Tungen and Freiherren von Geyr, von Retzenstein and von Malsen-Ponichau, Prinz von Hohenzollern-Emden of the House of Sigmaringen and Count von der Schulenburg.¹⁸ These members of the nobility and most of the industrialists were given high honorary ranks in the Allgemeine SS which during the war was gradually dissolved by the recruitment of its members into either the Wehrmacht or the Waffen-SS. On the other hand, the SD attracted large numbers of lawyers who served in the capacity of technocrats for the gathering and execution of power.¹⁹ Although Himmler wanted to create a soldier-peasant elite, the peasants were greatly underrepresented in the SS²⁰ while a full 25% of the SS elite had previous to their joining the SS, received their doctorate.²¹ As a rule the SS

¹⁸Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 135.

²⁰Karl D. Bracher, The German Dictatorship (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 335-6.

²¹William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 188.

attracted a larger number of professional men than any organization in Hitler's Germany.²²

²²The charts below show, (1) the proportion of political elites from the professions in Germany and (2) the political elites from the professions in other governments.

(1)	Weimar Cabinet (1918-33)	40%	(% of professionals)
	SS Elite (1940)	32%	"
	Nazi Cabinet (1933-45)	28%	"
	Nazi Elite (1934)	27%	"
	Nazi Party (1933)	18%	(this figure includes merchants and artisans so the actual proportion of professionals is substantially less).
(2)	U.S. Cabinet (1877-1934)	74%	(% of professionals)
	U.S. Congress (1949-51)	69%	"
	French Cabinet (1890-1940)	68%	(% of occupations reported)
	Conservative MP's (1945)	61%	(% of professionals)
	House of Commons (1945)	54%	"
	Labor MP's (1945)	49%	"
	British Cabinet (1916-35)	44%	"
	Weimar Cabinet (1918-33)	40%	"

Ibid., p. 184.

These figures show that while the SS was not exclusively the domain of the upper classes, it did not alienate the upper class and bourgeois elements as a whole. It seems that Donald Matthews' theory is confirmed when he writes;

A comparison of the backgrounds of Nazi...leaders suggests the tremendous importance of middle-class intellectuals and professional men in the revolutionary process...Unless a substantial number of them somehow and for some reason become disaffected revolutionaries, there seems to be relatively little danger of revolution. If, on the other hand, their loyalties, beliefs, and interests begin to diverge sharply from established political institutions and values, then the revolutionary dynamism may have been set in motion.

Donald R. Matthews, The Social Background of Political Decision-Makers (Garden City: Doubleday, 1954), p. 58.

With the recruitment of the nobility and middle-class elements, the elite propaganda line began to take hold on the populace. It was so successful that in 1946, Dr. Grober who was the Catholic Archbishop of Freiburg said, "...we in Freiburg considered the SS to be the most respectable of the Party organizations." This mood was prevalent after the night of June 30, 1934 when the man on the street felt relief rather than shock at the action of the SS. The liberal Frankfurter Zeitung wrote, "Liberation of our people from the rule of second-raters is a prize worth considerable sacrifice."²³ Thus the bourgeois elements of society were willing to accept the methods of totalitarianism as long as their basic values, security and land were left unchallenged.

By June 1, 1935, Himmler felt that the SS was strong enough to withstand a second purge. Because of the strength of the SS, Himmler could institute fully his program for racial purity which he had given up temporarily while his position was insecure. The first SS men to come under scrutiny were SS commanders from the rank of Sturmbannfuhrer (Major) upwards. These men had to show that neither he nor his wife had any Jewish ancestors. By October 1st of that year, this requirement was extended to the rank of Oberscharfuhrer (Warrant Officer 2nd Class) and Hauptscharfuhrer (Warrant Officer 1st Class) and eventually to every SS man. This test was then further expanded to every

²³Ibid., p. 132-33.

officer and cadet so that they had to be able to prove racial purity back to 1750 while other ranks only had to go back to 1800. When Jewish blood was discovered, at least in the lower ranks, the SS man had to report it to his superiors and request a release from the SS. If a release was not requested, the SS court would take action and decree expulsion. For the upper ranks, more leniency was shown, often with stipulations. Often the SS officer was allowed to stay in the SS if he agreed to have no more children and if no existing sons would request entrance into the SS.²⁴

Under the directorship of Himmler, Professor Bruno K. Schultz submitted a set of criteria which outlined SS requirements. These were based primarily on racial overtones and were in accord with Himmler's belief that within 120 years, the entire German people should be purely Nordic in appearance. Although the recruit was to be a blue eyed, blond ideal, there was no criteria for the level of intelligence.²⁵ The requirements which Schultz set up were to insure that "well-proportioned" individuals were the mainstay of the SS. This obses-

²⁴Ibid., p. 143.

²⁵Schultz set down five racial groupings which existed in the world, they were, "pure Nordic," "predominantly Nordic or Phalic," harmonious bastard with, "slight Alpine, Dinaric or Mediterranean characteristics," bastard of predominantly East-Baltic or Alpine origin and bastards of extra-European origin. Of these five groups, only the first three were acceptable to the SS. There were also nine other headings which were concerned with physical requirements.

sion with "well-proportioned" individuals was explained by Himmler, who said;

The point is that in his attitude to discipline the man should not behave like an underling, that his gait, his hands, everything, should correspond to the ideal which we set ourselves.²⁶

After the candidate had met the racial standards, he had to undergo further tests before he could swear the "kith and kin" oath and be called an SS man. When the candidate was 18, on November 9th, the anniversary of the Munich Beer Hall Putsch, he was allowed to wear the SS uniform without the collar patches. By the following January 30, which marked the Nazi seizure of power, the applicant who was now a cadet, was given a provisional SS pass. By Hitler's birthday--April 20--he received his permanent SS pass, the collar patches and recited the oath.²⁷

The final stage was not yet reached however, for he still had to obtain the Reich Sport Badge and learn the SS catechism by October 1st. The SS man then had to serve time in the Labour Service and the Wehrmacht and was then returned to the SS as a "Vollanwarter" or full candidate. If his reports were good, he could be accepted into the order within a month. Finally, by November 9th, he had to swear one more oath which dealt with the marriage laws of the Reichfuhrer-SS and was finally given

²⁶Hohne, Op. Cit., p. 143

²⁷Ibid., 146-7.

his SS dagger.²⁸

²⁸This catechism was designed to drill Himmler's concept of chivalry and spirit into the SS man; some of the questions and answers were as follows:

- Q: Why do we believe in Germany and the Fuhrer?
A: Because we believe in God, we believe in Germany which he created in His world and in the Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler, whom He has sent us.
- Q: Whom must we primarily serve?
A: Our people and our Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler.
- Q: Why do we obey?
A: From inner conviction, from belief in Germany, in the Fuhrer, in the Movement, and in the SS, and from loyalty.

CHAPTER IV

BRANCHES

The entire SS organization remained until quite recently a gigantic enigma. Partially due to the findings of the Nuremberg War Trials, objective studies and opinions of the organization were quite difficult to come by. Recently however, several excellent studies of the SS and the National Socialist regime have been published.

The size and scope of the SS organization can best be judged from the organizational chart (See Appendix #1). As can be seen, the police duties of the Gestapo and SD were separated from the duties of the Waffen-SS and the Totenkopfverbände. Also, the various administrative and procedural offices, such as those of the Racial and Settlement, and the Economic departments were strictly separated from the security branches. The first branch I would like to discuss is the Gestapo.

Gestapo

While it is one of the most famous--or infamous--branches of the SS, the Gestapo was the only one which was not originally an SS organization. It was originally established in 1933 by Hermann Goering in Prussia, "...with the mission of carrying out the duties of political police with or in place of the ordinary

police authorities."²⁹ When it was brought under Himmler's control during the spring of 1934 it began to function as an extension of the State, as opposed to the SD which acted as an extension of the Party.

By June 26, 1936, Himmler who was now the Chief of the German Police under Frick, the Reich Minister of the Interior, issued a decree which created two chiefs of police; the uniformed and the Security Police. Thus the German police system was divided into two branches, with two separate and distinct sets of duties. The first branch was that of the ORPO--Regular Police and Ordnungspolizei, which in turn was composed of the Schutzpolizei (Safety Police), the Gendarmerie (Rural Police) and the Gemeindepolizei (Local Police).³⁰

The second branch was the Sicherkerzspolizei or SIPO. The SIPO was divided between the Reich Kriminalpolizei (KRIPO) and the Geheime Staatspolizei (GESTAPO) and both were under the command of Heydrich, the famed 'Blond Beast' who was assassinated in Prague when his pacifications procedures were nullifying the fears of its citizens.³¹

Finally, by late October of 1939, Himmler combined the central offices of the Gestapo, SD and Criminal Police into the

²⁹Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Op. Cit., p. 249-52.

³⁰Ibid., p. 252.

³¹Ibid., p. 252.

Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office--RSHA).

The Gestapo was known on the organization charts of the RSHA as Amt IV. By 1943 it contained five sub-sections (See Appendix #2) which dealt with nearly every aspect of German life.

Section A was set up to deal with internal opponents, sabotage as well as protective services. It was further subdivided into four departments as follows:

- A1: Communism, Marxism and associated organizations, war crimes, illegal and enemy propaganda
- A2: Defense against sabotage, combatting of sabotage, political falsification
- A3: Reaction, opposition, legitimism, liberalism, matters of malicious opposition
- A4: Protective service, reports of attempted assassination, guarding, special jobs, pursuit troops

Section B was religiously orientated and was subdivided as follows:

- B1: Political Catholicism
- B2: Political Protestantism Sects
- B3: Other churches, Freemasonry
- B4: Jewish affairs, matters of evacuation, means of suppressing enemies of the people and State, dispossession of rights of German citizenship. (Eichmann was head of this office).

Section C was concerned with the extensive card files, protective custody as well as matters which dealt with the press and

Party;

- C1: Evaluation, main card index, administration of individual files, information office, and supervision of foreign engineers.
- C2: Matters of protective custody
- C3: Matters of the press and literature
- C4: Matters of the Party and its formations, special cases

Section D dealt with regions under German influence;

D (aus. arb.) Foreign workers

- D1: Matters of the Protectorate, Czechs in the Reich, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, and the remaining regions of the former Yugoslavia and Greece
- D2: Matters of the General Government, Poles in the Reich
- D3: Confidential office, foreigners hostile to the State, and emigrants
- D4: Occupied territories, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway and Denmark
- D5: Occupied Eastern Territories

Section E dealt with security and was subdivided as follows;

- E1: General security matters, supply of legal opinions in matters of high and State treason, and other security matters
- E2: General economic matters, defense against economic espionage, protection of works and those engaged in

guarding

E3: Security West

E4: Security North

E5: Security East

E6: Security South

Section F dealt with passport matters and alien police and was subdivided as follows;

F1: Frontier police

F2: Passport matters

F3: Identification and identity cards

F4: Alien police and basic questions concerning frontiers

F5: Central visa office³²

As can be seen, the Gestapo was able to burrow into virtually every facet of German life. While the members of the Gestapo did not receive the strict National Socialist ideological training of the SS Verfügungstruppe, its members were never the less Nazis. The Gestapo worked hand in hand with the dreaded SD division of the SS.

Sicherheitsdienst (SD)

The SD is on the whole, one of the best known divisions of the SS. Although it is generally thought of as an external organization--i.e., for use outside of Germany, it was also used within Germany. Its "best known" activity was the razing of the

³²Ibid., p. 253-4

Warsaw Ghetto. The SD was Section (Amt) III of the RSHA and by 1943, it contained four sections.

Section A dealt with questions of legal order and structure of the Reich;

- A1: General questions of work on spheres of German life
- A2: Law
- A3: Constitution and administration
- A4: National life in general
- A5: General questions of police law, and technical questions of legislation

Section B dealt with nationality and was subdivided as follows;

- B1: Nationality questions
- B2: Minorities
- B3: Race and health of the people
- B4: Citizenship and naturalization
- B5: Occupied territories

Section C dealt with culture and was subdivided as follows;

- C1: Science
- C2: Educational religious life
- C3: Folk culture and art
- C4: Press, literature, radio, office for evaluation of material

Section D dealt with economics, and was subdivided as follows;

- Da: Reading office, economics, press, magazines, litera-

ture

Db: Colonial economics

Ds: Special questions and review of material

D West: Western occupied regions

D Ost: Eastern occupied regions

D1: Food economy

D2: Commerce, handcraft and transport

D3: Finance, currency, banks and exchanges, insurance

D4: Industry and power

D5: Labor and social questions³³

The first head of the SD was Reinhardt Heydrich, the 'Blond Beast'; under him it became extremely powerful and by 1934, it was the sole intelligence and counter-intelligence agency of the NSDAP. Due to the need for security, it was separated from the rest of the SS until 1939, when the RSHA was formed.³⁴ The success of the SD was partially due to the large number of lawyers who were recruited; these men were not idealistic, but were rather strict technicians for power.³⁵

The impact of these "intellectuals" on the SD was important for the SD often carried on separate policies in the various

³³Ibid., p. 254-5.

³⁴Ibid., p. 179-80.

³⁵Hohne, Op. Cit., p. 135.

territories which it controlled. For example, when Reinhardt Heydrich was transferred to head the government of the area formerly known as Czechoslovakia, he instituted reforms which were aimed at neutralizing any potential resistance. He improved the working conditions in the factories, improved the fringe benefits of the workers and in general, made the lot of the Czech worker almost equal to that of the German workers. Unlike his predecessor, he drove through Prague in an open car, without bodyguards to show the people that he did not fear them. These policies did not make the Czechs love the Germans, but resistance was practically nullified until after Heydrich's assassination when the Germans reverted to their old iron fist tactics.

This same policy was used with equal success by Dr. Werner Best, the Reich Plenipotentiary from 1942-45 in Denmark. As was the case in Czechoslovakia, only resistance, open or underground, was treated with sudden swiftness.³⁶

As a whole, two policies concerning police duties in occupied territories were in effect. The first policy, which dealt with an occupied country which had a puppet ruler, utilized the local police to a greater extent. This was to maintain the independent facade which the Germans wished to preserve. For example, in the Netherlands, the local police were used unless the Reich Commissioner called on the German SS or police forces for

³⁶Roger Manvell, Gestapo (New York: Ballantine, 1969), p. 79.

enforcement of his orders.

On the other hand, in countries such as Poland, which were considered as non-collaborationist, the police carried out only minor duties, such as traffic patrols, protection of buildings, etc., and if a German was involved in any case, the Polish police could not act.³⁷

Thus it was that between the Gestapo and SD, everyone inside and outside of Germany came under surveillance. When in December of 1941, the Nacht und Nebel--the Night and Fog act--was instituted, the powers of the Gestapo increased dramatically, for;

...anyone could be seized whom the authorities chose to believe endangered German security whatever his nationality and spirited out of the country 'in night and fog' so that no form of local trial or hearing should take place to stir up local feeling.³⁸

The Nacht und Nebel decree only was the end point of the power of the SS in the occupied lands. Earlier, in March of 1941, the Reich Commissioner of the Netherlands issued a decree which stated in part that;

In fulfillment of his duties the Supreme SS and police chief may deviate from existing regulations... He may promulgate rules and regulations having the force and effect of laws. Such rules and regulations may contain penal provisions subjecting a de-

³⁷Raphael Lemkin, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), p. 22.

³⁸Manvell, Op. Cit., p. 79.

pendant to fines of unlimited amount and imprisonment.³⁹

The SD meanwhile, investigated the "loyalty and reliability" of State officials in the fields of adherence to Nazi ideology and devotion to Hitler. To help them in this task, the SD had several hundred full-time and several thousand part-time informants who seemingly lived average lives in shops, schools, churches, etc.⁴⁰

Both the Gestapo and SD were constantly attempting to expand the realm of their activities. The SD for a while attempted to take credit for the purge of the Red Army by Stalin while the Gestapo seemed to concentrate on the Abwehr. The Abwehr was the intelligence service of the Wehrmacht and the first success of the Gestapo came in the autumn of 1942 when an Abwehr agent was picked up at the old Czech border. He was originally charged with violation of the currency regulations, but it was learned from him that certain Abwehr officers were involved in getting Jews out of the country by giving them papers of Abwehr agents.

Later interrogations of Abwehr agents showed that certain officers were involved in secret negotiations with the Vatican to end the war.

Finally, on April 5, 1943, the big break came when a State Attorney in the Abwehr office of Admiral Canaris--the Commander-

³⁹Ibid., p. 79.

⁴⁰Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Op. Cit., p. 25

in-Chief of the Abwehr--was arrested and a group of files was seized which gave codes, names and dates for future contacts with the Allies. Then, in January of the next year, a resistance ring was broken by the Gestapo which included several Abwehr officers. At this final finding, Hitler authorized a crack-down and blamed Canaris for these leaks in his department. As a joke, Hitler's future brother-in-law suggested that the SS take over the offices of the Abwehr and Hitler quickly agreed. From that time on, the Wehrmacht was the only Army not to have its own secret service organization.⁴¹

Thus it was that by 1944, not only the civilian populace was under surveillance by the SS, but the Wehrmacht was dependent upon the SS for all intelligence information. But the power of the SS extended into other areas as will be seen in the following sections.

SS Polizei Regimente

The SS Polizei Regimente played on the whole, a minor part in the role of the SS. Its members were not volunteers, but were rather drafted by Himmler from the ranks of German constables when Himmler received permission from Hitler to increase the number of SS divisions from one to three. This permission was granted shortly after the close of the Polish campaign.⁴²

⁴¹Ibid., p. 483-6.

⁴²Keegan, Op. Cit., p. 61.

Originally the members of this organization, which was incorporated into the Waffen-SS under the divisional title of 4th SS Polizei-Fanzergrnadierdivision, were older in age than the other members of the Waffen-SS and they did not share the high amount of mechanized equipment of the other Waffen-SS divisions.⁴³

Throughout the war, this SS division was used mostly in police actions with the "savage peoples" as auxiliaries and in anti-partisan duties.⁴⁴

Allgemeine SS

The Allgemeine SS--General SS--was considered at the post-war Nuremburg trials to be the backbone of the SS. This section of the SS could be roughly considered the equal of the 1933 SA in that its membership was large, reaching a peak of 240,000, and its duties uncertain. It was often used during the anti-Jewish pogroms of 1938 and in various colonization efforts.⁴⁵

Its membership was largely middle-class and many members of the old nobility were in this division where they were given high honorary ranks in return for monetary contributions.

Its members were subject to draft into the Wehrmacht and during the war its total membership fell to approximately

⁴³Ibid., p. 62

⁴⁴Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Op. Cit., p. 186.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 178-9.

40,000.⁴⁶ Some members were able to get into the Waffen-SS divisions, but the majority were drafted into the Wehrmacht. Although their general level of political indoctrination was not high, they did have an effect on the ordinary Wehrmacht soldier.⁴⁷

Totenkopfverbände

Shortly after Himmler became the police chief in Munich, he formed the Totenkopf (Death's Head) guards,⁴⁸ which was recruited from volunteers from the Allgemeine SS.⁴⁹

Although elevated to the status of a Waffen-SS division in 1940,⁵⁰ they were originally set up to provide;

...indoctrination of the armed political soldier,
 ...(and) guarding enemies of the State who are held in concentration camps.⁵¹

As guards of the concentration camps, the Death's Head guards were responsible for both Jews and non-Jews who were opponents or supposed opponents of the regime.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 178-9.

⁴⁷An interesting book which deals with the General SS members who served in the Wehrmacht, is Diary of a German Soldier, by Wilhelm Pruller. The high level of belief in the National Socialist ideal and Hitler can be seen in Pruller's work.

⁴⁸Keegan, Op. Cit., p. 37.

⁴⁹Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Op. Cit., p. 185.

⁵⁰The division was known as 3rd SS Panzerdivision Totenkopf and was considered one of the "classic" Waffen-SS divisions.

⁵¹Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Op. Cit., p. 185.

Like the Allgemeine SS, enlistment in the Totenkopfverbände did not count as military service.⁵² This was changed after the Polish campaign when the divisional strength of the armed SS was raised from one to three. With the decree counting service in the Totenkopfverbände as military service, duty in this branch lost much of its bad color.

Verfügungstruppe SS and Waffen-SS

These branches of the SS have, since the war, been the branches under closest examination, due to their varied duties, actions and record. The Verfügungstruppe (Reserve Force) was set up by Himmler and Hitler in March of 1935. Its original purpose was obscure but its formation was important for it;

...marks the institution of a formal distinction between the militarised SS and the rest of the organization.⁵³

Set up on the strength of a division--i.e., three regiments, stationed in Munich, Hamburg, and Berlin--they were commanded by one of the few former high ranking Army officers available to the SS, Paul Hausser.

This division of the SS received the greatest degree of political indoctrination and its officer training was perhaps the most difficult ever established.

⁵²Keegan, Op. Cit., p. 56. At the peak of the pre-war period, a total strength of twelve battalions was reached.

⁵³Ibid., p. 53.

Reveille at six was followed by an hour's physical training, breakfast of porridge and mineral water ... and a morning of weapon training and exercises. Three times a week the cadets received 'ideological instruction,' at first from specially appointed instructors, later, when they seemed to be developing what Himmler called 'commissar status,' from the company officers. The texts most frequently used were Rosenberg's Myth of the Twentieth Century and Darre's Blood and Soil. The afternoons were spent on the square or the sports field, athletic prowess being highly valued.⁵⁴

Such a program produced a division which was comparable to commandos in their physical agility and skills.

Although early in his rule Hitler strove to keep the Army and its generals happy, the growth of the SS and his more secure position opened the covered split between Hitler and the generals. The prime concern of the generals was to maintain the traditional right of the Army to be the sole bearer of arms in the State. By a secret order on August 17, 1938, Hitler cancelled that privilege. The order in part said;

II. The Armed Units of the SS.

A. (The SS Verfügungstruppe)

1. The SS Verfügungstruppe is neither part of the Wehrmacht nor part of the police. It is a standing armed unit exclusively at my disposal. As such and as a unit of the NSDAP, its members are to be selected by the Reichführer SS according to the philosophical and political standards which I have ordered for the NSDAP and for the Schutzstaffel (SS). Its members are to be trained and its ranks filled with volunteers from those who are subject to serve in the army who have finished their duties in the obligatory labor service. The service period for volunteers

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 53.

is four years. It may be prolonged for SS Unterfuhrer. Such regulations are in force for SS leaders. The compulsory military service...is fulfilled by service of the same amount of time in the SS Verfügungstruppe. (italics added).⁵⁵

Thus, with one swift move, Hitler moved against the wishes of the General Staff and opened the power flood-gate for Himmler.

At the time of the Polish invasion, the SS Verfügungstruppe was little more than divisional size and its role was quite limited. Its performance was not outstanding but Hitler gave Himmler permission to increase its strength to three divisions.⁵⁶

The armed SS, now called Waffen-SS, played roles in the French and Balkan campaigns, but its reputation and legend was made in the Russian campaign. After the recapture of Kharkov in late 1942 during which General Paul Hausser's SS Panzer Corps suffered 12,000 casualties,⁵⁷ but stopped the Soviet offensive, the legend of the SS in Hitler's mind expanded and from this time on, the SS steadily increased its priority for men and material. This preference for munitions led to certain clashes with the Army⁵⁸ but until after the war, the army generally was glad for

⁵⁵Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Op. Cit., p. 185.

⁵⁶Keegan, Op. Cit., p. 62.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 84.

⁵⁸Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader (New York: Ballantine,), p. 242-3.

the "Fire Brigade"⁵⁹ of the SS, as well as for some of the other units.

During the war, the Waffen-SS expanded to an organization which could show the divisional badges of 38 units. Most of these units never got larger than regimental strength and many disbanded or dissolved before the end of the war. The hard-core SS divisions which were made up of Germans were slightly larger than the Wehrmacht divisions and received more tanks and assault guns than the average panzer division.

Prior to 1943, Himmler allowed the mass drafting of conscripts into the ranks of the Waffen-SS. This was coupled with the decree allowing the Waffen-SS to accept non-Germans into the Waffen-SS. At first, only French, Dutch or other races which were close to the Germans were allowed. Also, racial Germans from the occupied countries were allowed into the Waffen-SS and this again produced a clash with the Wehrmacht, for the Wehrmacht had no way of conscripting these racial Germans. The most famous of the German/West European divisions was 5th SS Panzerdivision Wiking.

Finally, in late 1943, Slavs and other "inferior" peoples were accepted into the Waffen-SS. This was a mixed blessing, for

⁵⁹The "Fire Brigade" was the name of the SS divisions--1st SS Panzerdivision Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, 2nd SS Panzerdivision Das Reich, and 3rd SS Panzer division Totenkopf--which was used as a mobile reserve by Hitler. These units were constantly shuffled from the Eastern Front, to the Western Front and to the Italian Front as needed. Due to their equipment, personnel and indoctrination, they constantly fought successful defensive battles.

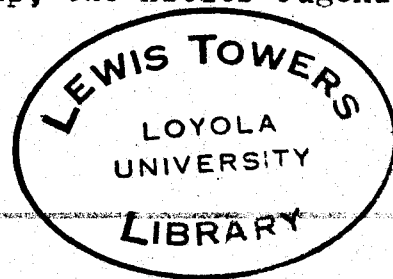
such units as the 13th Waffen-Gebirgsdivision der SS Handschar (Kroatische Nr 1) which was made up of Yugoslav Muslims, merely took up valuable funds and munitions, while at the same time, they were difficult to control. Others, and here the number is few, such as the divisions recruited from the Baltic Republics, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, provided good fighters who remained to the end.⁶⁰

The officers for these non-Nordic divisions underwent, when time allowed, the same training as the regular Waffen-SS officers. Only one part of the program was deleted however, and that was the racial indoctrination. The motivation for these divisions then, was their traditional hatred for the Russians, or their belief that they were fighting for their homeland.

From the records of the war, the battles of the Waffen-SS can be viewed, but what was said at the time is also important. From this point on, when I refer to the Waffen-SS, I am referring only to the "classical" divisions which were predominately German. There are many gauges to test the Waffen-SS by; should we use casualties as a yard stick?

If we do, then the SS was a success, for General Sepp Dietrich said at the time of the last battles in Hungary, that out of his original division--which numbered nearly 20,000--only 16 of the original men were still alive. Or, we could use the fact that after the battle of the Falaise gap, the Hitler Jugend

⁶⁰Keegan, Op. Cit., p. 103



division only had 600 men left--this after they stopped the British-Canadian offensive under Montgomery.

Another aspect of the Waffen-SS which should be examined, is the general attitude of the men. In other words, if we say that the high casualties were not caused by poor leadership, then what were they caused by? The answer would seem to lie in their training, for if the theories of their indoctrination were absorbed, then their high casualties would be explained. The officers cadet program stressed leadership; the motto of the officers was, "Follow Me" and it summed up the aggressive style of the corps. A Wehrmacht General said that the Waffen-SS were not soldiers, but rather fighters.⁶¹ By this, he meant that the troops of the regular Wehrmacht were soldiers, and soldiering was and is a profession like any other. It is a trade to be used when and where it is called for. The Waffen-SS trooper however, saw life as a belligerent act.

This outlook was formally called "heroic realism" and it was part of a concept which had begun in Germany near the end of the First World War. This outlook was incorporated into the Waffen-SS because these troops were to prove themselves and the theories of National Socialism. While all soldiers are expected

⁶¹Hans Buckheim, Anatomy of the SS State, (Ed. by Martin Broszat, et. al.) "The SS--Instrument of Domination," (New York: Walker and Co., 1965), p. 322.

to be hard in that they can inflict and bear pain, the SS concept went beyond this, for the SS man was expected to show a willingness to shed blood, be it either his own, or the enemies'.⁶²

As Himmler said;

For the SS man there is one absolute principle; he must be honest, decent, loyal and friendly to persons of our own blood--and to no one else.⁶³

This idea which was expounded continually at the officer cadet schools at Bad Tolz in Bavaria and in Brunswick, was to help save German blood and Kultur. To this end, the lives of those not of German blood was expendable. German laws were sacred when dealing with "Asiatics" since they were sub-human. The entire concept of the weak being spared at the cost of the strong not only ran contrary to history, but also to SS thinking.

"Heroic realism" was, as I said, begun near the end of World War I, when some German nationalist saw that the war was lost, and that a new ideal was needed.⁶⁴ It was the basis for the Free Corps in Germany, and Dr. Werner Best said in 1930, that;

The fight itself is essential and permanent; the aims of that fight are temporary and changeable. There can therefore be no question of success in our fight...the yardstick of the new code of

⁶²Ibid., p. 34.

⁶³Ibid., p. 334-6.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 323-4.

morality, therefore, is not its content--not 'what' but 'how.'⁶⁵

This concept made morality relative and cleared the way for any action. The end justified the means and the common soldier was relieved of all responsibility. To those who play down the effect of indoctrination, they should look at the concept of the sub-human and how it was absorbed by the Waffen-SS.

Because of the elite characteristic nature of the SS, the ideology of the sub-human, at least before the war, was quite strong. For example, a brochure entitled The Sub-Human stated to the SS that the Slavs were not human.

To the outward eye, the sub-human is biologically an entirely similar creature of nature; he has hands, feet and a sort of brain with eyes and a mouth. In fact, however, he is a totally different and frightful creature, a caricature of a man with features similar to those of a human but intellectually and morally lower than any animal. This creature is activated by a ghastly chaos of savage, unrestrained passions--limitless destructiveness, primitive lust, and shameless vulgarity.⁶⁶

The effectiveness of this indoctrination is difficult to judge, but such a man as General Felix Steiner, a Waffen-SS divisional leader, threw the idea out the window after having fought the Soviets.⁶⁷ There are many interesting stories however, in the book, Anatomy of the SS State which deal with the experi-

⁶⁵Hohne, Op. Cit., p. 159

⁶⁶Stein, Op. Cit., p. xxvi

⁶⁷Hohne, Op. Cit., p. 58-9.

ences and views of the SS men. These men who had to fight the Russians everyday often had rejected the pre-war propoganda, but changed their views after seeing and dealing with the Russians in battle and prisoner-of-war camps. This is not to verify the indoctrination which the SS men received, but rather can be attributed to the difference in the cultures and the standard of living.

Separated from home for long periods of time, and aware of their preferential treatment, there is little reason for shock at the attitude of the men in the Waffen-SS. The war with Russia was to the Waffen-SS men a holy crusade,⁶⁸ and this crusade gave cause to its fight. Perhaps the record and attitude of the Waffen-SS is best summed up from a telegram that was captured from the Soviet High Command; it said:

The German Wehrmacht is streaming back on all fronts. Only the Waffen-SS is standing like a rock in the sea.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Stein, Op. Cit., p. 122.

⁶⁹Kersten, Op. Cit., p. 241.

CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY IN THE SS

Himmler as Reichfuhrer SS, had a tremendous effect on the entire SS organization. Prior to the war, he personally took charge of officers' promotions, training manuals, etc. He was, aside from a strict organization man, a mystic. Himmler sought to create a closed order, a new elite and he played heavily upon German myths to support his order.

Himmler envied the organizational skill of the Jesuits, and he set up the SS on the same organizational level. Like the Jesuits, the SS men were held to strict obedience and were held responsible to no temporal power save Himmler and Hitler.⁷⁰ To maintain an aura around the SS, special rings, insignias and daggers were all distributed according to length of service, Party membership, etc. To reintroduce the idea of medieval chivalry, Himmler allowed dueling to be used as a means of settling points of honor.

⁷⁰Hohne, Op. Cit., p. 144-5. The SS were legally responsible for its own members, neither the State, Party nor Wehrmacht could try an SS man for an offense. As Brigadefuhrer Paul Scharfe, who was responsible for the legal arm of the SS said, "Compared to the ordinary member of the Party, the SS man naturally occupies a special place, primarily because it's his duty to protect the Movement and its Fuhrer, if necessary at the sacrifice of his life. This special position...of course means that the SS man must be dealt with in a special way."

Constantly referring back to the Germanic heritage, Himmler believed he could communicate with a long dead German Emperor. He also believed in the legend that the last German fortress to fall before a barbarian invasion from the East would be in Westphalia. To this end, he spent 13,000,000 marks on the restoration of a castle in Westphalia called Wervelsburg. It had a library of 12,000 books and a huge oaken table situated in a dining hall which measured 100 feet by 145 feet. Each of its bedrooms was furnished in a different period and the guests were expected to read the books available in the bedrooms so that they might feel the "spirit" which Himmler believed existed there. Aside from all this, there was a stone crypt with walls five feet thick. It was the realm of the dead, and it contained:

a flight of stairs in the middle of the crypt (which) led into a well-like cavity; in the center of the cavity there was a stone stoop, and around the walls were twelve stone pedestals. In the event of an Obergruppenfuhrer's death, his arms were to be burnt in the stoop and an urn containing ashes placed on one of the pedestals. The four vents in the ceiling were so arranged that, during the burning ceremony, the smoke would ascend to the roof in a single column.⁷¹

Within the SS "order," rape and plunder were punishable by death and while a soldier might requisition what he needed at the time while in the field, such as food and blankets, it was forbidden to take anything for the use of the dependents at home. As Himmler said, "Plunder is certainly not a gentlemanly crime in our eyes."⁷²

⁷¹Hohne, Op. Cit., p. 149-53.

⁷²Kersten, Op. Cit., p. 240-1.

CHAPTER VI

FRICITION BETWEEN THE SS AND THE WEHRMACHT

Prior to the seizure of power, Hitler realized the importance of the Army, both as a source of political power and as a high school for the people.⁷³ In Mein Kampf, Hitler wrote,

What the German people owes to the Army can be briefly summed up in a single word, to wit: everything.⁷⁴

According to Hitler, the army taught the masses obedience, responsibility, patriotism and duty. Thus it was that the army held a special place in the State. There was a hitch in Hitler's loyalty however, and it was in his distrust of the officer corps. As a rule, it reflected a conservative attitude toward politics and it had been constantly hesitant about the policy of rearmament,⁷⁵ and had been against his war plans.

Himmler was of the opinion that every revolution attempted to control the army, and that as long as the army maintained its

⁷³ Robert J. O'Neill, The German Army and the Nazi Party, 1933-39 (London: Cassell, 1966), p. 62.

⁷⁴ Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (Boston: Hurst and Blackett, 1943), p. 280-1.

⁷⁵ O'Neill, Op. Cit., p. 101.

independence, a truly National Socialistic state could not evolve. Himmler realized that the officer corps could not be scrapped, so the Verfügungstruppe SS and later the Waffen-SS were seen as "...the protagonist of the National Socialist revolution in the military field." The Waffen-SS was to keep the good traits of the army, such as the tradition and efficiency, but it was to add its own "personalized" touches. In the Waffen-SS, the individual soldier would not become an automaton, but would rather know what he was fighting for and against. The officers and men of the Waffen-SS were to be the "...cadres... for a new model army."⁷⁶ It was Himmler's belief that whenever the SS fought, victory would show through. The result of these victories would make the German people ask why the SS fought and won, and the answer would be;

Because these are dedicated men who know what they are fighting for, who show by their example that the conviction in the justice of their cause doubles their fighting strength, giving them a force that nothing can resist, making them capable of these great deeds.⁷⁷

Naturally because of these deeds, every young German would want to join the SS, and the Wehrmacht in order to stay alive, would adopt SS ideals.

Such thinking on the part of Himmler was difficult to keep

⁷⁶ Kersten, Op. Cit., p. 247-8.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 248-9.

from the Wehrmacht offices. Whereas at the time prior to the SA purge, the Wehrmacht saw the SS as a small, weak, ally, it gradually became aware of the growing power and influence of the Verfügungstruppe-SS and then the Waffen-SS. Prior to the war, there were many points of conflict between the two organizations and many times Himmler had to go to Hitler to stop the restrictions which the Wehrmacht placed on the SS recruitments. After the war began and Himmler opened SS membership to ethnic Germans, the Wehrmacht again sought to limit SS recruitment, but Himmler had managed to tap this source of manpower prior to Wehrmacht control.

Friction between the SS and Wehrmacht was great before the war, not only because of the drafting of men, but also because of charges of SS spying and the usual friction between branches of the armed services. The interaction between the Party, Army, and SS began in January of 1933, when General Blomberg of the Army issued a decree which stressed the need for the destruction of the old class concept in the army. This was a direct effect of the growing Party influence. Blomberg who was often viewed within Army circles as an idealist, went so far as to quote Mein Kampf on April 16, 1935, concerning the role of the Army in the State.⁷⁸ This in itself was a break in the Army's traditional role of aloofness from politics. It was a victory for Hitler

⁷⁸ O'Neill, Op. Cit., p. 64-6.

who was attempting to break the power of the Army while still using it as a main supporter of his power. Hitler, who was using the idealism of General Blomberg, was opposed by the autocratic General Fritsch who opposed the National Socialist ideology. After General Fritsch was replaced by General von Brauchitsch, a new era in Army-State relations began, for von Brauchitsch like Blomberg sought to make his subordinates adhere to the National Socialist ideology. In April, 1934, Blomberg announced the introduction of "Important Political Instruction" which was special instruction in the ideology of the Nazi's aimed at the regular army. By January 30, 1936, special political instruction for all officer training schools, Staff Colleges and the Wehrmacht Academy was introduced, this instruction was given by Party specialists.⁷⁹

Despite these official sanctions, and the attempt at a unified front between the Army and the Party, there were serious points of friction, especially as the power of the SS increased. By the mid-1930's, the Army felt that the Party was encroaching on its grounds and there were growing signs of resentment over the policy of Party indoctrination. Added to this were growing numbers of clashes between the Army and members of the SA and SS. Members of the SA and General SS were of course, subject to army

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 67-71. Near the end of the war, the equivalent of political commissars were being trained in special schools. Like the Soviet commissars, they were to be placed within the Army to insure proper thinking and action.

duty and during their tour, many SA and SS men began reporting to their organizations as to the actions of their Army superiors. On December 3, 1937, Rudolph Hess wrote a directive that, "...no Party members would be permitted to make reports on the Wehrmacht."⁸⁰

The period between 1935 and 1938 was critical as can be seen by another directive by General Blomberg which stated his hopes that the incidents could be corrected since they were bad for civilian morale. There were increasing reports of Army enlisted men being attacked by SS men and of Army officer cadets being ordered about by SS men who claimed they had, "...police authority over all Germans, and that includes soldiers." During a New Year's Eve celebration at Oranienburg, there occurred a massive brawl between local army and SS units.⁸¹

Perhaps the friction between the Army and pre-war SS can best be seen from a statement by General Fritsch in 1935;

While it was possible...to achieve a good, in many cases even confidential relationship with all of the officers of the Party, this was not the case with the SS. This may be, when seen from our side, because there was scarcely a single senior officer who did not feel that he was being spied upon by the SS. Also, it became known again that, contrary to the expressed orders of the Deputy of the Fuhrer, SS men who were serving in the Army had orders to report on their superiors.⁸²

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 79-83.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 99-100.

⁸²Ibid., p. 99; see footnote #76 for Hess' memo.

The formation of the Waffen-SS led to a degree of confusion on the part of the Wehrmacht officers and also led to mistrust within the German officer corps.⁸³ The gradual but steady growth of the Waffen-SS and their eventual priority for equipment and new manpower call-ups helped to form this aura of mistrust; the growing power of the SD also caused a certain degree of anxiety on the part of the Wehrmacht officers. As a rule, the SS men took a superior attitude from the opening days of the war. For example, during the Polish campaign, an SS officer executed some Polish prisoners and a Wehrmacht officer had him arrested. Within a few days, the SS officer was released and the full impact of the legal wranglings of such men as Brigadefuhrer Scharfe and the Fuhrer's decree of August 17, 1938 became known throughout the Wehrmacht. The German Army which had traditionally been the arms bearer throughout German history naturally resented the new rival whose panzer divisions had an operating strength nearly double that of the Wehrmacht panzer divisions and whose commanders had more of a say so with Hitler than their own Chiefs of Staff. The attitude of the SS was constantly thrown in the face of the Wehrmacht as in 1942 when the SS-Leithefte published an article which said in part,

In the past politics and the Wehrmacht have unfortunately often pursued divergent paths. The Waffen-SS

⁸³Otto Dietrich, The Hitler I Knew (London: Methuen and Co., 1955), p. 92. Dietrich was Hitler's Reich press chief between 1933-45.

provides the first example of indissoluble unity between the two, in that concept and sword are welded into one and political determination brings such strength to the soldier's sword that it becomes invincible.⁸⁴

In his book, Panzer Leader, General Heinz Guderian points out the belief that Hitler formed the Waffen-SS divisions so that he could be independent of the Army. Guderian states that in the heat of the battles, the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS units were comrades in arms, and he is careful to make the distinction between the Waffen-SS and the SD units.⁸⁵ Other generals such as von Manteuffel wrote glowing reports during the war on the actions of the Waffen-SS, yet in their post-war memoirs, they are careful not to mention the role of the SS units.

⁸⁴Buckheim, Op. Cit., p. 314-5.

⁸⁵Guderian, Op. Cit., p. 242-3.

CHAPTER VII

THE NSDAP - ITS MAKE UP AND STRUGGLE WITH THE BUREAUCRACY

I am including this section since the influence and power of the SS and its replacement of the Party, to such a degree, is unusual in a totalitarian state. We should then know something of the NSDAP and its struggle to achieve and maintain its power.

The NSDAP prior to the seizure of power, was organized differently than the Soviet Communist Party, due to the different circumstances under which each operated. In his famous work, "What is to be Done?" which was published in 1902, V.I. Lenin made clear the basic differences between himself and the Mensheviks. In that famous work, Lenin called for a disciplined paramilitary party which was made up of a group of professional revolutionaries and which operated on a clandestine level. This type of party was the logical result of the type of political system in which it operated; the Czar's secret police and control of communications all made the open, democratic parties impractical. As a result, the Communist Party kept its membership low and its quality high. As a result of this policy, the Party was able to fulfill its required tasks and the only elite which arose were the higher Party members.

The NSDAP grew and lived in a different environment however, for the weak Weimar Republic had to operate along democratic grounds. After the unsuccessful putsch in Munich, Hitler realized that his best path to power lie with using the legal means available to him. Thus his party had to be organized along different lines; his chief lieutenant, Hermann Goering served as a good public image, for, being an ex-war hero, he attracted support from many veterans and some members of the military. The Party platform which could be heard on street corners was directed at those elements in society who were or who felt they were disfranchised. As a result, the Party in the early days and just prior to the seizure of power consisted of lower and lower-middle class elements as well as a few pseudo-intellectuals. The NSDAP could organize openly and its first storm troopers, the SA which eventually numbered three million men, was made up to a large degree of the unemployed and the unemployable. As a result of the different environments, the differences between the Communist and the Nazi parties can easily be seen; the make-up of the Nazi Party created problems for Hitler after he took power in 1933.

In most totalitarian states, the role of the party is one of socialization of the masses and providing the future leaders. Hitler, however, saw the state and party as having distinct and separate functions. Hitler in 1935 said;

The task of the state is: the continuation of the historically developed administration of the state organization in the realm and through the means of law. The task of the party is first: development of...stable cells of the National-Socialist teach-

ing; second, the education of the total population in the sense of the National-Socialist idea; third, the delivery of these educated to the state for its leaders and followers.⁸⁶

The party was not to be the state, but it merely was to provide leaders for the traditional state structure. While the party was to eventually provide leaders to the state, attempts to gain power by the party membership were on the whole unsuccessful. Whereas a large degree of Hitler's success at the polls was the result of street demonstrations and brutal tactics against opposition parties, the NSDAP offered little in the way of constructive programs. The NSDAP on the whole, preferred men of action to men of thought. Hitler's preference for followers can be seen when he wrote;

They (the German Bourgeoisie) never understood that the strength of a political party lies by no means in the greatest possible independent intellect of the individual members, but rather in the disciplined obedience with which its members follow the intellectual leadership.⁸⁷

Since the NSDAP members were of lower or lower-middle class origins, they were impatient of delays, laws and due process, "...all of which stood between the 'popular will' and its achievement."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ E.N. Peterson, "The Bureaucracy and the Nazi Party," The Review of Politics, xxviii (April, 1966), p. 174.

⁸⁷ Hitler, Op. Cit., p. 457.

⁸⁸ Peterson, Op. Cit., p. 172.

When the seizure of power took place, the Party members ran into the bureaucracy which had a long history and tradition of service to the State. The bureaucrat was a trained and conservative element within the state and he often held a Masters or Doctorate degree; thus with his special privileges, the bureaucratic group formed almost a class unto themselves and they had little in common with the man on the street.

At first, few bureaucrats joined the NSDAP after the seizure of power in 1933, but when it became clear that the NSDAP would stay in power, many bureaucrats joined the Party for reasons of opportunity.⁸⁹ Although many positions and opportunities were open to Party members, the low educational level of the older members made their placement difficult. On the other hand, the later joiners consisted of many white collar workers, the wealthy, and the ex-noble classes. These later groups could not be fully trusted and placed in high positions by the Party because they were seen as opportunists and not true believers. To give high government offices to these late-comers would seem as reward while the older members would be left out in the cold.⁹⁰ This inability of the Party to place trusted individuals in high state positions seriously weakened the Party's ability to govern Germany. As a result, a further blow to the Party was dealt,

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 172.

⁹⁰ E.N. Peterson, The Limits of Hitler's Power (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 16-17.

but the struggle by the Party to gain power within the State machinery raged until 1943.

The battle for power was especially strong from 1933-1937, when various laws were passed which were designed to eliminate from the State machinery any elements which did not fit the desired role or which could not support the National Socialist program whole-heartedly. Of course, the first elements to be eliminated were the Communist, Socialist and Jewish supporters. With these individuals removed, beginning in 1933, the Party made several moves to fill key positions, but the Party members were little more than figureheads and could easily be side-stepped by the bureaucrats. Even on the highest levels of government, of those Party members who entered Cabinet positions, only half had the required legal training and the bureaucrats continued to dominate the Cabinet. The only real victory, was the need for Party approval for promotions from one grade to the next.⁹¹

One of the salient features of a totalitarian regime is its high degree of centralization. Every aspect of life within the State must be controlled and supervised so that not only the economy, but also the individuals cannot deviate from the norm. Such a deviation can cause dissent, a questioning of practices

⁹¹Peterson, "The Bureaucracy and the Nazi Party," Op. Cit., p. 174-5

and procedures; the dissenters must be eliminated from the mainstream of society. To sustain centralization, a bureaucracy must be used, and since the Party could not fulfill this need in Germany, other instruments had to be used, the first being the traditional State bureaucracy. Hannah Arendt says that, "...the Nazis simply retained the existing administration and deprived it of all power..."⁹² while the government lost much power, the bureaucracy and its continuing use of power would seem to refute this proposition. The bureaucracy did not, prior to Hitler's seizure originate policy, but merely carried out policies decided by the legislative branch under the Weimar Republic. Hitler displaced the legislative branch, but the bureaucracy continued to function and it carried out Hitler's policies. There is little doubt that had the war gone differently, better trained and educated Party members would have gradually replaced the traditional bureaucracy, yet the bureaucracy still had a great deal of power until 1943.

As the Nazis attempted to centralize their control, and as various ministries and agencies surged toward Berlin, the local Party units often lost much of their influence. Instead of turning to local administrators for funds, the Party would have to go all the way to Berlin for grants and many Party officials

⁹²Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, (New York: World Publishing Company, 1969), p. 397.

complained of having to cool their heels in various Berlin ministries. As Gauleiter Sauckel, Reichstatthalter in Thuringia wrote,

...(the Party virtues) initiative, decisiveness, and joy in responsibility, the best legacies from the fighting years, are increasingly entangled in regulations and formalities.⁹³

Sauckel for many years complained that the Reichstatthalter who was supposedly the personal representative of Hitler, was nearly powerless in his own area due to the increased centralization. It is at this point that the friction between the Party and the growing SS begins to become noticeable, for Sauckel complains of Himmler's supreme police command in Berlin. Prior to the seizure there was often difficulty between Party members and the police, yet the Party once in power, could not exact their revenge.⁹⁴

In March, 1933, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, was named by Hitler as provisional chief of police in Munich, and the SS began to penetrate the police forces. Within one year, Himmler controlled every regional police force in Germany and by June, 1936, he was made Chief of the German Police.⁹⁵ As Chief of German Police, Himmler and the SS succeeded in overriding the

⁹³Peterson, "The Bureaucracy and the Nazi Party," Op. Cit., p. 175-6.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 175-77.

⁹⁵Nolte, Op. Cit., p. 391.

traditional bureaucracy and the Party. This was the first instance in Germany where an organization of the new regime superseded the State and it was due to the different level of membership which I shall discuss later.

Meanwhile the struggle continued as the Minister of the Interior, Frick, embarked on a campaign to wrestle power from the centralized "monster" in Berlin and return power to the Landrat. He urged the principle of Selbsrverwaltung (local self-government) and after three years, a compromise was worked out for a greater degree of local autonomy. According to this compromise, the Party would lead the people and have influence in political matters, while the Landrat was given the task of state administration. The loop hole concerning the Party's influence over political matters was closed by the fact that "Each was to keep out of the other's business."⁹⁶ Thus the Party was barred from interfering in state affairs, hardly a positive factor in a totalitarian state.

Due to pressure from the Gauleiters, many of whom were old Party members, Hitler issued the "Decree of the Fuhrer for the Simplification of the Administration." This decree was an attempt to decentralize the Berlin "monster." Due to this decree, Berlin would merely co-ordinate plans and would not have to okay local requests for funds, etc. This decree was never implemented

⁹⁶Peterson, "The Bureaucracy and the Nazi Party," Op. Cit., p. 179-80.

however, and the centralization grew.⁹⁷

The situation within the Party became so bad that by 1943, Gauleiter Rover wrote that the Party had managed to survive only because of its older members. These older members whom he claimed were dedicated, merely had better connections close to Hitler so they could avoid much of the bureaucracy. Rover also complained that the Party had grown too quickly and that many of the members were luke-warm in their beliefs and were not true National Socialists. The Party also lacked leadership and this led to incompetence and weakness when dealing with local problems and the bureaucracy. During the war, the Party lost ground and the populace was critical of the high standard of living of many of the Party members, especially after Stalingrad. The Party also lost its influence in the Army and the Churches on the whole, stayed relatively strong.⁹⁸

Thus due to the low level of intelligence of the hard core members and the distrust of the late joiners, the NSDAP was not able to penetrate the State bureaucracy. While the Party was declining, the SS organization was becoming stronger; Hitler and Himmler saw the SS as the true wave of the future. By 1937 the NSDAP had sunk so low in its ability to cope with problems that

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 181.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 181-3.

Hitler said, "I've totally lost sight of the organization of the Party."⁹⁹

⁹⁹Joseph Nyomarkay, Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), p. 138-40.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DECLINE OF THE STATE MACHINERY

During the time that Himmler was attempting to build up the SS, it was necessary for Hitler to negate any powers of the traditional State machinery. Hitler naturally did not wish to share any power with any governmental agency; he did, however, wish to create a State machinery which would respond to his will.

The success of Hitler towards this end was voiced by Himmler in a 1937 brochure entitled, "Dr. Wilhelm Frick and His Ministry." In that brochure Himmler wrote,

The powers of the National Socialist police force are directed towards implementing the will of the leaders of the State and the protection of people and State; they are therefore necessarily based, not upon detailed laws but upon the realities of the National Socialist Fuhrer State and upon the duties allotted to it by the leadership.

Like the Wehrmacht, the police can act only in accordance with the orders of the leadership and not according to laws.¹⁰⁰

Himmler in the same year, went so far as to order the SS to create a new political order and not merely to protect the old one. Such a creation was responsible to and carried out, "...

¹⁰⁰Broszat, Op. Cit., p. 188

only on orders of the leadership.¹⁰¹ Thus Himmler felt that by 1937, control of the State lay not in the traditional political sphere, but in the hands of the SS.

When Hitler came to power, his first year was spent attempting to "stabilize" the governmental structure, so as to eliminate opposition from the legislature. A major step towards this end was the Enabling Act of 24 March, 1933, which was passed by a vote of 441 to 94. Because of this act, the legislature lost power to the cabinet, for the cabinet now had the power to, ... "depart from constitutional provisions and to interfere everywhere except in parliamentary institutions or with the federal council."¹⁰² Many of those who voted for the Enabling Act felt that the safeguards within the Act would limit its use.

The main safeguard was that the Act was valid only as long as the original federal cabinet was retained. The cabinet at that time contained only three National Socialists out of twelve. The cabinet was changed shortly, however, when one non-National Socialist member was arrested for embezzlement and another resigned. The Enabling Act stayed in effect, however, because various National Socialist lawyers fought to retain it. As one said,

It would belittle the significance of the great event of national concentration if we were to enter upon a discussion of what would constitute the premature end of the simplified legislative

¹⁰¹Bracher, Op. Cit., p. 354.

¹⁰²Neumann, Op. Cit., p. 51.

process, whether the replacement of one person by another in the cabinet or an alteration of the political composition of the cabinet.¹⁰³

The failure of the legislature to act decisively, while the National Socialists were still a minority, encouraged Hitler to push through the National Socialist Plebiscite Act of 14 July, 1933. This Act was more of a propaganda act than a constitutionally valid act, but it served its purpose by decreeing that only the cabinet could submit an intended enactment to the people. As this was interpreted by the National Socialist lawyers, the people could approve of an act after it was enacted. Even if it were rejected by the people, it would still be valid because the Fuhrer embodied the spirit of the people.¹⁰⁴

This Plebiscite Act marks an important turning point since it openly refutes the democratic principles of the Weimar Republic and clearly shows the relationship of the Fuhrer to the people. The lawlessness of the SA street fights was now legalized since the only criterion for the validity of an action was the will of the Fuhrer.

The Fuhrer's exact position, by 1938, was recognized even by foreign observers. As James Pollock wrote,

The Fuhrer alone has the power and the responsibility for the measures taken by the Third Reich.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 52-3.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 54-5.

¹⁰⁵James Kerr Pollock, The Government of Greater Germany (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc.,) p. 73.

The Reichstag was in an inferior position when Hitler was in power. It was little more than a cheering section, but its one function was to maintain an air of representation for the people.¹⁰⁶

Hitler did not stop with the reduction of the Reichstag, but attacked the local congresses. On 30 January, 1934, the statute, "to reconstitute the Reich" destroyed the state diets by transferring to the Reich, all sovereign power. One year later, the same action was taken against the municipal diets, so that within two years, complete centralization beyond law had taken place.¹⁰⁷

While the Reichstag was under fire, the courts were also attacked. The courts like the Reichstag did not have a long history of independence. Prior to the Republic, they had a history of serving the Kaiser rather than the people. They were constantly having to yield to the influence of the Army and Civil Service.

...a very close link existed between the legal profession and the state machinery, so close that on the average one jurist in two became a state official, and over half of all senior civil servants were law graduates.¹⁰⁸

As with the Reichstag, Hitler was beyond the law as he demanded all judges to swear obedience and loyalty to himself. As he said on 13 July, 1934;

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 78-9.

¹⁰⁷Neumann, Op. Cit., p. 55.

¹⁰⁸Richard Grumberger, The 12 Year Reich (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston,) p. 116-7.

In this hour, I was responsible for the fate of the German nation and therefore I was the supreme law lord of the German people.¹⁰⁹

Gradually under Hitler;

all judicial powers have been transferred from the states to the Reich, and all judicial officers have become Reich officials.¹¹⁰

With the transfer of the courts to the Reich, and with the Reichstag becoming a rubber stamp, any effective checks on Hitler became all but impossible.

The SS was not long in keeping its influence out of the courts. By 1939, the SS magazine, "Schwarzes Korps" assumed an unofficial watch on the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice officially published its own exchanges with the "Schwarzes Korps" on contentious court decisions. Many times the "Schwarzes Korps" took the Ministry to task on decisions.¹¹¹

More basic methods were used to bring the legal profession into line with the will of the Fuhrer.

All practising lawyers were grouped together in the Nazi Lawyers Association, the 'honor courts', of which were armed with formidable disciplinary powers: members failing to 'Heil Hitler' faced severe reprimands; those who failed to vote in Reichstag elections and plebiscites were excluded from the bar.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹Pollock, Op. Cit., p. 85.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 86.

¹¹¹Grumberger, Op. Cit., p. 119.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 118.

On 15 April, 1940, the RSHA, the Reich Security Office of the SS, felt safe enough in its power to decree that:

The legal validity of State Police regulations does not rest on the Reich President's ordinance of 28 February, 1933, for the Protection of People and State; the powers required by the Gestapo for the execution of all measures necessary to their task stem not from specific laws and ordinances but from the overall mission allotted to the German police in general and the Gestapo in particular in connection with the reconstitution of the National Socialist State. 113

In short then, the Gestapo's power was based purely on the will of the Fuhrer. While SD lawyers continued to justify actions in legal terms, such actions were only designed to pacify certain elements of the German populace.

As Martin Broszat wrote,

The State legal system having lost its authority and the State administration machine its independence as a result of the impact of the Fuhrer's authority, the Fuhrer was able to invest this new executive from time to time with the rights, prerogatives and privileges of an official organization without at the same time subjecting it to established state rules.

The historical significance of the SS was that, in its capacity of Fuhrer's executive, it became the real and essential instrument of the Fuhrer's authority. 114

The proof of this view, was the fact that on 24 August, 1943, Minister of the Interior Frick was demoted to Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia and Himmler was given his job. Himmler thus

113 Broszat, Op. Cit., p. 190.

114 Ibid., p. 191.

came to control, aside from the SS, the German civil-service and annexed territories as well as the Party machinery, since the Gauleiters were governmental employees. Thus through the Waffen-SS Himmler reached into the Wehrmacht, and he became the political chief of the Reich Ministry of Justice.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵Neumann, Op. Cit., p. 540.

CHAPTER IX

LEADING PERSONALITIES WITHIN THE THIRD REICH

There can be no doubt that certain individuals within the Third Reich had varying effects on not only the development of the SS, but the functioning of the State as a whole. Himmler's personality and organizational ability when coupled with that of the head of the SA, Ernst Rohm, prior to the 'Night of the Long Knives,' naturally helped to determine the degree of success of the SS. After Hitler managed to consolidate his position, after the SA leadership was decapitated, after the Army was brought under his control through General Blomberg, Hitler's world, and those men who influenced Hitler and helped to run the State, began to close into an ever-decreasing circle.

Unfortunately, this circle was all but destroyed during the final days of the Third Reich and the Nuremberg executions. Neither Dr. Goebbels nor Reich Marshall Goering nor Himmler himself survived these events, and Martin Bormann, if he is alive, certainly is not in a position to publish his memoirs. Thus reliable sources are narrowed to a small field, primarily the memoirs of Albert Speer and General Guderian. Using these men's memoirs and opinions, let us look at the men who were close to Hitler and who had either real power or a chance at it indirectly through their influence on Hitler.

Heinrich Himmler

Because of his control over the SS, Himmler, aside from Hitler, was in all probability the most powerful man in Germany. At times, Hitler may have felt that Himmler's ideas were a bit unrealistic, but Himmler showed Hitler almost perfect devotion and obedience and Hitler viewed the SS as his private force which could be relied upon in every situation.

If we take a look at the SS, we see that Himmler's mind was a combination of the absurd and the pragmatic. His desires to repopulate the East with German peasants and to found frontier-like outposts against the Asiatic hordes, seems in direct contradiction to the mind which instituted the complex and effective files kept by the Gestapo and SD, or the high esprit d' corps of the Waffen-SS main divisions.

General Guderian viewed Himmler as, "the most impenetrable of all Hitler's disciples, ...his imagination was all the more vivid and even fantastic. He seemed like a man from some other planet."¹¹⁶ Yet Speer who dealt with Himmler more often, but in a different capacity, views Himmler as, "...a sober minded realist who knew exactly what his far-reaching political aims were...His office worked with the precision of a well-oiled machine - which was probably an expression of his own personality."¹¹⁷ This dis-

¹¹⁶Guderian, Op. Cit., p. 374.

¹¹⁷Albert Speer, Inside the Third Reich (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1970), p. 444.

crepancy in views can, in part, be accounted for in the difference in each man's contact with Himmler on a day-to-day basis. With the elimination of the SA as a power factor, and with the increase in field strength of the Waffen-SS, the only armed group left to resist any expansion by Himmler was the Wehrmacht. While, "there was certainly no friction what-so-ever in the front line"¹¹⁸ between the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS, this was not so behind the lines.

Both Hitler and he (Himmler) distrusted the Army, for their intentions were dark, and there always existed the danger for them that if the Army recognized them in time, it might have resisted.¹¹⁹

While Himmler was loyal to Hitler, he was not a regular member of the dinner circle which hovered about Hitler. When he did come into the inner circle though, lying to Hitler was not beyond him. For example, Speer had proof that the SS was building secret concentration camps and stocking them with both foreign and German labourers. Many of these labourers were being pulled from industries where they were badly needed and Speer brought this fact to Hitler's attention. When questioned by Hitler about this, Himmler denied the report and Hitler was placated - the camps continued.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸Otto Skorzeny, during interview, Sept. 1972.

¹¹⁹Guderian, Op. Cit., p. 375.

¹²⁰Speer, Op. Cit., p. 445-6.

Himmler did remain high in Hitler's prestige but after his assuming control of the Vistula Army Group and its subsequent failure to stop the Soviet advance, Himmler lost some favor in Hitler's eyes, although "...everyone still feared Himmler."¹²¹

Martin Bormann

The concensus opinion on Bormann, unlike Himmler, is uniform. Putting it bluntly, "No one in the party was so hated as Bormann."¹²² By constantly being next to Hitler, carrying out his every wish and command and working hard, Bormann managed to push his way into every facet of Hitler's life. He was in charge of Hitler's personal finances, his date book, his correspondence and who could and could not see Hitler. Eventually by screening those who saw Hitler, Bormann managed to successfully "edit" the news which reached Hitler. Bormann could not keep out Himmler, Goebbels, Speer or other powerful men, but he could keep out various Gauleiters and other party officials.

General Guderian viewed Bormann as, "next to Himmler, the most sinister member of Hitler's entourage,"¹²³ who hated the army and did his best to keep all "decent" people from seeing Hitler.¹²⁴

Bormann had a constant battle with Dr. Goebbels, Speer, and

¹²¹Ibid., p. 506.

¹²²Ibid., p. 552.

¹²³Guderian, Op. Cit., p. 376.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 376-7.

to a lesser degree Goering, to vie for favorite positions vis-a-vis Hitler. Because of his close proximity to Hitler, he managed eventually to report various situations to Hitler and offer an "objective" solution. If Hitler would agree, Bormann would write lengthy memos which would carry Hitler's sanction. According to Speer, "de facto, Bormann was conducting the internal affairs of the Reich."¹²⁵

Although he managed to reach a stage where he could have a serious effect on certain State matters, his unpopularity and lack of intelligence¹²⁶ seriously hampered him.

Dr. Goebbels

Like Bormann, Goebbels was a long time follower of Hitler and stayed with him until the very end in Berlin. Unlike Bormann, Goebbels was quite intelligent and managed to make Hitler laugh, a trait which endeared him to Hitler and his dinner circle. Goebbels worked constantly to get rid of Bormann and sought allies on all fronts, but Guderian viewed him as a dangerous demagogue and a skilled and clever speaker who lacked the courage to stand up to Hitler.¹²⁷ The problem with this comment on Goebbels' courage, is that neither Bormann, Speer nor Goering stood up to Hitler; few men possessed Guderian's convictions or courage.

Like Goering, but not to the same degree, Goebbels indulged

¹²⁵Speer, Op. Cit. p. 302.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 301.

¹²⁷Guderian, Op. Cit., p. 376.

himself in various pleasures, the most common being the seduction of unknown actresses; but again, his ability to entertain and flatter Hitler kept him in favor despite Bormann's efforts.¹²⁸

Hermann Goering

Another early follower of Hitler's, Goering was a fighter pilot ace in World War I and brought a certain amount of prestige to the NSDAP when he joined. Between bouts with drugs, Goering was responsible for the development and growth of the Luftwaffe. After its development and initial successes, however, he succumbed to his power and wealth, as well as drugs, and retired to Karin Hall to fondle his jewels and ogle his paintings.¹²⁹

Goebbels often tried to enlist Goering's aid in his struggle with Bormann, but his fear of Hitler caused him to fluctuate. As Goering was in large part responsible for the failures at Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and Stalingrad, he sunk slowly into drugged stupor which was not reversed until after the war. Speer felt that Goering "would have been the only person whose authority and popularity Hitler would have had to reckon with,"¹³⁰ but his activity and attitude during the war can best be reflected by an incident in August of 1944, when Hitler in Generals Jodls and Guderian's presence addressed Goering in the following terms:

¹²⁸Speer, Op. Cit., p. 312-3.

¹²⁹Guderian, Op. Cit., p. 372-3.

¹³⁰Speer, Op. Cit., p. 605.

Goering! The Luftwaffe's doing nothing. It is no longer worthy to be an independent service. And that's your fault. You're lazy.¹³¹

At that point, Goering was quiet and began to cry.

General Guderian & Albert Speer

I do not feel that personality breakdowns on General Guderian or Albert Speer are in order because Guderian, while outspoken, was in and out of official positions too often to build up a sound position and Speer, while an able Minister, controlled absolutely no armed force, and was relatively unknown to the public. Thus the pressures they could bring to bear would be at best erratic.

¹³¹Guderian, Op. Cit., p. 373.

CONCLUSION

Now the question must be asked, "What does all this mean?" Does all this prove anything?" Let us summarize the preceding sections and see what the answer is.

Firstly, it is clear that Himmler had a clear idea of what the role of the SS was to be in the new Germany. It was to provide the future leaders who were to captain industry, finance, farming, politics and army. From the pick of the German population, the purest Aryans were to be selectively bred and trained so they could continue the work begun by Hitler and lead Germany into a new Golden Age. Hitler, on the other hand, seemed to gradually grow a dream; he firstly saw the SS as a party police force, but as time went on, as the SS under the careful guidance and loyalty of Himmler grew, Hitler saw the SS as the tool he could always rely upon. Here was an instrument forged from his will for his use; here was the sword which would do away with the intellectuals and old noble class who had shunned him and whom he mistrusted.

The SS was not to be part of the German masses, but was rather to be bred and trained to lead, to ever cause awe and an image which the German people could look to. Hitler's trust of the SS needs no further proof than the fact that it was the SS who guarded his person, up to the very end.

Secondly, to insure that the SS would draw only from the best and that it would be separated from the masses, a complicated recruitment and set of requirements were set up. Of course, not all of the SS was submitted to these standards; the Gestapo section was a local and secret police agency which was forced to mingle with the masses, so the standards had to be flexible, but at the same time, the black trench coat of the Gestapo agent, created by Himmler's right hand man, Heydrich, was designed to set the agents apart.

The General SS and especially the pre-war Verfügungstruppe SS had to pass rigid physical standards. It was important in both Hitler's and Himmler's minds, that the SS be placed immediately above the rabble of the SA, for if standards were relaxed, the elite character of the SS would be lost.

A problem did arise when the war broke out, for the General SS was largely swallowed by the Wehrmacht, and the Verfügungstruppe SS - now renamed the Waffen-SS - was rapidly expanded and recruits had to be found. The fact that the General SS was drafted into the Wehrmacht was not all negative, for a glance at the diary of Wilhelm Pruller will show that the political indoctrination received prior to the war was carried into the Wehrmacht units and this politicalizing had to have an effect on the other men. While new recruits did not receive the political indoctrination of the Verfügungstruppe SS, the Waffen-SS was always clearly noted as an elite section, with its own judicial system not subject to Wehrmacht control.

Getting back to the training of the Verfügungstruppe SS, it was intended to produce a closeness unequalled in the Wehrmacht. The complex initiation rights coupled with the length of time required to gain the various badges and insignia were designed to reinforce the elite psyche of the SS.

There can be no doubt that the SS was viewed as an elite group, both by the general public and the old noble classes and disenfranchised intelligensia who flocked to both the General SS and the SD branches.

Thirdly, if we look at the various branches of the SS, we can see that there was no aspect of public or private life that the SS did not control or investigate. Politics, religion, general police work, undercover police work, the press, the NSDAP, foreign territories, matters of German legality, economics, general security, secret weapons, foreign relations, munitions, the secret service and front line security (including Wehrmacht intelligence and desertions) were all in the hands of the SS. No law, no legal barrier stood in the way of the SS; aside from over 500,000 men in uniform, the SS had countless informers in both private life and governmental positions.

An important question arises when we look at SS-Wehrmacht frictions. At the front lines, especially as the war went on, Wehrmacht units were more than happy to have Waffen-SS units next to them. Behind the lines there was friction, for not only did the SS men feel superior and not only did the "Head-Hunters" have unquestioned authority, but also the Wehrmacht officers

resented the priority given to the Waffen-SS for men and material. By the end of the war, only the Waffen-SS tank divisions were effective, for the Panzer divisions when smashed were given lower priorities for refitting.

We must now ask a hypothetical question to further test the power of the SS: could the Wehrmacht units have disarmed the Waffen-SS units? It's a difficult question, but I would say no. First of all, there was no Wehrmacht central command; General Keitel was not capable of independent action; General Model showed himself a capable officer but again, afraid to face Hitler or the SS men around him; General Guderian was a strong man and perhaps capable of action, but could he have co-ordinated Wehrmacht action before the SS reacted. Since the SS controlled communications and the intelligence service, action of this sort would have been difficult. Even if Germany had won the war, there is the problem of disarming the Waffen-SS units. Himmler would have been reluctant to do so, and the action of Sepp Dietrich in Hungary showed that he was fully capable of independent action, even against Hitler. It is difficult for any group, especially an elite group to submit to orders which would endanger or lower their standing.

Next we come to the NSDAP and the struggle with the bureaucracy. It is clear that the Party proved itself unable to assume positions of power mainly because the oldest members, and therefore the most reliable were ill-suited to the struggle with the bureaucracy. Also, Hitler saw the Party, like the SA, as a

tool to reach his goal, and once reached, to be left alone. The Party struggled with and lost its battle with the State bureaucracy because Hitler did not give it the support it needed. But when the struggle was finished, Himmler was made Minister of the Interior, and at one blow, the Party, the State bureaucracy and the State Judicial system came under his direct control. Again, Himmler moved in and began to consolidate his control.

With the Wehrmacht, Party, and State bureaucracy weakened, who could have offered serious resistance to the SS within the State? Could Dr. Goebbels, Bormann or Goering? The answer is a clear no. Why? Firstly, if Hitler had died, a power struggle for his replacement would have taken place. Bormann could not have won, because he was hated by Dr. Goebbels, Goering, Himmler and the Wehrmacht. It is possible that either Goering or Dr. Goebbels could have "seized the Crown" but, what real, concrete power did they have? Did either of them have 500,000 men under arms, or the State machinery in their back pocket? Goering was openly laughed at in the streets and what could Dr. Goebbels do to command respect; what could he do to enforce his laws? The single man who held the trump card was Himmler; Speer said that everyone feared him, and what could they do to him? If he were eliminated, the head of the Gestapo or Dietrich could step in and they had power.

It is true that Himmler was not part of the dinner circle which included Dr. Goebbels and Bormann, but while they were at each other's throats, while Dr. Goebbels amused Hitler, Himmler

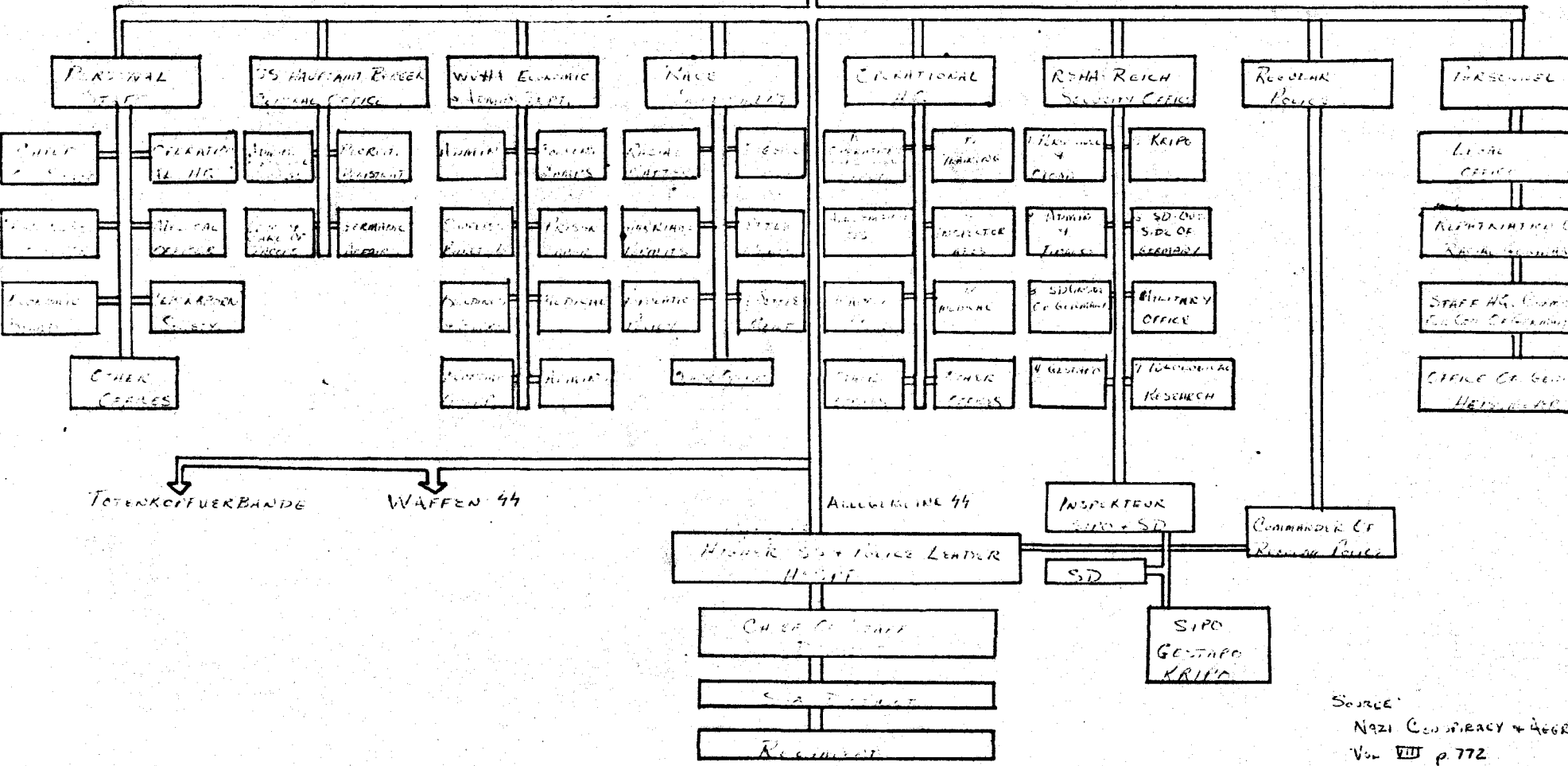
consolidated his hold on the occupied territories and the Gestapo grew.

There was one man who could cower Himmler, and that was Hitler himself, but while Himmler was not the bravest of men, he showed himself capable of independent action, when he forced skilled German labourers into his factories and when he sent out independent peace feelers to the Allies.

Of course, this is all speculation, but the fact remains that the SS (1) trained its personnel to assume responsibility and command, (2) it controlled every vital function of the State and (3) unlike the SA or the NSDAP, there was leadership in depth in its ranks. It was possible for the Wehrmacht to move against the SS, but such a move would have torn the entire German Reich apart. The Wehrmacht showed itself incapable of such independent action and there was simply no power base strong enough to root out the SS from German society until the entire Reich crumbled. With its front line divisions smashed, the factories in ruins and occupied by foreign powers, the SS died, but within Germany until 1945, it was sovereign.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SS

REICHFUHRER 44 - HIMMLER

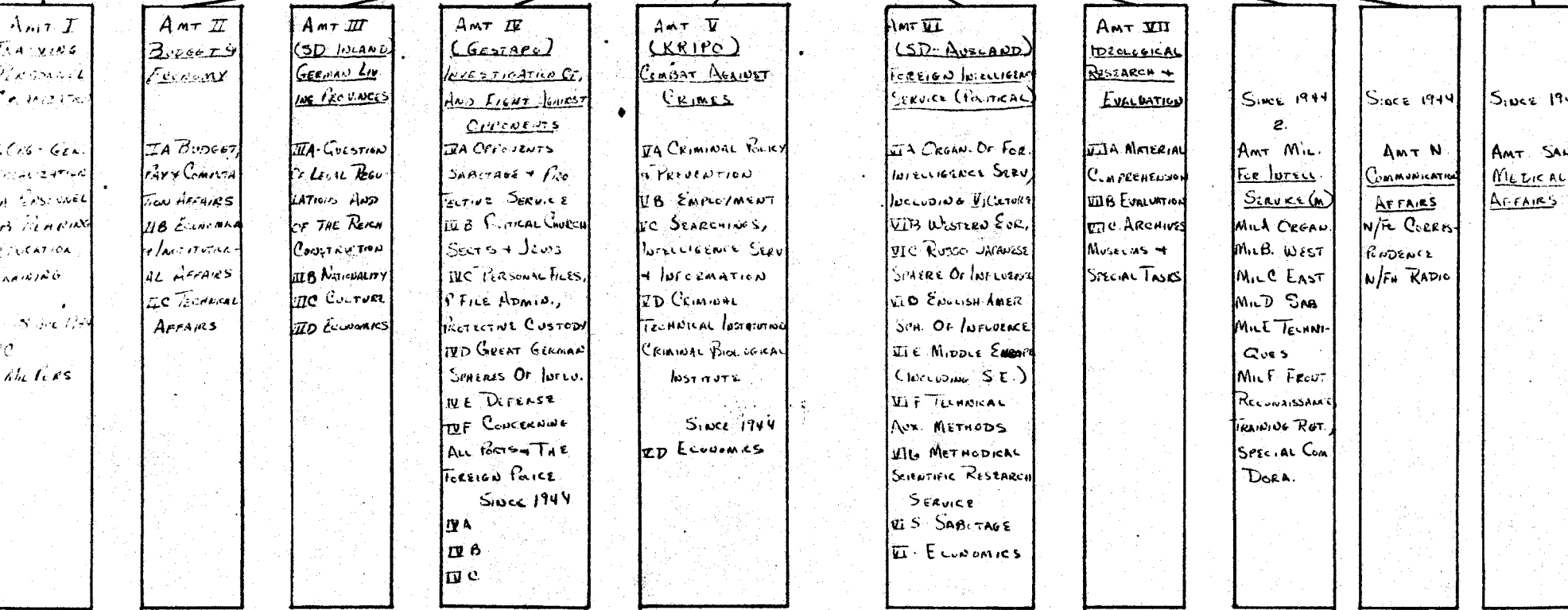


Source:
 NAZI CONSPIRACY + 4668
 Vol III p. 772

ORGANIZATION OF THE SECURITY POLICE (GESTAPO + KRIPPO) + SD 1943

APPENDIX II

THE CHIEF OF THE SECURITY POLICE + SD REICH SECURITY HEAD OFFICE (RSHA)



Source: Nazi Control + VII 9.77

APPENDIX # III

TABLE OF SS RANKS

<u>SS</u> (Rank)	<u>BRITISH ARMY</u> (Approx. equivalent)	<u>UNITED STATES ARMY</u> (Approx. equivalent)
Reichsfuhrer SS	Field Marshall	General of the Army
Oberstgruppenfuhrer	General	General
Obergruppenfuhrer	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General
Gruppenfuhrer	Major General	Major General
Brigadefuhrer	Brigadier	Brigadier General
Oberfuhrer	Senior Colonel	Senior Colonel
Standartenfuhrer	Colonel	Colonel
Obersturmbannfuhrer	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel
Sturmbannfuhrer	Major	Major
Hauptsturmfuhrer	Captain	Captain
Obersturmfuhrer	Lieutenant	1st Lieutenant
Untersturmfuhrer	2nd Lieutenant	2nd Lieutenant
Sturmscharfuhrer	Regimental Sgt. Major	Sergeant Major
Hauptscharfuhrer	Sergeant Major	Master Sergeant
Oberscharfuhrer	Quartermaster Sergeant	Technical Sergeant
Unterscharfuhrer	Sergeant	Sergeant
Rottenfuhrer	Corporal	Corporal
Sturmmann	Lance Corporal	Corporal
Oberschutze	Senior Private	Private First Class
Schutze	Private	Private

Source: Heinz Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 652.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Mr. Barry J. Klazura has been read and approved by members of the Department of Political Science.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science.

1/16/1973

Date

Francis Schweitzer

Signature of Adviser