

EX-SERVICEMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

AND

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, by
Christopher James Elliott.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON 1971.



IMAGING SERVICES NORTH

Boston Spa, Wetherby
West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ
www.bl.uk

BEST COPY AVAILABLE.

VARIABLE PRINT QUALITY

IMAGING SERVICES NORTH

Boston Spa, Wetherby
West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ
www.bl.uk

**TEXT BOUND CLOSE TO
THE SPINE IN THE
ORIGINAL THESIS**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE.

**TEXT IN ORIGINAL IS
CLOSE TO THE EDGE OF
THE PAGE**

IMAGING SERVICES NORTH

Boston Spa, Wetherby
West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ
www.bl.uk

**PAGE NUMBERS CLOSE TO
THE EDGE OF THE PAGE.
SOME ARE CUT OFF**

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The history of the ex-servicemen's associations during the Weimar Republic is one of social and political disunity. Losing its monopoly, semi-establishment rôle in 1918, the Kyffhäuserbund had to fight for its survival against the new more definitely political organisations of Right and Left, together with the new 'elitist' Offiziersverbände. The Bund retrenched its position between 1919 and 1923 and adhered closely to its statutory "Überparteilichkeit", refraining from attacks on the Republic. No so with the Offiziersverbände, particularly the Nationalverband deutscher Offiziere, who joined the hostile "patriotic" opposition from the outset.

Between 1923 and 1928 even the Kyffhäuserbund "moved to the Right". Despite close links re-established with the government, especially in the fields of military training and militarist propaganda, contacts with "right radical" associations tended to blur the distinctions between them. General von Horn tried, albeit hesitantly, to redefine the Bund's ethical position after 1928, mainly by dropping ties with political societies, criticising the radical agitation of the NSDAP, and even by taking up contacts with the Evangelical Church. His opposition to Hitler in the 1932 presidential elections played an important part in deferring the Nazi "Machtergreifung". Nevertheless the bulk of the propaganda of the veterans' associations tended in the long run to serve the ends of the DNVP and NSDAP, and Horn failed to maintain his moderate policy in the face of strenuous opposition from within the Bund.

In view of the size and prestige of the Kyffhäuserbund it could well have made a more positive contribution to the cause of moderate conservatism, even to that of constitutional monarchy. Nevertheless, the Kriegervereine differed from the Kampfbünde in the important question of motivation: Ex-servicemen generally joined them looking for comradeship and economic security, NOT for political or military activity.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	3
ABBREVIATIONS	4
SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION and GENERAL ASPECTS	
1) Origins of Ex-Servicemen's Organisations	6
2) Organisation of the Kyffhäuserbund	13
3) Social Aspects	17
4) Pensions and Welfare	25
SECTION TWO: 1918 - 1923	
1) Public Policy and General Propaganda	38
2) Attitude to Social Democracy	61
3) Local Influence	68
4) Relations with the Weimar Governments	81
5) Military Aspects	97
6) Relations with the "Patriotic Associations"	113
7) Monarchism and Right-Wing Parties	124
8) Communism	129
SUMMARY	130
SECTION THREE: 1923 - 1928	
1) General Propaganda	134
2) Attitude to Social Democracy	149
3) Local Influence	157
4) Relations with the Weimar Governmenta	167
5) Military Aspects	179
6) Relations with the "Patriotic Associations"	195
7) Monarchism and Right-Wing Parties	204
8) Communism	211
SUMMARY	212
SECTION FOUR: 1928 - 1933	
1) The End of 1928 to September 1930	216
2) September 1930 to August 1931	241
3) August 1931 to April 1932	260
4) April 1932 to January 1933	284
SECTION FIVE: 1933 - 1943	
1) Veteran Associations, NSDAP and SA: 1933-4	301
2) Monarchism 1933-4	308
3) Veteran Associations after January 1934	317
CONCLUSIONS	320
BIBLIOGRAPHY	325

PREFACE

This study is primarily concerned with those organisations which were composed almost entirely of ex-officers or ex-servicemen in general, and not with the political "Kampfbünde" which admitted to membership any men who were physically fit and who held the 'correct' political views. It must be emphasised that the German ex-serviceman of 1918 was not essentially different from his counterpart in any other country. The different political path taken by the German veterans' associations was basically due to the tradition of government exploitation for political ends, and the power 'vacuum' of the Weimar Republic itself.

With regard to material, while the records of the "Kyffhäuserbund" were destroyed during the war, a number of important files dating from the years before 1933 were preserved in the NSDAP Hauptarchiv. Otherwise, documents and literature are to be found in varying quantities in official files and libraries all over Germany. I am particularly grateful to Miss Kinder of the Bundesarchiv and Mr. Hiscock of the Foreign Office Library, London. In addition, for the willing and friendly assistance of the Wiener Library, London; the Public Record Office; the library of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies; the Militärarchiv, Freiburg; the Zentralbibliothek der Bundeswehr, Düsseldorf; the Stadtbibliothek, Wuppertal; the Cologne Historisches Archiv; the Staatsarchiv, Marburg/Lahn; the Hauptstaatsarchiv, Stuttgart; the Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, Stuttgart; the Staatsarchiv, Ludwigsburg; the Generallandesarchiv, Karlsruhe; the Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Staatsarchiv für Oberbayern, and Kriegsarchiv, Munich; the Document Center, Berlin and the Deutsches Zentralarchiv, Potsdam. My special thanks are due to Herrn Deutsch and the present "Kyffhäuserbund", and of course to Professor F. L. Carsten who has patiently supervised my work.

LONDON, April 1971.

C. J. E.

ABBREVIATIONS

(1) In the Text:

DOB Deutscher Offizier-Bund
 DVOB Deutsch-Völkische Offizierbund
 KB Kyffhäuserbund
 KV(e) Kriegerverein(e)
 NDO Nationalverband deutscher Offiziere
 RDB Reichsverband deutscher Berufssoldaten
 ROB Reichs-Offizier-Bund
 WVV Vereinigte vaterländische Verbände

(2) In the Footnotes

Archives:

DZA Deutsches Zentralarchiv, Potsdam
 F Freiburg, Militärarchiv
 FOL London, Foreign Office Library
 Ka Karlsruhe, Generallandesarchiv
 KH Köln, Historisches Archiv
 L Ludwigsburg, Staatsarchiv
 Ma Marburg, Hessisches Staatsarchiv
 MGS Munich, Geheimes Staatsarchiv
 MK Munich, Kriegsarchiv
 MSO Munich, Staatsarchiv für Oberbayern
 PRO London, Public Record Office
 SH Stuttgart, Hauptstaatsarchiv

Miscellaneous:

AA "Alte Armee" (Supplement to D-O-B1.)
 BMI/PS Badisches Ministerium des Innern/Polizei Sittlichkeit
 BPD "Bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland", 2 volumes,
 University of Jena
 CVZ "Centralverein Zeitung"
 'DOB' "Deutscher Offizier-Bund" (journal)
 D-O-B1 "Deutsches Offizierblatt"
 KKV Kreis Kriegerverband
 KY/PB "Kyffhäuser"/"Parolebuch" (journal and supplement)
 KZ "Kriegerzeitung"
 LV Landeskriegerverband
 NH NSDAP Hauptarchiv (Bundesarchiv)
 NL Nachlass
 PLKV Preussischer Landeskriegerverband
 Prov Provinzialkriegerverband
 RB Regierungsbezirk Kriegerverband
 RKUOO Reichskommissar für die Überwachung der Öffentlichen Ordnung
 SSch Sammlung Schumacher (Bundesarchiv)
 WMI Württembergisches Ministerium des Innern

SECTION ONE

Introduction and General Aspects

1. Origins of Ex-servicemen's Organisations in Germany
2. Organisation of the Kyffhäuserbund
3. Social Aspects
4. Pensions and Welfare

1. THE ORIGINS OF EX-SERVICEMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN GERMANY

The "Machtpolitik" pursued by Frederick II, "the Great", of Prussia successfully established his country as one of the first political powers of Europe. It was no coincidence that the year of his death (1786) saw the foundation of the first formal Kriegerverein, at Wangerin in Pomerania. The motives behind this foundation were three-fold and lie at the heart of the whole subsequent KV movement: Tradition - the wish to perpetuate memories of a glorious military past: Comradeship - the desire to prolong the customs and friendships formed in the Army, and, as every soldier knows, drinking and singing and gaming plays an important part in this: Welfare - the attempt to create collective economic security, and the wish to ensure a soldier's funeral⁽¹⁾. Basically, the KVe were neither para-military organisations - aggressive or defensive, nor political pressure groups. That they assumed sporting and shooting functions, and tended to nurture the "military spirit" was entirely natural, and in no way altered the original social and economic emphasis. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that once the KVe increased in number and popularity as they rapidly did in the first half of the nineteenth century, their inherent military-political potential became more significant. They formed, to say the least, a reservoir of support for the forces of law and order in time of crisis.

Already recognised by the State in the cabinet order of the 22nd February 1842⁽²⁾, they proved their usefulness in a civil defence rôle during the crisis of 1848/49. Thus the Breslau KV was expanded in 1848 into a Silesian "Veteranen Hauptverein" embracing 12,000 men in 258 separate groups, many from other regions such as Pomerania. Their rôle was openly anti-liberal and in support of the Prussian civil authorities⁽³⁾.

(1) Wilhelm Reinhard, "NS Reichskriegerbund", Berlin 1939: p. 6-8.

(2) Karl Schulz-Luckau, "Soldatentum und Kameradschaft", Berlin 1936: p. 18-20.

(3) Karl Werner, "Breslauer Kriegerkameradschaft", 1935/Reinhard op. cit.7.

The Silesian association soon dissolved and the KV movement continued to develop in its original manner - thousands of separate societies. The next stimulus came from the foundation of the German Empire in 1871. The following year a "Deutsche Kriegerbund" was established, but it soon became clear that particularism was still an insuperable obstacle in this field⁽⁴⁾. Local "Landesverbände" set up independently in the big southern states continued to develop more or less separately. In 1880 the Kaiser himself took a hand by commissioning General von Glümer to work for a coalition of all veteran organisations in Germany⁽⁵⁾. Again, little was achieved - the southern states holding to their view that a Prussian "Landesverband" should first be established and then all state associations could enter a national Bund on an equal footing⁽⁶⁾.

The years after 1880 marked the growth of the idea in government circles that the KVe could, and should, be exploited for military/political ends. This process ultimately perverted the whole course of development of the KVe: By 1918 they were all embodied in one organisation with an image very different to that of the first Wangerin group. A secret War Ministry order of 1887 inaugurated the official policy of drawing the KVe into a closer relationship with the Army⁽⁷⁾. At the same time Regierungsrat Dr. Alfred Westphal was elected to the praesidium of the "Deutsche Kriegerbund"⁽⁸⁾. Largely through his officially approved efforts, the suggestion of building a memorial to the first Kaiser (who had died in 1888) was exploited to draw all the Landesverbände into co-operation. In 1892 was established the "Ständiger Ausschuss der Vereinten deutschen Kriegerverbände für die Verwaltung des Kaiser-Wilhelm-Denkmal auf dem Kyffhäuser" - the first "Kyffhäuserbund"⁽⁹⁾. The choice of the Kyffhäuser mountain in Thuringia as the location of the monument was a happy one, for here, legend had it, the great Emperor Frederick

(4) Schulz-Luckau op.cit. p.24 et seq.//Reinhard op.cit. p.9.

(5) H. Saul, "Der Deutsche Kriegerbund...im Kaiserlichen Deutschland", Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen, 2/1969.

(6) Schulz-Luckau p.28-9, 32.

(7) Saul op.cit.

(8) ibid.

(9) Schulz-Luckau. p.37 et seq.

Barbarossa lay sleeping, awaiting the time when he should arise and lead Germany once more to victory. The contemporary growth of interest in German folk-lore and theories of race, had already inspired the German student movement, the "Vereine deutscher Studenten" to hold their first "Kyffhäuserfest" (1881) and form their "Kyffhäuserverband"⁽¹⁰⁾. The Monument was finally unveiled in 1896⁽¹¹⁾ and this tangible proof of the value of co-operation led to negotiations aimed at making something more of the "Ständiger Ausschuss". To meet the continued objections of the southern states, the "Deutsche Kriegerbund", (while remaining in existence as the welfare association for the Prussian and North German KVe already members) set up the "Preussischer Landeskriegerverband" in 1898⁽¹²⁾. In 1900, agreement was finally achieved and the "Kyffhäuserbund der deutschen Landeskriegerverbände" received its "Eintragung"⁽¹³⁾. The most important feature was that the presidents of the Prussian Landesverband and Bavarian Kriegerbund were respectively always to be 1st and 2nd Presidents of the KB. The administrative organs of both Kyffhäuserbund and Preussischer Landeskriegerverband were virtually identified.

Between 1887 and 1914 the KV movement was adapted to serve two main functions. From 1888 onwards the periodicals of the "Deutsche Kriegerbund", and after 1900 those of the KB, were exploited for anti-socialist propaganda, in close connection with the Wilhelmine government. Although the circulation of the "Parole" in 1913 was 67,800 (twice weekly), the anti-socialist campaign was hampered by the fact that many KV members were also members of trade unions. More successful was the co-operation with the army, which became especially close after 1907, covering such questions as pre-military training and recruiting. By the outbreak of

(10) Hermann v. Petersdorff, "Vereine deutscher Studenten", Leipzig 1891.

(11) Meyers "Lexikon" 1926.

(12) Schulz-Luckau//NH 908: Statutes of PLKV.

(13) Schulz-Luckau.

war in 1914 the KB consisted of 2,900,000 members and 32,000 KVe. As an unofficial part of the Imperial establishment it enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the field of veterans' clubs and was the target for bitter hostility from the Social Democrats⁽¹⁴⁾.

At the outbreak of war some 1½ million KB members were recalled for active service, while many of the others were occupied locally in Red-Cross and home-guard functions⁽¹⁵⁾. Of vital importance to the Bund was the Kaiser's declaration of "Burgfrieden" which demanded a sudden change of direction in the question of socialism. From May 1915 Social Democrats had to be admitted to the KVe⁽¹⁶⁾. Co-operation between KB and government naturally continued and if anything became closer during the war years. Particularly important was the question of the increasing numbers of sick and disabled servicemen. The government was slow to deal with this problem and as a result a number of new, ostensibly welfare organisations came independently into existence. The "Reichsbund der Kriegsbeschädigten und Kriegsteilnehmer" founded in 1917 by the socialist leaders Kuttner, Davidsohn and Heilmann rapidly grew to over 800,000 members and included, as the name suggests, ordinary veterans as well as disabled. This was the first real challenge to the KB by another ex-servicemen's association and relations from the outset were acrimonious⁽¹⁷⁾. Some groups like Marinevereine and the specialist "Verband bayerischer Militäranwärter" (founded 1900) were not members of the KB, but relations here had always been cordial⁽¹⁸⁾. With military defeat came the abdication of the Kaiser: this was "not a mere change of the form of government". It was - at least for the Prussian Army - "the collapse of the World".⁽¹⁹⁾ The prospects for the KB which had so closely depended

(14) Saul op.cit.

(15) NH 916, 194: Heinrich Fuhr: "Wesen und Wirken der Kriegervereine".

(16) Schulz-Luckau p.57.

(17) Alfred Westphal, "Handbuch für die Kriegervereine", 1922, p.189//NH 916, 176: "Kve als Pflanzstätten ..." (K).

(18) Polizeidirektion Munich, 24a IIIIF 11/202 (MSO).

(19) Erich von Manstein, "Aus einem Soldatenleben", Bonn 1958, p.51.

on the civil and military establishment, and was already under attack from the political left could scarcely have been bleaker.

Many people considered that the KB had lost its entire "raison d'être"⁽²⁰⁾. Doubts concerning the further existence of the KV movement continued to be expressed for months after the Revolution⁽²¹⁾ and as late as August 1919, General von Heeringen, the new President of the KB, was going to some lengths to dispel these in his speeches⁽²²⁾. Rumours were rife that the Allies intended to demand the dissolution of the KB⁽²³⁾, or that this had in fact already taken place⁽²⁴⁾. These expressions of uncertainty were fanned by a lack of communication within the organisation; members often failed to take or read the "Kriegerzeitung" while local Vereine did little to pass information upwards⁽²⁵⁾. Together with the campaign by the "Reichsbund", these circumstances contributed to a discernible reaction against the KV movement, notably among the younger veterans. Even in South Germany, demands were made for a relaxation of the discipline in the KV organisation: thus a representative at the 35th (1919) Abgeordnetentag of the Badischer Kriegerbund referred to "die Hitze in den jungen Köpfen" in this connection⁽²⁶⁾. Similarly in Württemberg and other places, suggestions were made to give "Kriegervereine" less militarist names⁽²⁷⁾. Thus, hand in hand with the decrease in membership resulting from loss of territory and military occupation, went *resignations of individuals and whole Vereine* from the KB, and even occasional dissolution of Vereine⁽²⁸⁾.

(20) NH 916, 1919.

(21) *ibid.* e.g. Hagemann to KB, 12-4-19 (K).

(22) NH 906, 1. NH 916, 187-8.

(23) Westphal *op.cit.* p.21.

(24) NH 916.

(25) NH 906, 1: Heeringen at PLKV Abtag, August 1919 (K).

(26) BMI/PS: "Bad.KB": 1919 Business Report (Ka).

(27) WMI 206: Württbg. KB: 1919 Business Report (L).

(28) NH 906, 1.

The precarious state of the KB was in no measure aided by the rash of new veteran organisations that sprang into existence in the months following the armistice. Some of these like the "Republikanischer Führerbund" joined the hostile, socialist camp with the "Reichsbund". The majority were not politically against the KB, but were independent, rival associations. Here again the question of motive plays an important part: the numerous "Regimentsvereine" were set up from a very similar standpoint to that of the very first KV, while the Freikorps were para-military groups formed for a specific military rôle; these obviously attracted the most active and aggressive of the discharged soldiers. A third group was that of the officers' associations.

In 1914 there had been 19,826 regular officers in the German Army, who formed a close-knit privileged caste closely linked to the Kaiser in matters of honour and general ideology, strongly conservative in outlook and strongly united in a jealous preservation of their social purity. This was specially so in the élite cavalry and guards regiments and while non-noble officers predominated in other branches of the service, these quickly adopted the attitudes and way of life of the nobility, and many were in fact ennobled in the course of their service⁽²⁹⁾. Opposition to extending the privileges of the officer corps to the middle classes and below was almost insurmountable, and during the war all manner of expedients - "Feldwebel-Leutnante", "Offizier-Stellvertreter" etc,-were used to avoid placing the new officers on a par with the old "regular". Thus in 1919 there were still only 23,000 officers with regular commissions; the majority of officers were "der Reserve" (141,000) and "Einjährige", "Feldwebel-Leutnant" etc (106,000) making a total of some 270,000⁽³⁰⁾. In the new Reichswehr only 4,000 officers could be employed.

(29) F.L. Carsten, "Reichswehr and Politics", Oxford 1966. p.3.

(30) Figures based on NL Schellch 86 (F).

A situation, similar in many respects, could be seen in the "Unteroffizier-Korps".

The problem of re-employing and sorting out the economic problems of over a quarter of a million trained leaders is in itself a formidable one. Taken in conjunction with a revolutionary situation, manifesting itself in abuse and attacks on officers in uniform it is hardly surprising that these men should seek some organisational protection, and furthermore, that they should seek it in their own formations, rather than in the general Kriegervereine. Certainly, the percentage of KV presidents who were Reserve or Landwehr officers, rose from 73% in 1895 to 87% in 1913⁽³¹⁾, but apart from attendance at parades and celebrations, officer participation in the real work of the KV was small. Moreover, in a political situation, which many believed could well follow the Russian pattern with the wholesale murder of nobility and officers, it is unlikely that a newly retired officer could expect really efficient, sympathetic representation of his interests by organisations chiefly concerned with NCOs and ordinary soldiers.

Already on 28th November 1918 the old established (1907) "Deutsches Offizierblatt" was carrying information concerning a proposed "Wirtschaftsverband aller Offiziere und oberen Militärbeamten", whose driving force was Major von Oppeln-Bronikowski. A meeting of officers and their wives in the banqueting hall of the "Rheingold" on 29th November was called at the instigation of Captain Erich von Salzmänn. This discussed the matter but came to no definite conclusions. The following week (2nd and 3rd December) saw the establishment of the "Deutscher Offizier-Bund" as the first major "officers only" association. The DOB held its first public meeting on the 5th and was openly assured of the help of the War Ministry⁽³²⁾. The

(31) Saul op.cit.

(32) D-O-B1 28-11-18; 5-12-18; 12-12-18.

War Minister, Lieutenant-General Schellch became the Bund's first president, and other generals such as von Bacmeister and von Kuhl played an important part initially⁽³³⁾. Already, however, it was becoming clear that the DOB was not satisfactory as far as the political activities of the officer corps were concerned. Later in December, and closely associated with the small, extremist "National Democratic Party", the "Nationalverband deutscher Offiziere" was set up. This from the outset was a nationalist/monarchist political association that pursued a violently anti-republican propaganda⁽³⁴⁾. These were only the two most important of the new officer associations. Many smaller ones sprang up, together with special bodies for NCOs only⁽³⁵⁾.

The problems then, which confronted the German ex-servicemen's organisations in 1918 were formidable; internal dissensions of a social nature tended to make more difficult the delicate readjustment to the new dispensation. Some of the veteran associations were to adjust more easily than others; some failed altogether to come to terms with constitutional government. Events between 1918 and 1933 must be seen against this background - the continuing struggle for survival, economic and political, together with the search for a rôle in the new Germany.

2+ THE ORGANISATION OF THE KB

The one advantage possessed by the KB over the new associations that sprang up in 1918/19 was its established organisational network including its own press and journal with a 70,000 circulation. The nature of the organisation is of considerable relevance to a discussion of the Bund's potential value as a political association.

(33) See p. 24.

(34) D-O-B1 52, 1918 p.831//Centralverein Zeitung 10-12-26, p.650.

(35) "Bund der Aktiver Unteroffiziere" 11508 (MK).

"Bund der inaktiver Unteroffiziere" Polizeidirektion Munich, 118/6272, (MSO).

From the outset, things had been bedevilled by the particularist attitudes of the big southern states. The KB was in form a federation of 25 Landesverbände ranging in size from 3,000 to 1,100,000⁽¹⁾. Just as Prussia itself spread right across Germany so did the Kriegervereine, Kreiskriegerverbände, Regierungsbezirk- and Provinzialkriegerverbände of the Preussischer Landeskriegerverband side by side with the other Landesverbände of varying size. This heterogeneous composition was an obvious weakness and little attempt was made to overcome "particularism" until Hitler re-organised the country. However, in 1921, the KB praesidium was at long last empowered to issue orders binding on the various state associations. The name of the Bund had already in 1919 been changed to "Deutsche Reichskriegerbund 'Kyffhäuser'", and in 1921 the old "Deutsche Kriegerbund" assumed the name "Deutsche Kriegerwohlfahrtsgemeinschaft", while continuing in its rôle as the welfare group for the Prussian branch and a few other North-German Landesverbände⁽²⁾. The president of the Prussian branch was ipso facto president of the KB and the administrative HQ of both organisations was the same. This at least was more satisfactory.

Financially, the main income of the KB came from the 1 mark per 10 members subscription from the regional associations. Each KV member in turn paid 1 mark per year to his Landesverband in addition to local charges. Thus in 1931 the Prussian association had the following income and expenditure:-

(1) Based on figures in NH 912, NH 931: (1930 and 1932) (K).
 (2) Westphal, p.22, 24//WMI 206, 1919 Business Report (L).

INCOME

EXPENDITURE

Subscriptions 1,150,000 M
 Interest 65,000
 etc 25,000
1,240,000 M

Subscriptions (KB) 115,000 M
 Subscriptions (DKWG) 460,000
 Administration 150,000
 Youth Groups 120,000
 Shooting 20,000
 Propaganda 25,000
 etc 350,000
1,240,000 M

Altogether some 53% went on some form of welfare, 16% on administration, and 12% on youth training and shooting⁽³⁾. A certain amount of help came from the government⁽⁴⁾, together with donations from trade, industry and big landowners⁽⁵⁾. The central assets at the beginning of the Weimar Republic stood at 600,000 Mk, less than half those of either the Baden or Württemberg branches⁽⁶⁾. The organisation recovered fairly rapidly after the 1923 crash, and displayed every sign of possessing a satisfactory, even sound financial basis. At the time of its dissolution in 1943 the KB had 25-30 million RM in liquid assets and a further 10 million invested⁽⁷⁾.

The effective direction of the Bund was in the hands of the 1st President and the other eleven members of the praesidium, only four of whom actually lived in Berlin⁽⁸⁾. The only real check on their activity was the annual audit and "Vertretertagung", although as president of the Prussian association the 1st President of the Bund was also subject to its annual "Abgeordnetentag". A two-thirds majority of the Vertretertagung was needed to change the statutes of the Bund. The President

(3) NH 926, 60-2. Parolebuch (K).
 (4) See p. 95.
 (5) BPD p.307.
 (6) F199 XX Kriegsakten, Einwohnerwehr 1919-20, "Staatsanzeiger" 3-10-19 (I)// WMI 206, 1919 Business Report (L)//BMI/PS "Bad.KV" 1918 Business Report(Ka)
 (7) Sammlung Schumacher 247: statement 26-3-43 (K).
 (8) Westphal p.102-4//Jahrbuch 1931.

could only therefore be removed on a similar decision and majority in both the KB and Prussian branch assemblies⁽⁹⁾. The chief obstacle to political activity was the basic statutory "Überparteilichkeit" and a good deal of preparatory canvassing on the part of an energetic 1st President would have been necessary before this could have been overcome, particularly as, since 1915, socialists too had been admitted to membership. Agreement on the form such prospective political activity would take, would have been that much more difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, a lot would have depended on the attitude of the chief regional leaders since the traditional social limitations placed on the offices at each level, combined with a customary acceptance of "superior authority" tended to militate against a consensus opinion rising from the KVe to the Vertretertagung. While the top posts at State, Regierungsbezirk and provincial level tended to be occupied by middle and higher ranking ex-officers and officials⁽¹⁰⁾, and had the backing of permanent staff⁽¹¹⁾, these had to take serious notice of their Kreisverband chairmen. The Kreisverbände, corresponding to the Landrat areas, were really the most important of all levels, being controlled by the individual KV chairmen, and being thus in direct contact with the "grass roots" of the organisation⁽¹²⁾. In 1932 for example, one in seven of the Prussian Kreisverbände demanded Horn's resignation⁽¹³⁾. The Kreisverband was the obvious focus for any political or quasi-political activity, and became thus the basis for the Kyffhäuserjugend groups.

The 28,000 individual KVe were scattered all over Germany and were specially active in agricultural areas⁽¹⁴⁾. After overcoming initial difficulties they attracted many World War veterans during the 1920s.

(9) Westphal p.102-4.

(10) See p. 23.

(11) See p. 143. //Westphal p.176-80.

(12) NH 906, 1: Heeringen's speech August 1919.

(13) NH 931: Analysis of local positions in Presidential Election.

(14) BPD p.307.

In 1929 66% of Bavarian members came into this category⁽¹⁵⁾. Each KV would also have an important number of women ("Honorary" members who could vote or "Förderer" who could not) and youngsters without military service ("Extraordinary" members, with the prospect of becoming ordinary members after 2 years)⁽¹⁶⁾. KV membership was thus often a family affair. The majority of KVe did not have their own private clubhouse, and usually met once or twice a month in a local cafe "clubroom". Run theoretically on "democratic" lines it is clear from an article in the "Kyffhäuser" in 1930, that doubt existed in some KVe as to what this actually meant: "Don't interrupt speakers - only speak if you have something important to say - be brief, polite and peaceable. Honour all members equally, exclude political and religious controversies - and purely personal questions. Accept defeat and majority votes gracefully and don't immediately threaten to resign"⁽¹⁷⁾. Experience in democratic, constitutional forms and procedures was not strong among the lower classes in Weimar Germany.

From this brief examination of the organisation of the KB it is clear that obstacles existed to adapting it for political ends. On the other hand, the administrative and financial structure was sound and in practice a great deal of directional power fell into the hands of the first President. Much obviously depended on the skill, personality, and political understanding of the men who held this office.

3. SOCIAL ASPECTS

A comprehensive statistical analysis of the various types of ex-servicemen's organisations in terms of occupation is not possible. The detailed lists that are available do not all come from the Weimar period itself and in the case of the officer associations the differences in

(15) R43 I 766, 102: Reich Office Munich to Reichskanzler 11-5-29 (K).

(16) NH 906, 42: Jahresrundschriften 1931 (1-12-30) (K).

(17) NH 906, 124: KY 15-6-30: Col. Immanuel's 12 Points.

"arm-status" must be borne in mind: this is best indicated by the percentages of noble officers in the various branches of the service:

Cavalry	45	
Staff	22	
Infantry	18	
Mechanised	16	
Medical	13	
Artillery	11	
Communications	8	
Intelligence	5	
Engineers	4	(1926) ⁽¹⁾

Similarly, a lower proportion of officers were of aristocratic origin in Bavaria, than in Prussia⁽²⁾. Nevertheless, the figures do suggest certain broad trends, especially if it is remembered that of the 266,000 officers left without employment once the Reichswehr was established,

7% were ex-regulars

53% "der Reserve", and

40% "Einjährige", "Offizier-Stellvertreter", etc⁽³⁾

In analysing the lists in question the following "classes" were recognised:-

- A: Lower:- workers
- B: Lower-Middle:- shop and trade employees, small proprietors, schoolmasters, lower professions and officials
- C: Upper-Middle:- factory owners, higher officials and professions (Medicine; Law; Universities): engineer officers
- D: Upper:- most regular officers, big landowners and nobility

(1) Karl Demeter, "The German Officer Corps", p.263.

(2) *ibid.* p.56.

(3) Nachlass Schedsch 86 (F).

KYFFHÄUSERBUNDOFFICER ASSOCIATIONS

	1911 Ordinary KV Members (4)	1913 Prussian Kreis Leaders (5)	1918 Württemberg Bezirk Leaders (6)	1934 Saxon Bezirk Leaders (7)	1938 All Verein Leaders (8)	1925 Bavarian Engineer Officers (9)	1930 Bavarian Engineer Officers (10)	1931 Saxon Artillery Officers (11)
	%							
A	81	10	8	5	45	0	0	0
B	18	42	69	64	45	55	67	55
C	-	34	20	22	8	41	29	27
D	-	14	3	8	2	3	4	4

(4) Saul op.cit.

(5) *ibid.*

(6) WMI 206: Report of conference 1918 (L).

(7) NL Schwertfeger: 1934 list (K).

(8) Reinhard op.cit. p.38.

(9) WK VII, 707: list 1-4-25: Verein of Officers 1st KB Engineers (F).

(10) *ibid.* 1930: Officer Verein of former "Pioniere u. Minenwerfer" (F).

(11) NL Schwertfeger 431 (K).

The general picture that emerges as far as the KB itself was concerned is of predominantly working-class Kriegervereine, predominantly lower middle-class Kreis and Bezirk leaders and, as will be seen later, a much more marked upper-middle and upper-class national and "Land"-leadership. Of the officer associations, the Saxon Heavy Artillery Verein is probably more "typical" than the Bavarian Engineers, and suggests a certain social affinity to the middle-ranking KB leaders (Bezirk i.e.). The lower middle-class element is particularly strong, and this was probably the case with all officer clubs, other than the cavalry and élite Guards regiments. Reinhardt's 1938 figures would suggest a considerable measure of "democratisation" by the Nazis, although in the case of Bavaria a higher proportion of local leaders came from the lower class anyway⁽¹²⁾.

A closer examination of the ranks and types of commission of the Saxon artillery officers would indicate that out of a total of 520, at least 26% were ex-regulars, more than the 7% overall average would lead one to expect. Of the "ex-regulars" at least a third were still in fact serving in the Reichswehr. The predominance of reserve and Landwehr officers is hardly surprising although the 255 (49% total) "Leutnante der Reserve" form a considerable part of the association.

(12) Saul op.cit.

The general conclusions to be drawn from these figures are firstly, that the KB, although democratic in theory was much less so in practice, certainly with regard to leadership. Like the German army itself before and after 1918, the higher the level of leadership, the higher the social status of the leader⁽¹³⁾, both in terms of origin, and in the case of ex-servicemen, of occupation. Secondly, individual officer clubs, certainly of the 100,000 strong DOB, and the regimental associations, contained a strong lower middle-class reserve-officer element, with the inherent social outlook this implies - especially the desire to model its behaviour on the aristocratic professional officers⁽¹⁴⁾. In the ROB, outlook was especially homogeneous: 95% of members were "Beamte"⁽¹⁵⁾. Finally, the participation of ex-officers in the local KVe, already declining before 1914, continued to do so until, by 1938, only 14% of local chairmen were in this category⁽¹⁶⁾. On the other hand the 100,000 officers in the KB played an important part at higher levels⁽¹⁷⁾.

The national direction of the main veterans' associations was in the hands mainly of retired generals in their sixties. This was so in the KB, DOB and NDO. The Stahlhelm and ROB were exceptions.

(13) Kurt Schütze, "Reichswehr wider die Nation", Berlin 1963: p.29.
 (14) Demeter op.cit.
 (15) BPD p.449.
 (16) Reinhard op.cit.//Saul op.cit.
 (17) BPD p.307.

(18)

TABLE COMPARING CAREERS OF NATIONAL + PROVINCIAL LEADERS.

NAME	BORN	SERVICE	RANK 1914	RANK 1918	GRENZ- SCHUTZ	RANK OR REICHSMILITÄR	KYFFHÄUSERBUND	OTHER ORGANISATIONS:	NOTES.
VON HEERENGEN	1850	1870-1: INFANTRY: STAFF: WAR MINISTER 1909-13	GENERAL -OBERST	GENERAL -OBERST			1 st PRESIDENT 1918-26		
VON HORN	1866	FIELD ARTILLERY: STAFF	OBERST -LEUTNANT	GENERAL -MAJOR	✓	GENERAL der ARTILLERIE	1 st PRESIDENT 1926-34		"POUR LE MÉRITE": Feb. 1926:
REINHARD	1869	INFANTRY: GUARDS	MAJOR	OBERST	✓	OBERST FREIKORPS	1 st PRESIDENT 1934-43	DOB 1919-20: 3 rd PRESIDENT. NDD 1933-34: PRESIDENT. RVDD 1934-40: 3 rd PRESIDENT. NDD 1923-26: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Freikorps leader: Kapp Putsch: "POUR LE MÉRITE": later SS. General der 215. LEFT Reichswehr 1922: stayed under REINHARD.
VON ENCKEVORT	1868	CAVALRY	MAJOR	OBERST	✓	GENERAL "MAJOR"	3 rd PRESIDENT 1927-		
VON FABECK	1867	GUARDS: STAFF.	OBERST -LEUTNANT	GENERAL -MAJOR		GENERAL -LEUTNANT	4 th PRESIDENT 1930-	DOB 1920-1: 3 rd PRESIDENT NDD 1921-34: Praesidium, REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION.	LEFT Reichswehr 1921: stayed under REINHARD
RITTER VON BECKH	1870	INFANTRY:	HAUPT- MANN	OBERST -LEUTNANT	✓	GENERAL -MAJOR OBERLAND	BAYERISCHE KRIEGERBUND. 1925 → 1 st PRES 1932. KB: 1932: 2 nd PRES.		LEFT Reichswehr 1927: stayed under REINHARD
VON KESSINGER	1866	INFANTRY: STAFF	OBERST -LEUTNANT	OBERST		GENERAL -MAJOR	WEIMAR L.V.: 1 st PRES 1922 →		P.O.W. (Tank - 1918)
DR. VON MAUR	1863	FIELD ARTILLERY:	OBERST	GENERAL -MAJOR		GENERAL -LEUTNANT	WÜRTTEMBERG L.V. 1 st PRES 1924 →		LEFT Reichswehr 1919: "POUR LE MÉRITE": stayed under Reinhard: SS rank: LEFT Reichswehr 1928. stayed under REINHARD.
VON DIDTMANN	1868	INFANTRY.	MAJOR	OBERST -LEUTNANT		GENERAL -LEUTNANT	HESSE LV. 1 st Pres 1925 →		
FRIEBSCH	1871	INFANTRY	MAJOR	MAJOR	✓	GENERAL -LEUTNANT	HANNOVER PROV. KV: 1 st PRES 1931 →	DOB, Stahlhelm member 1929 →	LEFT Reichswehr 1929 stayed under REINHARD LEFT Reichswehr 1928 stayed under REINHARD.
MÜLLER	1875	ENGINEER / TRANSPORT.	?	?		GENERAL -MAJOR	BERLIN HAUPT KV: 1 st PRES 1932 →		
SCHÜCH	1864	INFANTRY: STAFF.		GENERAL -LEUTNANT				DOB President: 1918-1919	WAR MINISTER: 1918.
VON HUTIER	1855	INFANTRY: STAFF: GUARDS.	GENERAL -LEUTNANT	GENERAL der INFANTRIE				DOB President 1920-	
VON RADOWITZ	1839	INFANTRY: STAFF:	OBERST -LEUTNANT	GENERAL -MAJOR				DOB Executive PRES 1919-34.	NSDAP Jan 1932.
VON JENA	1875	INFANTRY: GUARDS:	HAUPTMANN	MAJOR	✓	MAJOR FREIKORPS		NDD 1921-4 Political Expert 1926-34 Exec. PRES. STAHLHELM: liaison OFFICER at DOORH. "ORGESCH": 1921	1912-14: Royal a.d.c. 1934: to KB under REINHARD later: Lieutenant General in WAFEN SS.

From the accompanying table⁽¹⁸⁾ it can be seen that the majority were from the aristocracy and had served not only in the Imperial Army but also in the Reichswehr. Many had had experience in élite branches of the army, and in the Freikorps and Grenzschutz. Several of the KB leaders had connections with the officer associations, particularly the NDO. Heeringen and Horn had both been involved in politics at the highest level, the former as War Minister and the latter as a henchman of Seeckt⁽¹⁹⁾. While, of course, not all the Bezirk and provincial leaders were ex-generals many were ex-officers or high-ranking officials. Among the middle and lower echelons of the KB leadership, while they became more scarce, the professional officers are still in evidence, and locally, played important rôles. Men like Col. von Puttkamer (Magdeburg), Major Karl Lange (Zoppot, Danzig: Einwohnerwehr leader, joined NSDAP in 1930, SS Sturmbannführer in 1936), Major Otto von Weiss (Kreisverband Wehlau: East Prussia: organised 1919 "Heimatwehr" and "Heimatbund" against Bolshevist threat; 1928 organised the East Prussian "Bauernnotbewegung" aimed directly against the Prussian Government's agricultural policy; sentenced to terms of imprisonment; joined NSDAP 1932), Major Walter Jungnickel (since 1922 a member of "Saxon Grenadiers" in Dresden; activity in para-military Verbände, 1925/32 led Saxon Volkssportschule in Schmorkau; in "Reichskuratorium für Jugend-

-
- (18) Heeringen: Reinhard, "Wehen der Republik", Berlin 1933,
 "H. an den Kriegervereinen", p. 12-14.
 Horn: "Die Garde" 3/6 p.104//Carsten op.cit. pp.169-70,
 Harold Gordon, "Reichswehr and German Republic", p.280,
 NL Seeckt, 72, 17: correspondence with Gobbin, Finckenstein.
 Reinhard: R: "NS Reichskriegerbund"; "Wehen der Republik".
 D-O-B1 32, 1919; 35, 1919; 1, 1920.
 Enckevort: Reinhard "NS Reichskriegerbund" p.22.
 Fabeck: *ibid.* p.29; D-O-B1 21-5-20.
 Beckh: *ibid.* p.421.
 Kessinger: *ibid.* p.256.
 Maur: *ibid.* p.276.
 Didtmann: *ibid.* p.322.
 Fritsch: *ibid.* p.336.
 Müller: *ibid.* p.165.
 Hutier: 'DOB 10, 1925: p.226.
 Schellch: Nachlass (F): D-O-B1 16-10-19; 13-11-19; 5-8-22.
 Radowitz, Jena and others: Reinhard op.cit.//biographic material in
 Berlin Document Center.
 (19)Carsten p.169-70.

ertüchtigung" and later Obersturmführer in the SA; particularly concerned throughout with the education of youth in military skills; joined NSDAP in 1933): All these were promoted to the provincial leadership after 1934.

It is interesting to see the type of person advanced under Reinhard. The overwhelming majority are ex-regular officers, Captains, like Brunner, Majors, like von Bünau, Griasch, von Behr and von Proeck, Lt. Cols., like Collani, Knecht, von Kretschmann, and even the odd generals, like Generallieutenant Fritz Koch and Generalmajor von Kuhlwein: The pattern at the top did not change⁽²⁰⁾ Col. Reinhard himself, a tough ex-Guards Freikorps leader, although out of the service since 1920, was progressively promoted to the illustrious rank of "General der Infanterie".

The leaders of the officer associations were also men of distinction: General der Infanterie Dr. Hermann von Kuhl (DOB) was the only German besides Bismarck to be awarded the coveted "Pour le Mérite" both for war service and attainment in peacetime⁽²¹⁾. Generallieutenant Scheüch served as War Minister in 1918. In the other veteran organisations, such as the Waffeninge, the picture is the same: General Ächter had led the "Schützen and Wanderbund", the para-military successor to the Oberland Bund⁽²²⁾. General Freiherr von Watter had led the Freikorps largely responsible for quelling the Ruhr in 1919, and was dismissed from the Reichswehr in 1920 for openly supporting the Kapp Putsch⁽²³⁾.

In general, the survival of the social codes and class barriers established in Imperial Germany is nowhere more strongly apparent than in the ex-servicemen's organisations. In a period of social unrest such as followed the abdication of the Kaiser, it was fairly obvious that the

(20) Reinhard op.cit.

(21) FY 11-11-1956.

(22) R58 I 1114: Right Radical Movement (K).

(23) NL Marx 1109: "Köln Volkszeitung" 13-10-38 (KH)//Horkenbach: "Das Deutsche Reich", Vol. I.

adherents of the "old order" would band together in self preservation. On the other hand the continued divisions and rivalries among the veterans associations constituted in themselves a serious threat to "Volksgemeinschaft", and even within them there were large numbers of ex-NCOs and reserve officers from the war who were becoming increasingly unwilling to accept either the new "system" or what was left of the old. This feeling lay at the heart of the Freikorps and later the Nazi movement. Aging Prussian generals were never renowned for their ability to receive and adapt themselves to new ideas. Although sometimes "hidebound" by their traditional concept of honour, they were nevertheless men of intelligence and administrative ability. The experiences of some of them in the paramilitary Verbände and post-war Reichswehr politics were, however, a double-edged weapon. While aware of the advantages of propping up the weak "Weimar System" they were also aware of the ease with which it could be toppled. All too many of these retired generals were to contribute to activities tending to the dissolution of the Republic - without having the originality of mind, the constructive ability, to realise their own vague concepts of what was to replace it.

4. EX-SERVICEMEN: PENSIONS AND WELFARE

The obligation of the State to care for its old soldiers and their dependants was first recognised in Prussia after the War of Liberation 1813-1815, the first time the principle of "National Service" had been introduced. Previous to this the lucky few had found some refuge in orphanages and invalid-houses, but for the majority of ex-servicemen, even disabled ones, the only possible livelihood where normal employment was out of the question was the charity of relatives and passers-by in the street. The early pension legislation was, however, far from

adequate. . Even the 1873 Law, which in many ways was distinctly progressive, still gave insufficient attention to the needs of the dependants of the reserve-soldier, killed in action. The resources of the developing KV movement were limited at this stage, and in general it was only found possible to alleviate the hardship in individual cases, where the State provided insufficiently. In the later years of the nineteenth century the Deutsche Kriegerbund established and ran a few orphanages, but by far the most important function of the ex-servicemen's associations in this field was the representation of the needs of disabled and dependants to the organs of government responsible for drafting legislation. With the forging of closer links between KB and State in military and political affairs, the influence of the veteran-lobby in the area of pensions and welfare was seen to increase. This was so in the acts of 1895, 1901 and 1906 - particularly the later ones of 1907 and 1913. Nevertheless, all these measures had been drawn up to meet the demands of short, "limited" wars, involving only professional and reserve armies. It rapidly became clear after 1914 that the terrifying casualties being suffered by what soon developed into a "Volksheer" conscripted from all branches of society, necessitated action in the areas of pensions and welfare on a scale hitherto unprecedented. To meet these new pressures the "Reichsausschuss für die bürgerliche Kriegsbeschädigten-Fürsorge" was set up on 16th September 1915, primarily to co-ordinate the activities of public and private relief organisations, and also to advise on the drafting of legislation. While participation of official KB representatives in the sub-committees of the Reichsausschuss was important, as indeed it was in the "Hauptausschuss für Kriegerwitwen und Waisepflege" (set up 17th April 1915) and the "Nationalstiftung" and "Ludendorffspende", the KB leaders felt strongly that all welfare and pensions arrangements should be brought under direct government control. Probably, the aim here was to have the Kyffhäuserbund

explicitly entrenched in the Imperial establishment, controlling all relief work, very much as the "National-Sozialistische Kriegsofper Versorgung" (NSKOV) was to do under Hitler. This would have proved difficult in view of the "anti-socialist" rôle already created for the KB; once the trade unions and political parties of the left had established their own associations for disabled and dependants, it was out of the question. Even before the end of the war (August 1918) these new bodies had been granted official representation on the Reichsausschuss, on an equal footing with the KB. On 8th February 1919 the old "Reichsausschuss" was taken over by the Ministry of Labour as Department IV. A new "Reichsausschuss", purely an advisory body, was soon set up and of its 33 members only 4 came from the KB while its socialist arch-enemy, the Reichsbund provided 13. "How are the mighty fallen!"⁽¹⁾

The sheer size of the problem of disabled and dependants created by the First World War saddled the Weimar Republic with an enormous financial burden. In 1924 there were over two and a quarter million pensioned in these categories:-

Disabled	721,000	(increasing)
Widows	365,000	(decreasing)
Orphans	1,032,000	(decreasing)
Other Dependants	200,000	(decreasing)

Annual state expenditure continued to rise throughout the Weimar period as a result of a continuing supply of claims and national economic distress. The figures for the 1928/29 Reich Budget⁽²⁾ included:-

(1) Westphal op.cit. p.180-7

(2) "Deutsche Wehr" 19-12-28//Statistisches Jahrbuch 1928.

PENSIONS AND NATIONAL ASSISTANCE - 1,780 MILLION R.M. (20%)

viz:

"Old Army" Officers/Officials and Dependants	235 milln. R.M.
"Reichswehr" All Ranks and Dependants	60 milln. R.M.
1864/71 Veterans	20 milln. R.M.
1914/18 Disabled and Dependants	1,300 milln. R.M. (14½%)

(Percentages: proportion of total "ordinary" expenditure.)

The economic misfortunes of Germany in the 1920s were rooted in the war itself and not only in the peace. While, of course, payment of reparations involved similar annual sums (e.g. 1930: 1.5 milliards), these payments were not made throughout the period and were largely financed by American and British loans⁽³⁾.

The payment of pensions was made by the Ministry of Labour according to the provisions of the "Reichsversorgungsgesetz" of 12th May 1920 and subsequent measures like the "Wehrmachtversorgungsgesetz". The granting and fixing of pensions was carried out by the special boards established by the 10th January 1922 "Verfahrensgesetz"⁽⁴⁾ and it was in the expert presentation and advocacy of individual cases to these boards, that the various private associations provided a very valuable service of which some half of the total number of pensionable disabled and dependants availed themselves. The comparative strengths, etc, of the main independent associations, based on an assessment made by the NSDAP in 1930 are given in the following table⁽⁵⁾:-

(3) Erich Eyck, "History of the Weimar Republic", Harvard 1967; p.75(Vol.II).

(4) Westphal p.207.

(5) Sammlung Schumacher 255: "NSKOV": Reichsleitung to Hitler 7-1-33 (K).
Grosse Brockhaus 1931.

REPRESENTATIVES ON REICHSAUSSCHUSS

	NAME	FOUNDED	% (TOTAL)	NUMBERS	POLITICAL
4	Kyffhäuserverband *	1920	18	400,000	"schlapp deutsch-national"
13	Reichsbund	1917	13	300,000	Socialist (orig: Freie Gewerkschaften)
4	Reichsverband (orig: Einheitsverband - Essenerverband 1916/19)	1923	8	180,000	"neutral, but Marxist influenced"
5	Zentralverband (orig: Behrens Verband 1918 Münchener Bund (Bay. Kgrbd.) 1918) Essenerverband (Kassell) 1916)	1919	3	70,000	strong Zentrum influence (orig: Non-Socialist Trade Unions)
4	Internationaler Bund	1919	2	50,000	Communist
2	Deutsche Offizier-Bund				
1	Bund Erblindeter Krieger	1916		3,000	

(*The name "Kyffhäuserverband der Kriegsbeschädigten und Hinterbliebenen" was not used till 1932, and should be distinguished from the student "Kyffhäuserverband": Previously the unwieldy title "Verband der Kb und Kh des RKB Kyffhäuser" was used.)

Before examining the work of the Kyffhäuserverband in more detail it is worth investigating the influence that the veterans' associations had on the formulation of the Reichsversorgungsgesetz of 1920. The draft of the new law had long been under consideration by the old Reichsausschuss and this work was taken over by the Ministry of Labour in 1919. The first draft introduced important changes of principle: abolition of rank variation and of war and mutilation allowances made all war-disabled theoretically equal: these and other changes were in general favourably received by the socialist associations. On the other hand, provisions for compensation based on pre-war income, which would restore some measure of gradation according to rank for the former regular soldiers, were not. KB and DOB were naturally in favour of retaining this compensation if the "rank" principle had to be dropped. All the

associations were united in their opposition to a further principle which sought to apply a "means test", reducing pensions as income from work or investment exceeded certain levels. The sessions of the Reichsausschuss were taken up with acrimonious wranglings, between the socialist representatives demanding a (higher) "Einheitsrente", and the KB/DOB members who were in favour of accepting the basic rates and aiming at a higher "Teuerungszulage" or cost-of-living allowance.

In the event, although predictably, the "rank" differences favoured by the KB/DOB were not restored, the Law contained several provisions "in lieu": distinction was made between NCO and man, older officer and younger officer; "Ausgleichszulage" took into account former professional earnings, "Ortszulage" the costs of different "Ortsklasse". Similarly, the old "mutilation" allowance was replaced by an additional grant for "severely disabled". On the other hand, the "means test" was only to affect those in the "higher income" bracket (5,000 M, raised shortly to 7,000M) - the ordinary workers' pensions being in no way curtailed. More controversial was the compulsory payment of the small "10%" pensions and those due to reserve officers and officials, in one lump settlement. This was immediately contested by the DOB. Partially reduced work capacities in still serviceable reserve officers were, however, now to be compensated according to former incomes. Like most legislation this law was not wholly satisfactory to anyone. The most glaring defect, the fact that no provision had been made for the "Altverteranen", those professional officers and soldiers who left the Service before the outbreak of war, was soon remedied by the issue of a separate draft law prepared in conjunction with DOB, KB and the "Reichsverband ehemaliger und derzeitiger Berufssoldaten" (RdB) - not, i.e. the socialist welfare associations who were only concerned (in theory at any rate) with World War disabled and dependants. Last minute modifications before the draft was passed by the Reichstag resulted from lobbying by the veterans' associations, and achieved tangible benefits for the "old veterans" notably

in the shape of the right to choose which scheme they would come under: old or new. Similarly, the "Wehrmachtversorgungsgesetz" brought into the scope of the new legislation those soldiers disabled as a result of accidents sustained during the time of their service, but not while on duty; likewise, with dependants of soldiers killed in this way. Other aspects continued to be bones of contention: thus the "cost-of-living" allowance was only to be increased in cases of need duly investigated and approved - not, more reasonably, (as the KB maintained) by a purely administrative sliding-scale tangibly linked to the cost of living by relation to food prices⁽⁶⁾.

DOB pressure subsequently helped to obtain a considerable number of minor modifications to proposed legislation: most of these secured varying increases in pensions; such, for example, was the successful retention of the "Kampfszuschlag" and partially, of the "mutilation" supplement⁽⁷⁾. An important part of DOB propaganda was directed towards refuting socialist attacks on the whole question of officers' pensions. Thus statistics published in 1927 pointed out that the percentages of ex-regular officers entitled to draw pensions, who actually did so, were low (e.g. only 30% of Captains, and 20% of Lieutenant-Generals). Similarly the number of regular officers promoted during the years 1914/20, did not noticeably exceed that promoted during the years 1908/14; of the 595 Lieutenants commissioned in 1893, for example, only 7 had reached the rank of Lt. Col. by 1919⁽⁸⁾. All methods were utilised to put their case across, ranging from direct personal approaches to ministers, sending circulars to Reichstag members and enlisting the aid of local officials. (Thus in 1928 the Bavarian Staatsministerium forwarded a DOB proposal to

(6) Westphal p.195 et seq.

(7) "DOB" 25-11-28: "Zehn Jahre DOB").

(8) "DOB" 17, 1927: p.727.

Berlin, with their recommendation)⁽⁹⁾.

Overall, it may be said that the KB and DOE energetically represented their particular social interests to the Reich authorities responsible for drafting the laws concerning disabled and dependants: the one advocated the interests of the old veterans, the conservative working class and the "kleinbürgerlich"; the other, the needs of those 266,000 officers left without employment, together with those who had retired before the war. In view of the socialist majority on the Reichsausschuss and the difficult financial climate, their efforts met with a good deal of success.

In addition to direct influence exerted on the drafting of legislation and the advocacy of the individual cases of some 18% of all pensioned disabled and dependants, the KB had its own funds and special institutions which could be used in cases of real hardship falling outside the scope of state legislation, or thereby inadequately provided for. The subordinate bodies through which these funds could be dispensed suffered from the organisational complexity that bedevilled the KB as a whole. Initially, the institutions that developed within the old Deutsche Kriegerbund embodied the welfare organs of Prussia and some 10 small Landesverbände of North and Central Germany. From the beginning of 1922 the Deutsche Kriegerbund was known as the "Deutsche Kriegerwohlfahrtsgemeinschaft" (DKWG)⁽¹⁰⁾ and concerned itself henceforth purely with the welfare matters of the Prussian association and the other Landesverbände in question. Besides expending substantial annual sums in direct support of needy old comrades, the DKWG owned and ran five orphanages, and six convalescent homes for soldiers. The orphanages started in 1884 with the foundation of a home at Römheld in Thuringia, and were financed by the "Fechtanstalt" (1884), a form of standing appeal fund and the "Kronprinzen/Kronprinzessin

(9) MA 104267: 20-9-19, 13-1-28 (MGS).

(10) Westphal p.192.

Stiftung" (1906). In addition to this 50% of the Prussian association's income in subscriptions went direct to the DKWG, which used some 26% of this for the orphanages against 58% for general aid. Overall the DKWG budget for 1932/33 envisaged the expenditure of 556,500 M, of which 107,500 went to orphans, 449,000 to general assistance for comrades. The bulk of this came, of course, from the Prussian association (460,000M)⁽¹¹⁾.

The DKWG represented only part of the Kyffhäuserbund: many of the Landesverbände outside Prussia had developed their own independent welfare institutions. In 1920, partly to facilitate negotiations aimed at amalgamating the disabled and dependants in the KB with the local associations of the Zentralverband (this came to nothing), and partly to safeguard against a possible exclusion of all organisations, other than those purely for disabled and dependants, from the Reichsausschuss, it was decided to create a new organisation, embracing these elements from all Landesverbände (i.e. - including Prussia) in separate, but associated Vereine: the "Verband der Kriegsbeschädigten und Kriegshinterbliebenen des Deutschen Reichskriegerbunds Kyffhäuser". This organisation was primarily designed to represent the interests of war victims to the Reich and local authorities⁽¹²⁾.

Finally, it must be remembered that each Landesverband (including Prussia) retained its own independent welfare organs. Thus the Prussian association had the "Kriegerstiftung" (495,000 M. in 1920) and the "Linkische Stiftung" (975,000 M. in 1920)⁽¹³⁾. The Württemberg Kriegerbund spent altogether 218,473 M. on "Aid" in 1929⁽¹⁴⁾. A breakdown of the 1 Mark subscription to the Prussian association includes:-⁽¹⁵⁾

(11) NH 926, 42: PB 8-3-31. 60, 2: PB 8-19. (6-7-31) (K).

(12) Westphal p.192.

(13) *ibid.* p.162.

(14) WMI 206: Business Reports (L)//E 130 IV Staatsministerium 1479 (SH).

(15) J 45 Flugschriften: Nr. 191: Erich Kerwiese: "Kyffhäuserbund, Wesen Zweck und Ziele" 1927 (SH).

<u>PLKV 50 Pf.</u>		<u>DKWG 50 Pf.</u>	
Kriegerstiftung	5	Unterstützung	29
Disabled & Dependants	10	Orphans	13
Unterstützung	5		

In all: 62% on welfare

This indicates the high proportion of the general KB funds that went on welfare work. Westphal's assessment of the total assets of the KV movement in 1920 was in the region of 74½ million Marks, with an overall annual expenditure on welfare of 11-12 million⁽¹⁶⁾.

While the pre-eminent social rôle of the KB must be seen in this field, there were nevertheless other important aspects, ranging from special Life and Accident Insurance, Information Bureaux (post-war), Discount Saving Schemes and Local Bulk Buying, to Settlement provisions and War-Grave Care.⁽¹⁷⁾ In the area of welfare the activities of the DOB were the same, if on a smaller scale and on behalf of a different social group. Their subscription rate was higher, but having only a limited membership (ca. 100,000) the amounts they could spend on hardship cases from their own funds was naturally smaller. In 1920 for example, 175,000 M was spent to assist 288 needy ex-officers⁽¹⁸⁾.

Another association mainly concerned with welfare work was the "Reichsbund der Zivildienstberechtigten", to whom retiring soldiers and policemen turned for assistance in finding work as public or private officials (Beamte). In 1932, some 50,000 such men were waiting for employment and many became active Nazi supporters, as the voluntary adoption by the Bund of a completely Nazi praesidium (in July 1933) would indicate⁽¹⁹⁾.

(16) Westphal p.107.

(17) *ibid.*

(18) D-0-B1 2, 1921.

(19) Polizeidirektion Munich: 24a IIIF 11/202. (MSO).

The activities of the ex-servicemen's organisations in the affairs of disabled and dependants were not without a certain political significance. Firstly it made necessary co-operation between government agencies and the KB and DOB at all levels, even to the extent that the veteran groups themselves were sometimes blamed along with the "system" for the inadequacies in the administration and amounts of pensions. (The DOB made it quite clear, however, which parties opposed pension cuts in the Reichstag: the DNVP, DVP and later the Nazis⁽²⁰⁾.) Secondly the rise of the KB to first place among the private associations enhanced its "image", its public reputation, and thus its potential "bargaining power". Perhaps the best indication of this is the attention paid to the KB "disabled and dependants" association by the NSDAP. A memorandum of 18th November 1930 to all Nazi Gaue described the "rival" welfare groups and ordered the establishment of local Nazi cells specially designed to present and advocate the cases of individual "disabled and dependants". Early in the following year special 10-day training courses for the new cell-leaders were initiated. Joint demonstrations against the Notverordnung of 8th December 1931 included local KB groups. Already in 1932 the NSDAP were conducting negotiations with the "Reichsverband" and "Zentralverband", with a "take-over" very much in mind. The usual high-standard propaganda was directed against the other organisations and by December 1932 the NSDAP were strongly recommending to their local representatives the desirability of contesting the elections to the local "advisory boards"; politically, the Kyffhäuserverband is described as "im Reiche stark deutschnational", and the Bavarian Kriegerbund is primarily "Bayerische Volkspartei". Early advances to the KB (late 1930)

(20) "DOB" 5-8-25; 8, 1928.

with the prospect of inaugurating a struggle against the Reichsbund and Internationaler Bund, had come to little. It was only after Hitler had become Chancellor that things really began to move on this front. The dissolution of the KPD removed the Internationaler Bund from the scene. An earlier amalgamation of the NSKOV with the Reichsverband to form the "NS Reichsverband der Kriegsofopfer E.V." was broadened when this body linked up with the DOB, Kyffhäuserverband and Kriegsblindener Bund to form a loose: "Nationale Kampfgemeinschaft der Kriegsofopferverbände". This was shortlived and following the dissolution of the socialist Reichsbund on 31st May 1933, the DOB and KB severed their connections with the "Nationale Kampfgemeinschaft". Although subsequently agreeing to a provisional enrollment as "Einzelgruppen" in the NSKOV, thus retaining their identity, the KB and DOB put up a strong resistance in negotiations with the Wehrpolitisches Amt⁽²¹⁾. In fact only small numbers of Kyffhäuser groups appear to have been attracted to NSKOV by the end of 1933 and the rivalry between the two associations was to continue for many years to come. The official treaty between Reinhard ("Reichskriegerführer" the chief of the NS Reichskriegerbund, and Oberlindober ("Reichskriegsofopferführer": *head of NSKOV*) gave NSKOV a monopoly of welfare work, but restricted its activities purely to this (15th December 1937)⁽²²⁾.

From this examination of the welfare rôle of the two most significant ex-servicemen's associations the KB particularly is seen in a light which lifts it above the purely "Kameradschaftliche-" and "Traditions-Verbände". This important social work did more than anything else to forge links between the moderate conservative element in the KB and the governments of the Weimar Republic, and was recognised as a possible source of opposition by the Nazis, who even went to the length of founding their own "Kriegsofopfer-Versorgung" from scratch: no easy task.

(21) See p. 304. //S.Sch. 255 (K).

(22) NS 10/108 (K).

SECTION TWO

1918 - 1923

1. Public Policy and General Propaganda
 2. Attitude to Social Democracy
 3. Local Influence
 4. Relations with Weimar Governments
 5. Military Aspects
 6. Relations with the "Patriotic Associations" .
 7. Monarchism and Right-Wing Parties
 8. Communism
- SUMMARY

In this and ensuing sections will be discussed the political attitudes and activities of the various ex-servicemen's organisations, in relation to the Weimar Republic itself, those forces dedicated to its survival, and those pursuing its downfall. The aim will be to investigate the extent to which these associations embodied and promoted factors tending to its survival or dissolution. For convenience, the question is considered over the fairly obvious periods into which the history of the Republic falls. The first of these covers the troubled years following the military defeat of 1918 and the fall of the Hohenzollern monarchy. This culminated in the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr and the financial collapse of 1923, after which, although the German government adopted a public policy of outward fulfilment of the terms of Versailles, secret military preparations contrary to these terms were set in motion by the Reichswehr leadership. Even more important, German popular sentiment against France had hardened, probably irretrievably. The rôle played by the veteran associations in these earlier years will first of all be considered in terms of the PUBLIC POLICY and GENERAL PROPAGANDA pursued by the various leaders, their attitudes to SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, and the LOCAL INFLUENCE of their subordinate groups.

1. PUBLIC POLICY AND GENERAL PROPAGANDA

The main political questions between 1918 and 1923 originated in the war, the Versailles Peace and the revolution. The general state of the veteran organisations after the war has already been discussed. The reaction of the Kyffhäuserbund, (by now virtually part of the Imperial establishment) to the events of November 1918, is important, not only with regard to the future development of the organisation itself but also, more widely, with regard to the survival of the new republic. If one subscribes to the view of historians such as Stampfer - that the remarkable thing about the Weimar Republic is NOT that it did not last

longer, but that it lasted at all⁽¹⁾, the public attitudes adopted by such a large 'bürgerlich' organisation may be seen to play a certain part in this survival. Certainly, some conservative circles criticised the passivity with which the leaders of the KB reacted to the revolution⁽²⁾ and Westphal several times defended his policy in this connection. Writing in 1922, for example, he pointed out with some justification that the old veterans remaining at home had little alternative in view of other factors - the abdication of the Kaiser, the acquiescence of the entire middle-class and the civil service, and the decision of men like Hindenburg to take the Kaiser's instruction "den Inhabern der tatsächlichen Gewalt in Deutschland helfen -" at its face value⁽³⁾. On the other hand a concerted lead by such middle-class organisations as the KB could well have stiffened the backbone of the moderate group in Germany from the outset. Groener, writing to his wife on 17th November 1918 asks "But where is the courage of the middle-classes?"⁽⁴⁾. General Maercker, the Freikorps leader, puts the matter in more detail: "Almost every time we entered a town I had to ask myself the question: would our intervention have been necessary if everyone had been at his post? Where was the German bourgeoisie? Where were the pro-Government workers? Where were our students, our ex-officers, NCOs and soldiers? I have acquired in the five months of my activity in Central Germany little respect for the constructive ability (Gestaltungskraft) of the German bourgeoisie, but a high opinion of the organised workers. --- The workers, well organised, disciplined and ready to make sacrifices are faced almost everywhere by a bourgeoisie which is completely unorganised, split up into four or five mutually hostile parties, little inclined to

(1) F. Stampfer, "Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse", Köln (1953) p.235.

(2) BPD p.305.

(3) Westphal p.17.

(4) Wilhelm Groener, "Lebenserinnerungen", p.47.

make any sacrifices."⁽⁵⁾ This lack of initiative on the part of the middle-class in general may in part be explained by the sudden removal of the keystone to the whole German administrative structure. Deprived of the long-accustomed uniform direction from above, the bourgeoisie found itself floundering in a situation which had become all at once terribly fluid. The buck had been passed - the recipients found wanting - and the game lost to the extremists of left and right. This interpretation has much of value, but other considerations certainly played a part, for republican troops such as Kuttner's "Regiment Reichstag" were locally of some importance⁽⁶⁾. Of more significance perhaps, was the initial failure of the middle-class to rally round existing organisations. In the case of the KB it may be questionable whether, in view of the post-war deficiencies of communication within the association, any initiative from the Berlin Centrale could have had much effect. Either way, the initiative itself was not forthcoming and the reason for this was apparently the fear that the establishment of "Kriegerverein Abwehrabteilungen" might be construed as counter-revolutionary activity. Such local Kriegervereine as constituted themselves into Civil Guards to make up for the absence of government troops did so without encouragement from the KB Centrale - who limited themselves to approving the entry of KV members into local Bürgerwehren, as long as the local authorities were in agreement, and to a general advocacy of helping to restore law and order⁽⁷⁾.

The decisions which confronted Westphal and the other leaders during the period immediately following the Kaiser's abdication were largely dictated by the trend of events beyond their control. A proclamation of loyalty to the Kaiser was considered, but rejected in the face - particularly

(5) Otto Ernst Schüddekopf, "Heer und Republik", Hannover/Frankfurt 1955: p.48.

(6) A. J. Ryder, "The German Revolution of 1918", p.207.

(7) NH 916, PLKV to KKV Ostprieognitz, 15-3-19 (K).

of Hindenburg's decision to co-operate with the Ebert régime. After a more than formal expression of sadness at the course taken by events, the first official statement after the "Revolution" issued on November 14th laid emphasis on preserving the unity of the German people and law and order. "We ask our comrades in the interest of the German people to stand behind the present régime and any future one recognised by the people, and to co-operate in the preservation of order." In general terms the KB pledged itself to continue with its welfare work for veterans and dependants⁽⁸⁾. A few days later a second statement included a call for an early 'National Assembly', the aim of Ebert and the moderate Socialists⁽⁹⁾. Further statements followed, (27th November, 11th December and 29th December) which politically, merely repeated this call to co-operate with the new régime in preserving law and order. Otherwise they detailed the tasks with which the KB would in future be concerned⁽¹⁰⁾.

In general the local associations accepted the new policy without question⁽¹¹⁾, although requests were made for an urgent meeting of Landesverband leaders in Berlin. These requests were refused in view of the conditions prevailing in the capital⁽¹²⁾. It took time of course for some individual members and Vereine to come to terms with the new policy - and for a while local expressions of monarchist sentiment were not uncommon. More often than not, however, the public statements, circulars, etc, of local Vereine found ample scope in general "sabre-rattling" and the myth of an "undefeated army"⁽¹³⁾.

Having taken an initial stand of political neutrality, the KB found itself safe from any immediate attacks by the Ebert régime. There was still the possibility that the Allies would demand its dissolution, but

(8) Westphal p.18./NH 916, 70 et seq.

(9) Westphal p.18.

(10)ibid. p.18-19.

(11)NH 916, passim.

(12)ibid. KB to Lübeck LV, 24-12-18.

(13)ibid. 117 (Christmas 1918 Circular of Elmsland KV), 106.

by far the greatest danger to its survival was an internal one: many veterans considered that with the changes of the last few months, the KV movement had lost its 'raison d'être'. A large part of the KV press in 1919 was concerned with the task of putting across the new emphasis on welfare to the rank and file. With this looking towards the future went a certain nostalgia for the past. "Alles, was bisher uns in Deutschland galt - es liegt zusammengebrochen".⁽¹⁴⁾ Requests for an all-out public relations drive, coupled with an internal setting-to-rights, went out in a circular of 18th January to all leaders down to Kreis level⁽¹⁵⁾. The realisation had dawned that they must seek their own salvation and could no longer rely on the government for any assistance⁽¹⁶⁾. Westphal himself was very pessimistic as to the future, and extremely critical of the Ebert régime. In a private letter (10th February) to Geheimrat Gravenhorst (Alsace-Lorraine), he wrote: "... only duty keeps me going it will need the most strenuous hard work to get through this crisis, but I hope we will come through: the bigger the mistakes of the revolutionary government, the worse the conditions, then the sooner will those people who stand true to Germanicism (Deutschtum) join us The revolution has destroyed us and poisoned our people" Going on to blame also the earlier administrations of Bethmann and Max v. Baden, he asked again the defensive question - what else could our old veterans have done in the face of all the other circumstances? To go against the revolution would have been impossible, - would have totally destroyed our cause. Nevertheless, "we will work for reconstruction. Our time will come again!"⁽¹⁷⁾ Subsequent private letters struck a more optimistic note, although the fact that KV members were in many places still reluctant to acknowledge their membership in public, for fear of giving offence, continued to worry him⁽¹⁸⁾.

(14) *ibid.* 106, "Kriegerverein Vorstand" Nr.I, Jan 1919, p.8-15.

(15) *ibid.* 114.

(16) *ibid.* 139, Heeringen to Schaefer, 10-2-19.

(17) *ibid.* 142, Westphal to Gravenhorst, 10-2-19.

(18) *ibid.* 144, Westphal to Lehmann, 15-2-19.

In spite of the KB leadership's public neutrality towards the Ebert government and Social Democrats in general, some of the Landesverbände were not so restrained. The Lippischer Kriegerbund, for example, prepared a critical, even hostile circular: "Our army was victorious and our diplomats brought us to ruin unity is strength what have we got 3½ million members for?" Disparaging remarks about the 'men in Weimar', made such announcements embarrassing to the Berlin Centrale and not surprisingly they declined this for publication in the "Krieger Zeitung"⁽¹⁹⁾. Other local associations felt that the time had come for the KB to reassert itself publicly - but the leadership was still of the opinion that caution must prevail (March 1919)⁽²⁰⁾. Nevertheless, while the organisation remained wedded to the principle of political neutrality, (and this in fact was to be approved by the Prussian Abgeordnetentag in Kassell (August), and the KB Vertretertagung on the Kyffhäuser (September)), March 1919 with all its civil unrest in the capital and elsewhere, saw the beginning of "patriotic" press activity which was to become in the future virtually "political" in content. The "Kriegerverein Vorstand" of March 1919, refers at length to the KB's protests to the government over the proposed retention of German prisoners-of-war in France, and the rape of the German colonies. It is likely of course, that at the time, such "pressure" was entirely welcome to the Ebert régime - as a means of strengthening their hand in Versailles. When the Allies presented their terms in May, Scheidemann himself was to describe the proposed treaty as a "document of hate and delusion"⁽²¹⁾ and other socialists spoke in similar terms. However, with the signing of the Treaty on 28th June and its ratification by the Weimar Assembly on 9th July, the Ebert régime became irretrievably linked with the "shame of Versailles". Regardless of the fact that Germany had no option, in the public mind at any rate,

(19) *ibid.* 147, 14-2-19.

(20) *ibid.* KB to KKV Harzburg, 19-3-19.

(21) Ryder, *op.cit.* p.223.

condemnation of Versailles after 9th July meant condemnation of the Social Democratic government and all they stood for - including the constitution itself finalised on 11th August. As far as the KB was concerned, the March "Kriegerverein Vorstand" demands were important inasmuch as they advocated protest meetings and resolutions, and general agitation, in order to spur on the government⁽²²⁾. Further articles such as Westphal's "Kriegervereine als Pflanzstätten vaterländischen Fühlens und Denkens"⁽²³⁾ and Heinrich Führ's pamphlet "Wesen und Wirken der Kriegervereine"⁽²⁴⁾ presented a somewhat aggressive justification of the activities of the KB and its leaders to date, with detailed treatment of the hostility of the socialists (e.g. the Reichsbund) towards the KVe. In correspondence too, a more positive political intention is evident: "Die Kriegervereine sollen und müssen das Rückgrad bilden zur wirtschaftlichen und politischen Wiederaufstärkung des deutschen Reiches ..."⁽²⁵⁾, together with a stronger attitude towards the socialists⁽²⁶⁾. Even in public, some Landesverband leaders frankly stated that if the KVe wished to safeguard their future position in the state "so geht es nicht anders, als das wir auch die Politik etwas streifen"⁽²⁷⁾.

By the summer of 1919, it was clear that the KVe as such were not to be dissolved. Article 177 of the Peace Treaty merely ordained that they "must not occupy themselves with any military matters" - like shooting and weapon training. The KB executive assemblies in August and September gave a strong vote of confidence to the central leadership and Westphal was able to go ahead with his programme for internal reform⁽²⁸⁾. On the political front the organisation joined the "patriotic" attacks on

(22) NH 916, "Kriegerverein Vorstand" March 1919.

(23) *ibid.* 173 et seq.

(24) *ibid.* 194 et seq.

(25) *ibid.* 193, KB to Hagemann, 14-4-19.

(26) *ibid.* 200.//See p. 64.

(27) *ibid.* 208, Hofrat Dr. Müller (President) at Gotha LV Tag 27-7-19.

(28) See p. 14.

the Versailles Treaty, articles appeared in the "Kriegerzeitung", inflammatory statements made at the meetings of the big Landesverbände were given publicity. While outright attacks on the régime were generally avoided, the implicit sense is undeniable⁽²⁹⁾. Nevertheless, the frequent official repetition of the "political neutrality" - talisman, served to prevent any interference by the government: indeed, the little general press attention attracted by the KB at this time, tended to view it as favourable to the new constitution⁽³⁰⁾. Here in fact is seen the origins of the dilemma which was to beset the Kyffhäuser leaders increasingly throughout the Weimar period. On the one hand they wished to base their public activity on the present constitution, thus preserving some at least of their earlier advantages as an "establishment" organisation; on the other, they wanted to retain a freedom of action to criticise the Weimar governments from a patriotic standpoint. As events were to prove, the KB was neither thus to have its cake, - nor eat it!

Before considering the reaction of the KB to specific issues in the years 1920-1923, some mention should be made of general ideological trends which are discernible throughout the years of the Weimar Republic. Besides the basic political neutrality mentioned already ("politische Soldatenvereine sind ein Unding"⁽³¹⁾) there recur many times variations on the militarist/nationalist theme. The myth of the 'unconquered army', while not over-stressed, certainly found official credence by the KB: "the honour of our field-army remains free from all stain" is an idea recommended for inclusion in the opening addresses of all KV chairmen at the beginning of 1919⁽³²⁾. Although, even within the movement, the

(29) e.g. NH 916, KZ 5-10-19//BMI.PS 'Badischer Kriegerbund', Business Report (Ka)//WMI 206, Business Report of Württembergischer Kriegerbund 1919 (L).

(30) NH 916, 252, Vossische Zeitung 31-12-19.

(31) *ibid.* 185, Westphal: "Kriegervereine als Pflanzstätten vaterländischen Fühlens und Gedenkens".

(32) NH 916, 106, "Kriegerverein Vorstand", Jan. 1919.

charge had been made that the "Kriegervereinswesen" had already been misused by "Militarismus"⁽³³⁾, this never ceased to be an important aspect in KB propaganda: "Wehrstärkung" as such was often advocated by Heeringen - although at the same time any bellicose intention was denied⁽³⁴⁾. The "Honouring of Heroes" and the acceptance by Hindenburg of the honorary presidency in 1919 was all part of a deliberate policy of keeping alive Germany's glorious military past⁽³⁵⁾. The official advocacy of the wearing of uniform at KV functions by all those so entitled was also a very important aspect of KB propaganda⁽³⁶⁾. Militarism is also implicit in the emphasis laid on patriotism: "Any government that would deny the patriotic tasks of the KVe would place itself in a most unfavourable light".⁽³⁷⁾ "Vaterlandsliebe" succeeded loyalty to the Kaiser as the first avowed public duty of the KVe⁽³⁸⁾. The "Strengthening of National Consciousness" was frequently called for, although this was to be realised by the Prussian government forming "the backbone" of the German Reich⁽³⁹⁾. "National Reconstruction" in particular was seen as a field for KVe activity⁽⁴⁰⁾. Great stress was laid on the soldierly virtues of loyalty, honour, and comradeship and their value in civilian life⁽⁴¹⁾. Indeed, the Christian ethic in general is by no means absent. Although rarely formulated as such in public, the underlying message embodied in these ideological trends, is unmistakable: furthering the aim of remilitarisation and a war of "rectification" (if not of "revenge") is the moral duty of every ex-serviceman. This conception of national and individual honour is of course, pre-eminently, the conception of the officer corps - in whose hands

(33) NH 916, 160, KB to Meiningen LV 6-3-19.

(34) "Heeringen an den Kriegervereinen" p.26-7.

(35) *ibid.* p.15.

(36) Westphal p.86.

(37) NH 916, 157.//"Kriegerverein Vorstand", March 1919.

(38) Westphal, p.25-7//"Heeringen" p.40-3.//NH 916, 85 (etc).

(39) Heeringen p.32.//NH 906, 7.

(40) Heeringen p.26-7.

(41) *ibid.* p.44.//NH916, 144, Westphal to Lehmann, 15-2-19.

the detailed direction of the propaganda of the KB lay. Politically, it tended to promote the interests of the more extreme nationalist parties, at the expense not only of the pacifists on the left, but also of the moderate parties in the centre.

February 1920 brought the Allied note concerning the surrender of some 900 "War Criminals": many Reichswehr generals had already agreed privately that this must at all costs be refused - although it was merely one aspect of the "shame clauses" in the Treaty - and Noske the Reichswehrminister insisted on this refusal to the government⁽⁴²⁾. Against this background, Heeringen's participation in the DOB - inspired protest of twenty-one ex-generals and admirals against the note, assumes no sinister aspect. One later account of the meeting which resulted in this public protest, suggests that Heeringen and one other general were actually in favour of complying with the Allied demands: The accused could prove their innocence in Paris, thus sparing the Kaiser and other members of the royal family, the same indignity⁽⁴³⁾. Perhaps more questionable is the resolution approved by the September 1920 Vertretertagung against the abolition of "National Service" - "das Recht der körperlichen und geistigen Erziehung der Jugend und die Möglichkeit der Verteidigung des Landes, - unserem Volke genommen wird"⁽⁴⁴⁾. In March 1921 representatives of all political parties combined to set up the "Arbeitsausschuss Deutscher Verbände - entstanden auf die Äusserung Lloyd Georges an Aussenminister Simons vom 3. März 1921, dass die deutsche Schuld am Weltkrieg als cause jugée zu betrachten ist"⁽⁴⁵⁾. In fact, this committee, together with the "Zentralstelle für Erforschung der Kriegsursachen" was established by direct initiative of the German Foreign Office, in the hope of thus securing internal unanimity on the important question of war-guilt, which lay at the heart of the Versailles

(42) F. L. Carsten, "Reichswehr and Politics", (1966) p.75.

(43) D-O-B1 26-2-20, Front page.//Reinhard, "Wehen der Republik".

(44) Heeringen p.22-3.

(45) Nachlass Wilhelm Marx, 255. (KHA).

Treaty and in particular, of the thorny problem of reparations⁽⁴⁶⁾. Under the initial leadership of DVP Reichstag Member Freiherr v. Lersner, and after 1925, of ex-Colonial-Governor Schnee, the committee pursued a vigorous public campaign by all available means. By November 1923, working co-operation had been set up with some 700 different associations⁽⁴⁷⁾. A monthly four-page report "Der Weg zur Freiheit" employed language calculated to stir any German heart against the "Diktat" of Versailles, and at the same time published relevant extracts from the speeches of such unchallengably republican statesmen as Stresemann, Rosenberg, Cuno and Wirth, while making the most of sympathetic statements by illustrious foreigners, such as General Smuts⁽⁴⁸⁾. All too soon alas, it was to become clear that the Weimar governments, like the sorcerer's apprentice, were totally incapable of controlling the forces they had (in part at any rate) helped to unleash. Instead of contributing towards internal consolidation the "Kampf gegen die Kriegsschuldllüge" became the basic weapon in the armoury of the "National Opposition"⁽⁴⁹⁾ (Nazis, DNVP, etc) who carried it to its "logical" conclusion, - a general demand for the destruction of the Versailles Treaty, and any party, government and "system" wedded to a policy of "fulfilment" of the treaty's terms. It was this uncompromising and aggressive nationalist propaganda that later persuaded vast numbers of German voters to turn to the Nazis.

In 1921 the statements of the KB on the issue of "war-guilt" were often linked with an implied criticism of the régime as in Heeringen's speech at the August 1921 Abtag in Lübeck: "Alle Vergewaltigungen stützen unsere Feinde auf den sogenannten Friedensvertrag von Versailles und das darin enthaltende und von Deutschland leider unterschriebene Bekenntnis von der alleinigen Schuld unseres Vaterlandes am Weltkriege." He continued by

(46) Nachlass Dr. Gustav Stresemann 7133 (H 148747) Aufzeichnung 18-5-25 (FOL).
 (47) *ibid.* (H 148830-33) "Weg zur Freiheit" November 1923.
 (48) *ibid.*
 (49) Nachlass General Kurt von Schleicher 32.8. Internal Report dated 9-4-24 (F)

strenuously denying Germany's sole responsibility for the war, and in the same speech referred to the need to strengthen Germany's "national consciousness". At provincial level too, some Verbände were taking a strong line against ^{the} Allied commission in the Rhineland - especially the activities of the French⁽⁵⁰⁾. The annual New Years Message (1922) was couched in strong terms "Das deutsche Kriegervereinswesen steht gerüstet, etc", and in the same breath it renewed the KB's support for the constitution and announced that "Der Kampf um die weitere Entwicklung unserer Organisation geht parallel dem Kampf um das Bestehen unseres Vaterlandes." Even in 1922, many of the people who read the "Kriegerzeitung" must at least have doubted whether these aims could be compatible⁽⁵¹⁾. On 21st June the KB issued a special statement condemning the "war-guilt-lie", a matter it was often to return to. A short time afterwards, in common with other responsible circles, a special statement regretting the murder of Rathenau was published⁽⁵²⁾. In a longer exposition of Kyffhäuser policy which was published in the "Deutsches Offizier-Blatt" (25th November 1922)⁽⁵³⁾, Heeringen put into concrete terms the new political ideology of the KB - basically, the aim being to build up a strongly nationalist, patriotic organisation, independent of party-political ties and not concerned with controversy about forms of government; above all, not concerned with political violence. Such an aim was all very well, so long as the main threat to Germany was to be found in foreign military power. All patriotic Germans could agree on a "non-political front" against the "war-guilt-lie"⁽⁵⁴⁾: all, too, could sympathise with the wildest expressions against the French after the invasion of the Ruhr⁽⁵⁵⁾. However, as soon as

(50) Heeringen p.23-4, 32-3//BMI.PS "Bad KB": 1920 Business Report; Badischer Kriegerzeitung" 10-7-21, 15-8-22 (Ka).
 (51) NH 906, 4, New Years Message quoted in "Soldaten Zeitung" 7-2-22.
 (52) Heeringen p.24, 37-8.
 (53) D-O-B1 (AA) 25-11-22.
 (54) NH 906, 5, KZ 1-1-23.
 (55) (AA) 15-2-23.//NH 906, 6, etc.

Germany began to settle down after 1923 the difficulties of such an aim were to become apparent: already the political attacks on the Versailles Treaty had become party-political attacks on the Weimar governments and even the Weimar constitution. To maintain an aggressive nationalist policy and yet steer clear of party-political strife was to prove impossible. The obvious answer was for the KB to throw its moral support into the moderate-conservative camp - even at the risk of losing some of the privileges it enjoyed as an officially "neutral" organisation. "Reichsbanner" and "Stahlhelm" were also statutorily "neutral", but much more quickly threw themselves into the political struggles of the Weimar Republic. The KB was too long to linger on the fringes of the combat and by the time the leadership was ready to take the plunge it was too late to have more than a transient influence on affairs at the centre. During the years 1919-1923 however the public utterances of the KB served the main purpose of building-up the public image of a patriotic, even militarist association, with an important rôle to play in Germany's future. In this way many World War veterans who had hitherto stood aloof from the KVe were drawn into their ranks⁽⁵⁶⁾ and became once more subject to the influence of the officer corps via the KV press. On a wider plain, although the cry of "political neutrality" was often heard, it is clear that these public statements did nothing to alleviate popular dissatisfaction with the "Weimar" parties among the middle-classes, and at times, "patriotism" was merely thinly veiled criticism of the government.

In contrast to the established and conservative Kyffhäuserbund, the officers' associations which came into being largely as a measure of self-defence on the part of the World-War officer corps, were unhindered by tradition or a rank-and-file membership to which the leadership was effectually responsible. As a result, they displayed from the outset a much less inhibited approach to all the political questions of the time,

(56) See p. 114-5.

and rapidly became officially branded as "political". While this brought in its wake some disadvantages - serving Reichswehr officers, for example, were after 1921 allowed no connection with the NDO or even the more moderate DOB - by and large, freedom of expression in conjunction with select membership was a distinct advantage for a potential pressure group. Their biggest handicap, however, was in the long run to be this select membership, which denied them the mass following and authoritative voice necessary for lasting political effectiveness. The logical solution would have been ultimate amalgamation with the Kyffhäuserbund, particularly as the need for separate officer representation was at most transitory. For various reasons this was not to be, and the officer associations, apart from their social functions, remained isolated, if well-defined groups in the rightish spectrum.

In assessing the influence of the public policy statements of veteran organisations it is important to bear in mind the vehicles used.

<u>FOUNDED</u>	<u>(WEEKLY KB PUBLICATIONS)</u>	<u>CIRCULATION</u>
1876	Kyffhäuser (before 1927: "Kriegerzeitung")	70 - 90,000
1902	Hessischer Kamerad (Hesse LV)	56,500
1874	Badische Kriegerzeitung (Baden LV)	30,000
1876	Württembergische Kriegerzeitung (Wbg LV)	58,000
1923	Sächsisches Militärvereinsblatt (Sax LV)	152,000
	TOTAL:-	386,500
	<u>(DOB)</u>	
1922	"Deutscher Offizier-Bund"	20,000
1922	Sächsische Landesblätter (Saxon DOB)	3,800
	<u>(NDO)</u>	
1918	Deutsche Treue	8,000
	<u>(MISC)</u>	
	Deutsche Wehr (non-polit since 1928)	5,000
	(formerly Stalling Press "Deutsches Offizierblatt")	

CIRCULATION OF VETERAN PERIODICALS⁽⁵⁷⁾

While these figures are based on the situation in 1930 the basic

(57) "Sperlings Zeitschriften", Leipzig, (1931) p.220 et seq.

position remained the same throughout the Weimar period: the total circulation of the various Kriegerverein weeklies alone was many times greater than that of the officer associations' periodicals. (The KB also issued the monthly "KV Vorstand", the Jahrbuch and other publications)⁽⁵⁸⁾. It should be noted that up to 1922 the official DOB organ was the established and well-produced "Deutsches Offizierblatt" which enjoyed a higher circulation and prestige than its successor, "Deutsche Wehr", a mainly technical paper. The disparity in circulation was to some extent compensated by the officer associations' use of public demonstrations (in such patriotic matters as the continued retention of German POWs by the Allies)⁽⁵⁹⁾ and notice attracted in the general press, something which was only later taken up systematically by the KB. The DOB in particular sought frequent conferences with the editorial staff of the daily press - as early as 1919⁽⁶⁰⁾.

From the outset, while the "Kriegerzeitung" with its various supplements aimed at a family readership, the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" specialised in simply written, informative articles on the general political situation, together with more detailed and less objective appraisals of matters directly concerning officers - and frequent formal statements of protest, duly signed by illustrious names from the war years⁽⁶¹⁾. Often, the more vociferous protests find attention from the national press. Thus the reception of the controversial "Kommandoerlass" (19th January 1919) by the two main associations is reported at length in the "Post", "Kreuz-Zeitung", "Der Tag", etc. This decree, which regularised to some extent the position of the "Soldatenräte", was issued at the same time as two others - dealing with the abolition of épaulettes and, rather imprecisely, with saluting; it was bitterly resented by the officer corps⁽⁶²⁾. In particular, at the big NDO meeting of 29th January,

(58) Westphal p.112.

(59) D-O-B1 13-11-19.

(60) D-O-B1 8-5-19 p.402.

(61) D-O-B1 16-1-19 "Die Gerichtigkeitsidee in Wilsons Friedens-Programm" (c.g.)

(62) Nachlass Schellch 106-110 (F)//Carsten, op.cit. p.25-26.

Hpm. v. Jena (NDO) criticised the "weak" line taken by the DOR (who had officially recommended compliance with the new instructions) and went on to express sentiments which surely found a response in the hearts of every officer: "The Erlaass (19th January) is only a sanctioning of unheard-of insults to officers from deserters and traitors"⁽⁶³⁾. Agitation by the two associations took the form of petitions and deputations to ministers, heads of political parties, etc, and aroused unfavourable comment in the National Assembly⁽⁶⁴⁾. However, the campaign was also being pursued vigorously at the highest level by General Groener and others and was ultimately to succeed in re-establishing the regular officer corps in the Reichswehr on very much the "élitish" lines of its Imperial predecessor⁽⁶⁵⁾. Groener recognised the value of "requests and protests" organised to further the cause⁽⁶⁶⁾. Other senior officers were not quite so sure: Seeckt for example wrote: "Everything depends on our succeeding in making the government firm and keeping it firm; whether it pleases us or not, there is nothing else and whoever can, should help. Who is unable to do so or cannot bring himself to do it, should at least not disturb. But that is done by stupid newspaper articles which publicize the many weaknesses and ridiculous traits of the Republic. That is also done by resolutions and speeches against the military decrees which emanate from the officers' sides. It is very easy to say "This is unheard of" and then do nothing; it is very difficult to try to find usable timber among the ruins"⁽⁶⁷⁾. Here we have the entire outlook of the officer associations placed in perspective: to Groener they could be used to further short-term ends hardly in essence beneficial to the cause of constitutional government in Germany. Seeckt on the other hand recognised

(63) Nachlass Scheßch 106 'Post' 30-1-19 (F).

(64) D-O-B1 9/1919 Article by Scheßch.

(65) Carsten op.cit. p.24 et seq.

(66) "Besprechung bei der OHL am 22-3-19" Nachlass Seeckt 17/125 (cit. Carsten p.29).

(67) Seeckt to his wife 6-2-19: NL Seeckt Roll 28, microfilm in Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich. (cit. Carsten p.31).

the long-term dangers attached to such public criticism and weakening of the new republican régime.

The NDO was soon to show itself the more extreme and more explicitly monarchist of the two chief associations. Demonstrations on the 23rd March 1919 (notably that held by the NDO) again provoked attacks in the National Assembly. Not really surprising - the singing of "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz", raising "Kaiserhoch", not to mention ovations in honour of Ludendorff - all this was hardly likely to dispose moderate opinion at home or abroad in favour of the "new Germany".⁽⁶⁸⁾ Similarly the DOB's comprehensive front-page protest (sent to the government) against the terms of the peace (15th May) was the first of several inflammatory articles on the subject⁽⁶⁹⁾.

The question of the requested surrender of "War Criminals" (1919-1920) whipped up anger in military circles to a new pitch. For a while opinion was almost unanimous: the DOB vigorously opposed the suggested trials in June 1919. NDO and DOB issued a joint protest (12th February 1922) - even Heeringen (KB) subscribed to the 26th February protest against Versailles. In March the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" discussed the possibility of Hindenburg becoming president of the Reich and in the same issue condemned the official closure (in accordance with Versailles) of the Cadet Schools⁽⁷⁰⁾. In May, protests by the "Volksbund-Rettet die Ehre!" against the French use of black troops in the occupied zone were printed⁽⁷¹⁾. Although the German government had so far shown little public concern over the activities of the nationalists - and it is even possible that some republican politicians considered that a controlled "barking" by the reactionaries could well be used as an excuse for non-

(68) Horkenbach, "Das Deutsche Reich", Vol I, p.63 (under 26-3-19).

(69) D-O-B1 15-5-19, 19-6-19, 26-6-19, 3-7-19, 13-11-19 (e.g.).

(70) D-O-B1 5, 7, 9, 11/1920: 19-6-19.

(71) D-O-B1 19, 24-5-20.

fulfilment of some of the peace clauses - the demonstrations were closely watched by Allied Intelligence services. In July 1920, the weekly intelligence summary sent to the Foreign Office records that "The NDO invites the German people who have any National feeling left to pass proclamations and resolutions to the effect that 'The German People is not willing to recognise these fateful and disastrous negotiations (Spa Conference) as the expression of its own desires and wishes'⁽⁷²⁾. In August, the NDO together with the "Bund Nationalgesinnter Soldaten" and other "Vaterländische Verbände", held a Tannenberg Festival of Remembrance in the Berlin Stadion⁽⁷³⁾. As was to be expected, the occasion was exploited for anti-republican propaganda. The accustomed forms of agitation continued throughout 1920 - articles, declarations, messages to ministers, even telegrams to German delegations abroad⁽⁷⁴⁾. Doubtless, the disruptive policies pursued especially by the NDO from 1919 to 1920, partly account for the determination of Seeckt and the government to sever all connections between Reichswehr and the officer associations. The Wehrgesetz (23rd March 1921) forbade the attendance of Reichswehr personnel at meetings of political associations or even of specified non-political associations. A decree of 24th May 1921 ordered the dissolution of all unofficial military organisations within the army. A further decree of 12th July 1921 forbade the participation of serving officers in the officer associations⁽⁷⁵⁾, but not in the unaffiliated regimental clubs. Ostensibly, of course, these orders could be viewed as no more than a response to pressure by the Allies demanding strict fulfilment of Versailles, particularly the dissolution of the para-military associations (Freikorps, Einwohnerwehr, etc). Nevertheless, the anti-republican propaganda of the officer associations was attracting public

(72) FO 371, 4/92, C2382/676/18: Intelligence Report 13/19-7-20 (PRO).

(73) D-O-B1 21-8-20 p.609.

(74) See p. 47. //D-O-B1 11-3-21: telegram to London delegation.

(75) Carsten p.111.

attention. In August, a big demonstration at the Berlin Stadion and the Tannenbergfeier at Königsberg in East Prussia moved Lord D'Abernon, the British Ambassador, to send a personal despatch to Lord Curzon. The Berlin "Frontkämpfertag" (24th August) was forbidden in advance to members of the army and navy on the grounds that it was like to prove anti-republican and political. Interestingly enough, v. Heeringen also, advised Kyffhäuser members not to participate. The following account of the much advertised meeting is worth quoting at length:-

"The spectators numbered about 20,000, with Generals Ludendorff, Graf Waldersee and von der Goltz in the Ex-Royal Box. The appearance of the Frontkämpfer was preceded by a march into the arena of the representatives of the numerous Vereine, such as the Deutscher Offizier Bund (Sic), Verband Nationalgesinnter Soldaten, etc, Students' Corps, Veteran and Selbstschutz Associations, all with banners and placards proclaiming their identity. These were followed by 2,000 to 3,000 youths and girls who lined the arena, two deep. The precision of the military movements and the drill of these youths' associations was most striking.

The Frontkämpfer were about 2,000 strong and marched on headed by Prince Eitel Friedrich under an archway bearing the inscription "Im Kriege Unbesiegt". They marched past the Royal Box in "paradeschritt", Prince Eitel Friedrich throwing his heels as high as anyone else, and the salute was taken by Ludendorff. Then followed a sermon by a chaplain, who suggested that Germany's greatness could only be recovered via military power, monarchy and Hohenzollern. The speeches of the three Generals were in the same strain. Graf Waldersee described the meeting as a "Kontrol Versammlung" that is, one to prove the strength of the Nationalist idea. Both he and von der Goltz attacked the "Jew Government" which caused some anti-Semitic incidents in the crowd. The star turn was played by von der Goltz, who produced telegrams from Wilhelm II and Hindenburg which

caused "rauschender Jubel" and long continued cheers for the Hohenzollerns. Von der Goltz called on the Frontkämpfer to remember that they formed the cadre of the old army when the day for action arrived. At present a war of liberation without modern armament, aircraft, tanks, heavy guns, was not to be thought of, but the Frontkämpfer might be required against Poland. Meanwhile the Nation must prepare by organisation, training and cultivation of sport.

The singing and playing of patriotic airs was a feature, of course, of the proceedings, which were to conclude with a torchlight tattoo when our representative left at 8.30 pm."

At the Frontkämpfertag a leaflet "Sühne für die Schmach von Leipzig" was distributed, aimed primarily at the trial on Allied insistence of certain "war criminals" (e.g. Oberleutnant Boldt), but containing in addition a number of interesting suggestions: after some explicit anti-Semitic passages came the proposal to form a committee from the leaders of the great national organisations standing outside parliament, augmented with co-opted politicians. This committee would take the necessary steps to select a leader - who would then be proposed to the German people and confirmed by plebiscite: subsequently this leader would rule by himself. That the ex-officers were thinking in terms of "re-electing" a Hohenzollern to the highest office seems more than likely; equally likely that only a minority of the German people would be prepared to countenance this. The anti-republican propaganda of the 24th was rammed home by a whole series of messages printed in the NDO Zeitschrift on the following day - messages from the Kaiser, Hindenburg, Mackensen, Tirpitz, Scheer, Ludendorff, a host of other top generals and admirals, and other nationalists like Bang, Rudolf Herzog, Class, Escherich, Graf Kalkreuth, Eduard Meyer, Wildgrube, Graf Westarp, Siegfried Wagner, Wulle, etc: messages full of jingoism and prophecy: "es kommt ein Tag!" As if this were not sufficient, the reader is treated to a verbatim account of von der Goltz's speech: powerful stuff!

Shortly afterwards came the Tannenbergfeier in Königsberg (East Prussia) which followed a similar course, involving especially students and professors of the University. The incident provoked counter-demonstrations by socialists and a violent attack on Ludendorff by the pacifist von Gerlach in "Welt am Montag".

In his accompanying letter, D'Abernon mentioned that "the authorities have not been disposed to attach great importance to these manifestations". He quoted a recent speech by Gessler, the Reichswehrminister: "Those super-patriots who aroused European resentment before the war by rattling the sword in the scabbard, should remember that they are only making themselves ridiculous today by rattling an empty scabbard"⁽⁷⁶⁾. Empty or no, two days after the Berlin Frontkämpfertag, Erzberger met his death at the hands of nationalist extremists. Forced at last to take action, the government first of all banned the wearing of uniform by retired servicemen and later, in September, placed a general ban on the activities of the regimental associations⁽⁷⁷⁾. These measures hit mainly the Regimentskriegervereine, and little affected the public activity of the officer associations. These continued much as hitherto: joint protests against the uniform ban, the Allied suppression of regimental clubs in the Rhineland and the trial of ex-officers in Aachen for war crimes, patriotic statements over Upper Silesia, participation in the campaign against the "war-guilt-lie": (Hutier, president of the DOB was on the committee of the "Deutscher Kampfbund gegen die Kriegsschuldllüge" founded in Munich in 1921. NDO and ROB also engaged enthusiastically in this campaign⁽⁷⁸⁾), talk of the "stab-in-the-back", etc. Nevertheless, more blatant kinds of attack on the government were avoided, and despite the excitement aroused by the attempt on the life of Scheidemann, the murder of Rathenau and

(76) FO371, 5974/CI7493.(PRO).

(77) See p. 86.

(78) D-O-B1 11-9-21, 21-10-21, 11-11-21; (Staat u. Wehrmacht) 15-5-22, 5-10-22, 25-5-23.//Büro des Reichspräsidenten-Club membership (K).

Ebert's emergency decrees (June 1922) which were closely followed by the dissolution of the Stahlhelm in Saxony and Prussia, the NDO and DOB continued unhindered in their propaganda activities. A British Intelligence report of July 1922 talks of the "great activity" of the NDO and the "increasing importance" of the Kyffhäuserbund⁽⁷⁹⁾. Between December 1922 and May 1923 negotiations were continuing among all the major ex-servicemen's organisations, with a view to introducing some measure of unity.⁽⁸⁰⁾ The Allied occupation of the Ruhr (11th January 1923) once more forced the government into uneasy alliance with the paramilitary Verbände: thus the ban on the Stahlhelm, etc, was lifted. With the collapse of "passive resistance", and that of the Mark, the first troubled period of the Weimar Republic came to its disastrous conclusion.

From this survey of the propaganda activities of the major veteran associations between 1918 and 1923 several interesting trends emerge: The smaller of the two main officer associations, the NDO, quickly became an integral part of the extreme, sabre-rattling anti-republicanism associated with Ludendorff and von der Goltz (of the "Vaterländische Verbände"). The DOB (and ROB), also seized every available opportunity to apply patriotic pressure to the government, but were in general more restrained in their direct criticism of the régime - too much so in the view of some of their members⁽⁸¹⁾. The DOB had, of course, to preserve its official 'recognition' in order to perform its important welfare tasks, a field with which the NDO was not especially concerned. Similarly, the KB displayed a keen sensitivity in "patriotic" questions, and indicated that its former rôle in "establishment militarism" was by no means a matter of the past. However, more than any of the other ex-servicemen's associations the KB refrained from direct participation in anti-republican

(79) FO371, 7502: C9690/144/18 (7-7-22 Secret Report) (PRO).

(80) See p. 116 *et seq.*

(81) e.g. D-0-B1 8-5-19 p.401 (Mitteilungen).

propaganda. From the point of view of its size, financial assets, established organisation and press facilities, this restraint was an obvious service to the young republic. In the sense of Seeckt's words - in spite of a guarded criticism of the government - the KB did not "disturb" in their propaganda activity, for had not the German Foreign Office itself countenanced agitation in the matter of "war-guilt"? In other fields the KB may even be seen as helping the new republic, at least in questions of short-term significance. Nevertheless, these early years also saw the establishment even in the KB of trends potentially dangerous to the existence of the Weimar Republic. The failure to integrate officers' associations with the biggest general ex-servicemen's organisation effectively prevented any amelioration from below of the "élitish", militant, "revanchist", spirit nurtured in the old officer corps. The survival more or less intact of the old social hierarchy within the KB itself even ensured the continuing influence of the ex-officers on the rank and file, pre-eminently through the "Kriegerzeitung". Hopelessly complicated by government policy in the field of patriotic propaganda, the situation made it increasingly clear that "political neutrality" and "patriotism" were inherently incompatible, particularly as a certain patriotic common ground made possible an overlapping of membership between the KB and the more explicitly politically "right-wing" parties and associations. The failure of the KB leadership to solve adequately this dilemma, and the wider failure of the organisations in general to settle their differences and speak with one voice, deprived "moderate" opinion in Germany of the leadership it so badly needed. The failure of the Weimar government itself effectively to control the effusions of the super-nationalists, was in the long run to be the death-warrant of the Republic.

2. ATTITUDE TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

The KV movement, as has been seen, developed round the triple aim of preserving tradition, furthering comradeship and safeguarding the welfare of ex-soldiers. Additionally, under the Wilhelmine régime, it was consciously exploited in the fight against the rising tide of Social Democracy - taking on some of the attributes of a political organisation, although lacking any specific party-political aspirations. The First World War saw increasing attacks on the KB from the Social Democrats who condemned it - with some justification - as an establishment, militarist association. The survival of such an organisation from a period of virtually absolute monarchy into one of republican democracy - with what was perhaps the most "democratic" constitution in Europe, obviously demanded some adjustments.

According to the 1898 statutes of the Prussian Landesverband, as approved by the Kaiser, "Anyone who belongs to, supports or furthers in word or deed" the Social Democratic party was debarred from membership⁽¹⁾. This was only amended in 1915 (to allow all "Vaterlandsliebende" veterans into the KVe) as a response to the Kaiser's declaration of "Burgfrieden", and in effect did nothing to improve relations with the Social Democrats. The establishment in 1917 of the socialist "Reichsbund der Kriegsbeschädigten und Kriegsteilnehmer", by such men as Kuttner, Davidsohn and Heilmann, was the main feature of the increasing socialist campaign against the KB, which was also manifested in a bitter propaganda campaign, especially at the local level. The KB leadership could do little to counter this - in view of the 1915 decision and in view also of the wartime break-down in organisation. Peace found the KVe hard-pressed from all sides, particularly by the socialists and their 800,000 rival association, but also financial, social, ideological and organisational factors. Rumours were rife with regard to the impending dissolution of the whole KV movement⁽²⁾

(1) NH 908, Statutes of PLKV (K).

(2) NH 906, 173, Article by Westphal.

In fact the only real danger to the continued existence of the KB was that the Allies might demand its dissolution as part of the peace terms. Uncertainty prevailed up to the presentation and publication of the Allied conditions (May 1919), when - despite Article 177 which placed strictures on organisations dealing with military matters, no specific intention to dissolve the KB emerged. By this time it was also becoming clear that the Ebert administration had come to terms with the generals and old civil service - and was increasingly relying on the politically right-wing Freikorps to maintain internal security. Nevertheless, the possibility that the "Revolution" might be forced into more radical socialist phases was at the back of most people's minds throughout these early years and lies behind the cautious adjustment of the KV organisation to Social Democracy and Socialism.

Although the 1915 change of statute had opened membership of KVe to Social Democrats, the big Landesverbände were only slow to follow suit: Thus Württemberg only accepted the desired modification in July 1918⁽³⁾, and hedged it with restrictions providing for the expulsion of members who were also members of an association "dessen Satzung oder Ziele das Gesamtpräsidium mit den Interessen des Württembergischen Kriegerbunds, für unvereinbar erklärt hat". Despite the renewed approval given to the 1915 decision by the national representatives in spring 1918 many local branches remained ignorant of the change - or unwilling to accept it. Even at provincial level doubt prevailed: at the end of December 1918 the Berlin Centrale pointed out to the Silesian provincial association that disbanded troops should be accepted for membership regardless of their political views⁽⁴⁾. In January 1919 Heeringen wrote personally to an influential local KV president, defending the official "Neuorientierung" - to little effect. The angry reply asserted: "Die Sozialdemokratie ist

(3) WMI 206 "Württemberg KB", report 24-7-18 (L).

(4) NH 916, KB to Breslau KV 21-12-18.

und wird niemals eine nationale Partei. Da ist alle Liebesmühe vergeblich".⁽⁵⁾ Some local leaders, even at Kreis level, prepared anti-socialist/monarchist circulars to mark the Kaiser's birthday - presumably in ignorance of the new rules published in the "Kriegerzeitung" on 1st January. Correspondence between Landrat a.D. von Bonin (Neu Stettin), his subordinate Vereine, and the Berlin Centrale contains some interesting remarks: "Können sie mir Vereinsvorstände nennen, die sozialdemokratisch infiziert sind?" "Ja, selbst, der Neustettiner Vorstand ist nicht sicher genug für Vertraulichkeiten" and: "Wenn die Sozialdemokratie erst in die Kriegervereine einzieht, wird sie auch bald in ihnen herrschen!"⁽⁶⁾ Bonin even asserted that "the Kaiser cannot be considered to have abdicated as King of Prussia." In February 1919 the Küsslin Regierungsbezirk association expressed the view that the acceptance of Social Democrats was threatening to destroy interest in the KVe (on the part of prospective recruits). Other local leaders refused to accept the fact that the change was "fait accompli" and even pledged themselves to fight the decision in any way possible⁽⁷⁾.

Influenced perhaps by the opposition shown to the official line on socialism, Heeringen expressed himself on the subject in a letter to the Saxon Landesverband which had enquired concerning the possibility of misunderstanding arising from a recent article in the "Kriegerzeitung" including the passage: "Im Übrigen kann diese Partei immer noch als national angesehen werden": Heeringen wrote: "We know from the author that he realises the weakness of the present régime and condemns it. The same goes for us. It would, however, be going too far to imply either of the régime or of the Majority Socialists - that they are not "Vaterlandsliebend gesinnt". By his use of "im Übrigen" the author

(5) NH 914, 191-3, Rickert to Heeringen (Jan 1919).

(6) NH 916, 127 et seq. Correspondence: Nickel/von Bonin/KB (Jan 1919).

(7) NH 914, 196-7, Küsslin RB/KB 15-2-19; Reinecke/KB 27-2-19.

affirms that they do not yet think as we would wish. We hope nevertheless that they are on the way towards this, and we wish henceforth to accept Social Democrats from the Majority Socialists into the KVe - in order to further this process" (22nd February 1919)⁽⁸⁾. This letter was written of course between the two main periods of disturbance in Berlin (January and March) and displays a moderation and confidence which is wholly unexceptionable, if not wholly realistic. Locally socialists continued to attack the KVe as "hostile to the government"; KVe continued to ask the Berlin Centrale for elucidation; many local KVe became nuclei of "Einwohnerwehr" against the "Spartacist" threat; others were taken over by the rank and file members and announced that their KV was now a purely democratic association; (the latter found themselves threatened with legal action.) Generally speaking then, despite palliative announcements in the KV Press stressing the KB's political neutrality and the wish that all, even socialists, work together in the national interest - socialist attacks were maintained and sometimes replied to⁽⁹⁾.

In the middle of 1919 the official pamphlet "Wesen und Wirken der Kriegervereine" by Heinrich Führ⁽¹⁰⁾, took a strong line over the socialists, particularly the Reichsbund. Similarly the Abtag of the Baden Landesverband considered the need for counter-propaganda against the increasing hostility of local Reichsbund branches⁽¹¹⁾. Correspondence between Berlin and the localities displayed considerable sympathy for old monarchists and very little for socialists: "Do you think that the systematic undermining of our army can be forgotten in an instant?"⁽¹²⁾ Reactionary sentiments soon began to creep into the KV press: In

(8) NH 914, 183, Heeringen to Saxon KB 22-2-19.

(9) NH 916, 187-8, 191-2//NH 914, 200-1.

(10)NH 916, 194, Heinrich Führ: "Wesen u. Wirken der KVe".

(11)BMI/PS "Badischer KB" Protokoll of 35th Abgeordnetentag 1919. (KA)

(12)NH 916, KB to Kullmann (Potsdam) August 1919.

September 1919 the "Kriegerzeitung" published a letter ("aus dem Leserkreise, ohne Verantwortlichkeit der Redaktion"): "Kennt ihr meine Farben?": "Keinen schöneren Anblick kann ich mir in dieser Zeit denken, als das Schwarzweisse Band und das Kreuz auf den Rock des Arbeiters, wie des Bürgers."⁽¹³⁾ Little anecdotes pointed at socialists are also in evidence⁽¹⁴⁾. By and large, although local groups occasionally objected (e.g. the Hameln Verband which accused the "Kriegerzeitung" of publishing right-wing party-propaganda, - a letter condemning the naval mutinies⁽¹⁵⁾) and some also had "Democratic" leaders⁽¹⁶⁾, the cautious expression of sentiments implicitly anti-socialist, was accepted by the rank and file of the KB without comment. It must be emphasised, however, that no explicit attacks on Social Democracy were printed, and the KB leadership accepted, "dass alle unsere Vereine unter der Sozialdemokratischen Hetze und dem Sozialdemokratischen Terror zu leiden haben, den nur durch intensive Aufklärungs- und Werbearbeit seitens unserer Verbände entgegengetreten werden kann."⁽¹⁷⁾ Nevertheless, the underlying attitude was by no means friendly, and attempts made by Majority Socialists to enter Vereine "en masse" were prevented: "It is for the Vereinsvorstände to choose the right comrades."⁽¹⁸⁾.

This moderate attitude in public, combined with a discriminating acceptance of Social Democrats at the local level, was in essence a compromise which was considered equally unsatisfactory by many SPD members as by many KV members. The matter is well put in the "Sächsische Tageblatt", (14th September 1921) discussing under the heading: "Wehrmacht und SPD Parteitag", the military proposals to be dealt with at Görlitz in 1921: "Aufrichtig begrüßen auch wir

(13) NH 914, KZ 28-9-19.

(14) NH 914, "Kriegerheim" Nr 16: 18-1-20: "Freiheit, Gleichheit".

(15) NH 916, Hameln KV to KB, September 1919.

(16) NH 916, 208 Hofrat Dr. Müller (Gotha).

(17) NH 914, KB to Meiningen LV, February 1920.

(18) NH 914, KB to Meitzendorf KV, November 1920.

ausnahmsweise einen Antrag, der lautet: "Zur Partei kann ferner nicht gehören welcher einer anderen Politischen Partei, Krieger- oder Militärvereinen als Mitglied angehört. Uns soll es recht sein, wenn die Genossen schleunigst aus den Kriegervereinen austreten, sind wir doch heute mehr wie bisher unbedingt für eine reinliche Scheidung des Geistes. Der altgediente Soldat, der sich noch etwas Frontgeist bewahrt hat, mag nun entscheiden zwischen Partei und Verband. Wir wissen auch, dass auf manchem dieser Zwitterzustand schwer gelastet hat, deshalb wird gewiss mancher alte Soldat diese verlangte Klarheit begrüßen. Besonders erfreut wären wir aber - ausnahmsweise - für Annahme dieses Antrages im Hinblick auf die Vorgänge im Kyffhäuserbunde. Es wird für ihm von wesentlichem Gewinn sein, wenn er seine sozialdemokratischen Mitglieder, auf die er ja bis heute soviel Rücksicht hat nehmen müssen, los wird, und sich dann wieder voll und ganz seinen nationalen Aufgaben widmen kann".⁽¹⁹⁾ The opinions expressed here are in the highest degree prophetic: By admitting "Social Democrats" the KB had abandoned its earlier political function and entered into an uneasy alliance with the "Weimar Parties". The Social Democrats obviously placed some value on this alliance, for, despite the long history of enmity, despite the clashes between KVe and socialists sparked off by the murder of Erzberger in August 1921, despite the careful selection practised by the KVe and the continuing rivalry between Reichsbund and KB, the Görlitz Party Conference rejected the proposal discussed above by a large majority⁽²⁰⁾.

Rumours that a reconciliation had taken place between KB and SPD were of course unjustified⁽²¹⁾, and relations at a local level continued

(19) NH 914, "Sächsisches Tageblatt" 14-9-21.

(20) NH 914, "Zentrale Allgemeine Zeitung", 21-9-21.

(21) (e.g.) NH 914, "Hamburger Nachrichten" quoted in Hildesheim Verband to KB 2-11-21.

to be extraordinarily bitter in some places⁽²²⁾ - especially as a result of the murder of Rathenau in June 1922, with the Emergency Decrees, attacks in the Reichstag (by Socialists) on the Reichswehr and the "stab-in-the-back" lies⁽²³⁾, and rumours of the formation of a "Red Army" in Oranienburg⁽²⁴⁾. All this did nothing to reassure the members of the KB as to the wisdom of the official policy. In spite of the growth of the extremist right-wing activity in Germany on the whole, the SPD conference in September 1922 again rejected proposals to stop party members belonging to KVe⁽²⁵⁾. Clearly, the oft-repeated affirmation of political neutrality, made by the leaders of the KB, was at this stage, accepted by the SPD. Whether or not this accorded with the facts as far as activity by local Vereine was concerned is another question. Nevertheless, the change of attitude with regard to Majority Socialists at any rate - which was initially an action of self-defence rather than of political conviction - was preserved as the official policy of the KB leadership, and by 1922 was becoming transformed into an ideology⁽²⁶⁾. While this attitude obviously raised difficulties with the other "patriotic" groups, it was nevertheless of considerable value to the existence of the Weimar Republic in the early years, not only from the point of view of respectable and at this stage undeniably "patriotic" support, but also as a bridge - one of the very few, between "the System" and the political "right".

Predictably, of course, the accommodating attitude of the KB was not reflected in the officer associations. Initially, officers with "republican" opinions had their own organisation - the "Republikanische

(22) NH 914, KKV Dick/KB November/December 1921.

(23) (e.g.) NH 915, "Vorwärts" 8-7-22.

(24) NH 915, "Oranienburg Generalanzeiger" 11-7-22; KB to Budjuhn 19-7-22.

(25) NH 915, KZ 1-10-22.

(26) Westphal, p.25-7 and see p.49.

Führerbund" - and after this lapsed in 1921 the very few former officers with Social Democratic beliefs ultimately found their way into the "Reichsbanner". Although the NDO was in the thick of anti-republican activity, the DOB was more careful in public, and, as in Bavaria (1920), was quick to appeal to the authorities against the "unjustified" attacks on the old officer corps made by socialists in "Vorwärts" and other left-wing papers⁽²⁷⁾.

3. LOCAL INFLUENCE

Having considered the general trends in the development of the public policies of the various ex-servicemen's organisations, some attention must be given to the ways in which these were interpreted at the local level. Besides the manner in which "official" instructions concerning such specific matters as the membership of socialists and the attitude to the ex-Kaiser, were carried out by the individual Kriegerverein, the whole question of the rôle of the veteran association in the community became of crucial importance in post-war Germany.

Over a period of some 130 years a network of 30,000 separate local associations had become firmly embedded in German society. Almost every small village had one and in some places they would constitute the sole centres of social activity, sometimes sharing, sometimes disputing this rôle with the Church. To the Kriegerverein member they were virtually a way of life: entertainment, sport, welfare and patriotic instruction were all included in their activity. In addition they provided the chance for enjoying service-comradeship and rank-privilege beyond the army itself. Of course, compulsory military service does not always engender the wish to prolong one's association with a military environment, but suffice it to say, the incentive to do so in Imperial

(27) MA 104 267 DOB (Bavaria) to Staatsministerium 13-1-20, 15-12-20 (MGS).

Germany was strong. To those standing outside the KV movement, the awareness was not for its social aspects, but rather for its militarist trappings. The majority of the public functions held by the local association, whether they were funerals, festivals of remembrance, foundation anniversaries, or special celebrations like the Kaiser's birthday or the "Reichsgründungstag", had the same ingredients: uniformed parades, marching through the streets, banners, military music, patriotic songs, speeches, and where appropriate, fireworks or "Ehrensalven" - the last volley of honour for a departed comrade⁽¹⁾. All this was unobjectionable - so long as the Empire and its army remained the objects of general veneration. By November 1918 the people of Germany had come to realise with dramatic suddenness that this was no longer the case. The old gods had gone. Initial bewilderment gave way to anger and disillusion, even violence towards the remaining representatives of imperialism. Understandably, officers still with troops under their command continued to wear their uniforms complete with medals and rank insignia - the hated *Épaulettes*. Less understandably, many officers serving now only technically, also continued to wear uniform. That retired officers too continued to do so - as had been their privilege under the Kaiser - even in areas where social unrest prevailed, can only be regarded as provocative and foolhardy. Many were to pay for their lack of good sense. Thus during the general strike in Stuttgart there were 17 instances of attacks on ex-officers, 10 of them serious and 1 fatal⁽²⁾. Under these circumstances, and dependent of course on local conditions, some adjustments to the customary activities of the Kriegervereine would appear necessary from the point of view of public order and the personal safety of the old soldiers.

(1) Westphal, *passim*.

(2) Staatsministerium 1480, complaint by Württemberg O.B. 25-4-19 (SH).

Co-operation between the KB Central and the Reich Innenministerium resulted in the former sending out and publishing requests to avoid provocative actions - such as funeral parades, with medals and insignia, **and** unauthorised Ehrensalven - and work with the local authorities, for the maintenance of order. Some provincial associations sent out the same recommendation independently⁽³⁾. Whether or not these requests were observed in all areas is not known. There is, however, no record of any incidents arising from their deliberate disregard. On the other hand one or two cases of unguarded, even provocative speeches, did occur in 1919: Monarchist sentiments were voiced by Kreiskriegerverband chairman von Bonin at a Verbandstag in Neu Stettin, and were duly reported in the socialist press ("Vorwärts" 18th June 1919). More seriously, a festival held on 6th July 1919 by the Karlsthal KV included the dedication of a new colour inscribed "Mit Gott für König und Vaterland", a monarchist-flavoured speech by the Kreisverband chairman von Loos (also the local Landrat), and shooting practice with a machine-gun. Despite the emotive heading: "Pommersche-Maschinengewehr Idylle - Kriegervereins - und Landratsreaktion", the "Vorwärts" account (23rd July 1919) would appear largely factual. Von Loos was dismissed from his Landratsamt by the Ministry of the Interior, but defended by the KB leadership who pointedly sent to the Ministry a copy of their letter expressing sympathy with von Loos and recommending his retention as Kreisverband chairman. This was agreed by the Kreisverband representatives who passed a unanimous vote of confidence in the ex-Landrat⁽⁴⁾. It was doubtless incidents of this nature that tended to make the government a little wary of the KB's new "political neutrality".

(3) NH 916, 94, KB to Borck 11-12-18.

ibid. 85, Circular of Silesian Prov. 18-11-19.

(4) ibid. 219 et seq.

Renewed attacks on officers as a result of the Kapp Putsch moved the Württemberg Offiziersbund to protest to the Staatsministerium. The latter replied that they would do all in their power to protect officers who acted in accordance with the constitution⁽⁵⁾.

In August 1921 the Lübeck conference of the KB provoked an incident of the type that was to recur time and again throughout the Weimar period: In preparation for the conference, some public buildings in Lübeck had been decked with the old Imperial colours, black-white-red, also the colours of the KB itself. Protests made by the local Social Democratic paper resulted in the flags being taken down; instead, private residences were decked out in the offending colours. As a reprisal the local Bismarck monument was painted red⁽⁶⁾. Up to this date incidents would appear to have been isolated and, apart from attacks on officers, of a minor nature. Moreover, all of them seem to have been occasioned by varying degrees of provocation from the side of the veteran organisations themselves. The assassination of Erzberger on 26th August 1921 caused a wave of indignation among all moderate Germans. The fact that those responsible belonged to the lunatic fringe of the nationalists was immaterial. Reprisals organised and spontaneous hit at the nearest "nationalist" target - the Kriegerverein. On the 29th August an emergency decree placed a ban on "regimental" celebrations - i.e. those functions of actual former army units. This, however, in no way curtailed the activities of the general Kriegervereine. The 50 years "Stiftungsfest" of the Osnabrück Verein in Hannover, held on the 3rd/4th September, was menaced by local socialists, although no-one seems to have been hurt⁽⁷⁾. In Hannover itself a wave of violence broke out on the same days: although a regimental reunion of the old 74th had been cancelled in view of the

(5) Staatsministerium 1480, W.O.B. 25-3-20 (SH).

(6) NH 919, "Neue Preussische Zeitung" 16-8-21.

(7) *ibid.* Reichslandischer KV to KB, 15-9-21.

official ban, workers cordoned the hall designated for the celebration and "roughed-up" all better-dressed citizens found in the area. Two high-school boys were beaten up for wearing the nationalist black-white-red badge in their button-holes. Police were "not strong enough to intervene". Protests were made to the Minister of the Interior by the Berlin Centrale, who in the meantime advised the local Kreisverband to avoid provoking the workers⁽⁸⁾. In Saxony too, socialists organised workers' demonstrations against the "reactionaries". Reports came in from the localities of crowds a thousand strong, of demands from local authorities for the surrender of KV weapons and banners, of excitement aroused by an untrue report that one "Veteran Brandt" had hurled filth at a passing (Social Democratic) cycling club. The Berlin Centrale again advised caution - "although the colours can NOT be confiscated, they should not be openly displayed as this would be provocation".⁽⁹⁾ In Brandenburg, the local left-wing press whipped up opposition to a proposed visit by General von Kluck to a closed meeting of the Kreisverband, Forst im Lausitz. The Kreisverband itself decided to postpone the meeting (planned for 6th September), but in ignorance of this the left-wing workers went ahead with formidable preparations to stop it, including the occupation of the station and the planting of armed men around the hall⁽¹⁰⁾. From Silesia, a worried Kreisverband chairman reported threatening action from the trades union Kartell which was demanding the abolition of black-white-red colours and badges⁽¹¹⁾. In Berlin itself attacks were made on remembrance parades. One, transferred to Wilmersdorf at the last minute to avoid provoking socialist attacks,

(8) *ibid.* KKV Hameln to KB, 2-9-21 et seq.

(9) *ibid.* KKV Neuahaldensleben/KB, 5-9-21 et seq.

(10) *ibid.* KKV Forst im Lausitz to KB, 8-9-21.

(11) *ibid.* KKV Bolkenhain to KB, 12-9-21.

was nevertheless disturbed - a mob systematically smashed the place, burned the offending colours, threatened those present with firearms, and, on their homeward march, demolished a war memorial and broke into a KV chapel⁽¹²⁾. In Stettin (Pomerania) the same pattern was repeated: crowds gathered round a Verein hall and attacked individual veterans going to a meeting: one old man appears to have been stabbed. Police were slow to gain control of the situation⁽¹³⁾. Again, in Herford, Westfalia, police found themselves unable to safeguard an officially sanctioned parade attended by the burgomaster, a Reichswehr band and two Reichswehr officers. The opposition here was openly led by the local trade union secretary (a magistrate) and a communist⁽¹⁴⁾. Shortly afterwards, near Iserlohn, the police stepped in and banned a KV function planned for the 19th September⁽¹⁵⁾.

Similar incidents continued all across the industrial northern half of Germany; only the southern states appeared to have been immune. In places certain elements appeared that lifted the whole affair out of the realms of mere rowdyism or political skirmishing. In Silesia attempts were made by mines personnel to make KV miners choose between their jobs or their KV membership⁽¹⁶⁾. Görlitz was a staunch socialist area and the scene of the SPD conference (20th September 1921). In addition, the leaders of the attacks on the KVe were sometimes Social Democratic Landtag deputies⁽¹⁷⁾. In other places explosives were used to demolish war memorials⁽¹⁸⁾.

The seriousness of these events led to letters of protest by the

(12) *ibid.* "Berliner Tageblatt" 19-9-21 et seq.

(13) *ibid.* "Deutsche Tageszeitung", 20-9-21.

(14) *ibid.* KKV Herford to PLKV, 7-9-21.

(15) *ibid.* KKV Iserlohn to PLKV, 17-9-21.

(16) *ibid.* Görlitz RB to KB 17-9-21.

(17) *ibid.* KV Storkow names USPD deputy KLAUSNER. (29-9-21)

KKV Hallen names Remmele and Kilian (8-10-21).

(18) *ibid.* "Deutsche Tageszeitung" 5-10-21.

Berlin Centrale to the Innenminister, commenting especially on the ineffectiveness and lack of police action either on the spot or subsequent to disturbances. The Innenministerium assured the KB leaders that they had urged the local authorities to take action and provide protection where necessary⁽¹⁹⁾. Pressure in the Reichstag from Deutsch National quarters seems to have had some effect. Albeit tardily, the Forst case was taken up by the public prosecutor in the middle of November⁽²⁰⁾. In April 1922, 17 workers (male and female) concerned in events at Herford, were put on trial; 7 were acquitted and the rest received prison sentences ranging from 6 to 9 months⁽²¹⁾. In general the excitement stimulated by the murder of Erzberger died down towards the end of 1921 and KVe including the regimental associations resumed their customary activities more or less undisturbed. This was, however, only a lull in the storm. Events played into the hands of the extremists: in April 1921 the Allies had fixed the figure to be paid by Germany as reparations at the unimaginable sum of 132 thousand million gold Marks; in October, the League of Nations had overridden the recent plebiscite held in Upper Silesia in order to give the Poles a larger and more valuable share of former German territory. In view of this, the policy of fulfillment advocated by Wirth and Rathenau found little support. By 1922 the decline in the value of the Mark was becoming alarming and nationalist aspirations were once more on the boil.

The attempt on the life of Scheidemann (4th June 1922) and the murder of Foreign Minister Rathenau (24th June 1922) once more provoked a storm of socialist violence directed against the nationalists - particularly the Kriegervereine. An especially serious incident in

(19) *ibid.* 42-3, correspondence with Minister of Interior Sept/Oct 1921.

(20) *ibid.* KKV Forst im L. to KB, 21-11-21.

(21) *ibid.* "Vorwärts", 19-4-22.

Königsberg (East Prussia) actually involved a direct clash (11th June) between Reichswehr troops and demonstrators. The participation of the Reichswehr had been forbidden since the Prussian authorities had declared the whole Hindenburgfeier "political" as, unofficially, they had also described the East Prussian Provincial Kriegerverband to the Reichswehr Ministry. Local police had given assurances that they could handle any socialist disturbances at a KV remembrance service being attended by Fieldmarshal von Hindenburg. A preparatory campaign in the local socialist press, however, brought out the workers, wives, drunks and teenage lads in large numbers. A direct assault on the accompanying Reichswehr contingent on the march to the Devauer Platz, resulted in the soldiers fixing bayonets to defend themselves, some even opening fire without orders. Some 15 shots seem to have been fired before the mob drew off: one demonstrator was bayoneted to death; four others were shot in the legs. Again the same ingredients are to be found: a militarist function in public: socialist inspired agitation: lack of adequate police. The more serious results of the Königsberg affair were solely due to the "accidental" participation of regular troops and the fact that the troops were carrying live ammunition and correct discipline was lacking⁽²²⁾. In Berlin, too, left-wing demonstrators ran into trouble: a Zossen KV celebrating its 50 th anniversary over the weekend (11th/12th June) was well prepared and protected. A group of communist youths from Berlin tore down and burned some of the many black-white-red colours decorating the area. The prompt appearance of the local police with 40 Landjäger resulted in some 11 young communists being man-handled to the police court. The following day, the KV procession had a most interesting composition. Led by a serving Reichswehr RSM were 22 men carrying black-white-red banners inscribed: "With God for Kaiser and Empire", the men of the Zossen KV carrying Model 88 rifles and swastika daggers, and a contingent of Landjäger

(22) Nachlass Schleicher 39/1 20-6-22 (F): NL Gay1 20 (K).

bringing up the rear. In Zossen itself a strong police guard took no action when communist boys were beaten up for trying to snatch the nationalist flags⁽²³⁾. To what extent this socialist account is exaggerated is not known: clearly, however, the KV was prepared. In Gruiten (Düsseldorf-Rhineland) an area not previously troubled with incidents of this nature, the extreme-left trade unionists who attacked a KV celebration being attended by Gen. Dieffenbach met with less opposition: with firearms, they wounded several of the KV participants⁽²⁴⁾.

The earlier attempts by Silesian miners to co-erce KV members had been resisted with some success by the Berlin Centrale who took up the matter with the highest government authorities⁽²⁵⁾. Attempts of a similar nature were now made by trades unions, particularly those in Nauen and Spandau-Osthavelland (Potsdam area, outskirts of Berlin), who presented KV members with the choice of leaving their KV or leaving their trade union - and hence lose their jobs. This was a response to workers taking part in a local KV procession sporting the offending nationalist colours⁽²⁶⁾.

Other actions against the KVe at this time included the burglary of premises and the theft and public burning of KV banners⁽²⁷⁾. And not only KVe were involved; NDO activities in Saxony and Hamburg were also disturbed⁽²⁸⁾.

The emergency decrees of 26th June 1922, which were interpreted in a sense much more restricting to the activities of the KVe than the purely "regimental" ban of the previous year, together with the efforts of the KB leadership to have them reviewed, are considered in detail elsewhere⁽²⁹⁾. That they were fully justified, both for the sake of

(23) NH 919, "Vorwärts", 13-6-22.

(24) *ibid.* KKV Mettmann to PLKV, 20-6-22.

(25) See p. 94.

(26) NH 919, KB Circular 17-6-22.

(27) *ibid.* PLKV to Staatsanwaltschaft, Dortmund, 26-8-22.

(28) AA 12, 5-10-22.

(29) See p. 88 *et seq.*

public order and the safety of the KVe themselves, cannot be disputed. To many of the moderate KV members who had never been directly involved in "incidents", and even more so to those who had suffered at the hands of socialist mobs and found no redress, the decrees could only be viewed as an unfair reprisal for Rathenau's death, and an arbitrary infringement of their civic rights; - even more so when demonstrations against KVe continued, sometimes forcibly entering private houses - removing and destroying banners. There can be little doubt that the KB letter of protest to the Thuringian Ministry of Interior sincerely expressed the feelings of the average KV member: "Wir sind weder Staatsbürger minderen Rechts noch Reaktionäre oder Feinde des heutigen Staates, sondern helfen mit an seinem Wiederaufbau. Wir verlangen aber auch, dass dieser Staat uns seinen Schutz ebenso angedeihen lässt wie jedem anderen Deutschen, gleichgültig welcher Partei er angehört".⁽³⁰⁾ This particular matter was to drag on into 1923, Heeringen actually intervening personally with Ebert⁽³¹⁾. Despite regional differences in application, the June 1922 measures certainly curtailed KV activity in many places and for several months there was comparative peace at the local level. This was not to last. The French occupation of the Ruhr in January 1923 served temporarily to throw together government and extreme right. The restrictions on military associations were lifted.

In March 1923 a Kriegerverein celebrating its 50th anniversary was literally besieged, together with a Reichswehr band and a handful of Landjäger, in the church at Erkner, not far from Berlin. Their assailants were communists from Berlin who had found it possible to travel in their hundreds, assemble at the station and march off in good order, without any police intervention. The lack of adequate police provision, after due warning, was blamed variously on the police them-

(30) NH 919, KB to Thuringian Government, 14-7-22.

(31) See p. 92.

selves and the Landrat. The Minister of Interior came as near to apologising for this occurrence as any government department ever can⁽³²⁾. The incident occurring in the same place on Ascension Day (10th May 1923), a time notorious for its public disorder anyway, has all the aspects of a retaliatory measure by a regimental association (4th Grenadier Regiment) who set off with a band, singing "Deutschland, Deutschland..", marching through the socialist suburbs of the capital to Erkner. Not surprisingly they found themselves set upon by the inhabitants. On the same day a fierce battle took place on the northern outskirts of Berlin, between Kriegervereiners and Stahlhelm on one side and communists on the other. There were 100 casualties, 37 serious ones⁽³³⁾. Again, holding such a meeting, in such a place, at such a time must be viewed as unwise, if not deliberately provocative. On the other hand, the incident in Lübeck (3rd June 1923) on the occasion of the unveiling by the former 46th Reserve Infantry Division of a memorial to the Fallen of 215 Reserve Infantry Regiment, seems to have been largely due to police stupidity, if nothing worse. Police Chief (SPD Senator) Mehrlein, while ensuring that a socialist demonstration was held at a different time and place, appears to have authorised a communist demonstration to coincide with the parade of the Reserve Infantry Division in the castle yard. The result was foreseeable⁽³⁴⁾. Again in July in Görlitz, Silesia, police did nothing to prevent a group of miners and glassworkers led by a union official attempting to stop a KV shooting match⁽³⁵⁾.

From this survey of the activity of the local ex-servicemen's organisations in the early years of the Weimar Republic several interesting points emerge. Quite apart from the officially approved patriotic

(32) NH 919, Report 10-3-23; KZ 15-6-23.

(33) NH 919, 4 Grenadier RV to KB, 11-5-23: "Oranienburg Ztg" 15-5-23.

(34) *ibid.* KZ 15-6-23.

(35) *ibid.* Braunsdorf KV/Görlitz Staatsanwalt 23-7-23.

indoctrination of the members themselves⁽³⁶⁾, they had in places an obvious influence on public order. By and large, it would appear that requests from the KB to observe the new "political neutrality" and avoid provoking left-wing elements, were effective up to the murder of Erzberger, in August 1921. This event was the signal for the renewal of the struggle, between extremist elements all across the northern half of Germany. Essentially this involved also the moderate working-class hitting back at militarism (and the appearances of the "old" soldiers in public were always anti-republican by implication, if not always in intent: Kriegervereine were, personnel-wise, the Kaiser's army, and in the minds of the populace could often not be distinguished from the para-military organisations and the "murder clubs" of the extreme right). In this light the public appearances of the KVe, particularly in industrial areas, must be viewed as potentially provocative, and often actually, even deliberately, so. Certainly, in view of their total number only a small proportion were directly involved in the serious incidents discussed here. Equally, many incidents of a less serious nature were never reported to the national HQ in Berlin. On many other occasions individuals must have been annoyed, even if they did not show it - and had their attitudes sensibly modified by contact with tactless exhibitions of sabre-rattling. In other words the public activity of the KV in these years, especially after 1921, can be seen as politically divisive, tending to alienate moderate socialist workers from the KB as a whole, deepening the gulf between left and right and stimulating real hatred where before perhaps only political dislike had existed.

(36) Westphal p.63.

From another point of view, to use Seeckt's words, the KVe served to accentuate and "publicize the weaknesses and many ridiculous traits of the Republic": when demonstrators against militarism were bayoneted and shot by a "republican" army this did little to enhance the country's reputation abroad. Unpunished attacks on decent, moderate Kriegerverein members drew attention to the weakness of the civil power at home. It was not that the police forces were inadequate in strength or training. It was rather a lack of sensible direction and definition from above; with goodwill and a little enquiry it was perfectly possible for local police to distinguish between the officially-countenanced KVe and other elements. But is it surprising - particularly where a socialist police-chief was responsible to a socialist Bürgermeister, Landrat or Oberpräsident - that goodwill was sometimes lacking? Certainly, in June 1922 the Weimar government proved to itself and others that the problem of public order could be dealt with. Perhaps a better way of dealing with militarist associations would have been to ban public uniformed parading and marching, and exercise a closer general supervision (and protection) over all meetings, public or private. Alas, the events of 1923 were once more to force the government to depend on illegal military Verbände - the "Black Reichswehr". However, perhaps the most unfortunate effect of the public activity of the Kriegervereine in this period was in hardening the political attitudes of their own members: moderate, decent working- and lower middle-class men were likely to lose patience with a government that on the one hand afforded them no protection or redress from socialist and communist violence, and on the other, punished them with blanket bans for acts of violence for which they were in no way responsible. In the words of Reichswehrminister Gessler (referring specifically to the misuse of veterans' celebrations for political ends) "Veranstaltungen die statt Aussöhnung der verschiedenen Volkskreise eine immer grössere Kluft zwischen ihnen schaffen." And yet, he continued, the associations of the old army

are potentially one of the best ways of achieving a "Nationale Einheitsfront des Deutschen Volkes."⁽³⁷⁾

4. RELATIONS WITH THE WEIMAR GOVERNMENTS

The propaganda activities of the ex-servicemen's organisations and their policies with regard to Social Democracy obviously dictated the general trends in their relationship with specific Weimar administrations. The continuous nationalist, anti-republican effusions of the NDO effectively prevented any official co-operation with the government or its agencies. Apart from its overt monarchism and its public sympathy for DNVP, DVP and Grossdeutsche Freiheitspartei, probably the main grounds for objection was its public approval of the aims of the Kapp Putsch (20th April), and the bitter personal attacks made by the association's president on the former War Minister, General Scheuch. In a letter to the Bavarian Ambassador dated August 1921, the "Staatskommissar für die Überwachung der Öffentlichen Ordnung" wrote: "Der Verband hält sich zwar zur Zeit in verfassungsmässigen Bahnen, ist jedoch dem Gedanken eines Rechts-umsturzes nicht unter allen Umständen abgeneigt".⁽¹⁾ The Verband had been one of the first to be declared "political" and banned to serving army officers⁽²⁾. The DOB on the other hand maintained a somewhat questionable political neutrality and managed to preserve its official recognition, the basic pre-requisite for its important welfare work⁽³⁾. Relations were nevertheless by no means cordial (requests for financial assistance from official funds were turned down⁽⁴⁾) mainly because of

(37) Nachlass Bredow, 5, Gessler's circular 5-9-21 (F).

(1) Bayer. Gesandtschaft Berlin 1162, Staatskommissar letter 2-8-21 (MGS). D-O-B1 (S & W) 15-8-22, "Erklärung".

(2) See p. 103.

(3) FO 371, 7547, C9271/1156/18, answer to Parliamentary Question 27-6-22, (PRO)

(4) MA 104267, DOB to Staatsministerium 7-1-20 (MGS).

the frequency with which the DOB was seen acting in concert with NDO and even more questionable groups⁽⁵⁾. By far the most fruitful co-operation between the veteran associations and government resulted from the official relations established with the KB.

A sincere attempt was made by the Bund to adhere to the principles of "Überparteilichkeit", to support the republican constitution and to co-operate with the government in maintaining law and order⁽⁶⁾. Initially this policy met with some success and Heeringen was able to state with complete honesty in August 1919 that, although the KB no longer enjoyed its former privileged position, the government was making no difficulties for them⁽⁷⁾. The same situation held in the case of the big semi-independent south German Landesverbände: In Württemberg, for example, the local Minister des Innern attended the Kriegerbund's annual conference in 1920⁽⁸⁾, and even the local Offiziersbund was promised protection for officers abiding by the constitution⁽⁹⁾. The co-operation between KB and Weimar government continued more or less undisturbed up to the murder of Erzberger in August 1921. Gessler, the Reichswehrminister, was even an honorary member of a Kriegerverein⁽¹⁰⁾. The KB leadership advised its members to keep clear of anti-republican demonstrations, like that organised in the Berlin Stadion by the NDO (August 1921)⁽¹¹⁾. However, the murders of Erzberger and Rathenau, with the ensuing socialist reprisals in the localities and the emergency decrees by the government, placed severe strains on the links between KB and Weimar ministers. At the centre these links were never in fact severed, but the hardening of feeling at

(5) See p. 123.

(6) See p. 41.

(7) NH 916, 204, KB reply to query from Pragnitz dated 14-8-19 (K).

(8) WMI 206, Württbg KB letter 1-9-20 (L).

(9) E 130 iv Staatsministerium (Württbg) 1480, 30-3-20 (SH).

(10) Nachlass Otto Gessler Bd 2, 2, 41 (K).

(11) FO 371, 5974, C17493/416/18 (PRO).

the local level made them increasingly unrealistic, just as the balancing of "patriotism" and "political neutrality" increased government wariness. The KB had never shown itself averse to sabre-rattling,⁽¹²⁾ and by 1922 its old reputation for "violent Pan-Germanism" and general reactionary tendencies was once more well-established in the public mind⁽¹³⁾. Nevertheless, the government continued to see (for the duration of the Weimar Republic) some point in preserving the KB and maintaining their own links with it. Whether they were justified in so doing is the question which lies at the heart of the present study.

The official contacts between the KB and the Reich and Prussian Innenministerium during this period could have done little to enhance the popularity of the ex-servicemen in government circles. The Karlsthal incident in July 1919⁽¹⁴⁾, where a Landrat/Kreisverband chairman was dismissed by the Prussian Innenminister because of his involvement in an anti-republican demonstration, moved the Berlin Centrale to inform the ministry of their complete sympathy for the dismissed Landrat. Here, one feels, the KB action was not entirely justified. In the case, however, of the protest sent to the Reichsminister (22nd September 1921) following socialist violence in Osnabrück, Hameln, etc, the comments on lack of adequate police action would appear to be fully justified. The minister replied (13th October 1921) that he had urged local authorities to take appropriate steps and provide protection⁽¹⁵⁾. Similarly in the case of the Potsdam incidents⁽¹⁶⁾ a request to the Prussian Innenminister (13th October 1921) for protection of a forthcoming function was granted by the Potsdam Regierungspräsident (18th November 1921)⁽¹⁷⁾. With regard to the

(12) e.g. NH 917, KB to anti-Bolshevist Association 22-7-19.

NH 906, 4, "Soldaten Zeitung" 7-1-22.

(13) FO 371, 7501, C7234/144/18: 15-5-22 (PRO).

(14) See p. 70.

(15) NH 919, 42-3.

(16) See p. 74.

(17) NH 919, 8-11-21.

Halle incident⁽¹⁸⁾, the Magdeburg Oberpräsident Hürsing would appear to have been slow in dealing with a complaint by the Halle Kreisverband and the KB was asked to contact the Reichsminister on their behalf⁽¹⁹⁾.

(But this is understandable - Hürsing was a Social Democrat and also the leading spirit in the formation (subsequently - February 1924) of the "Reichsbanner"). Only in Thuringia was any marked official hostility to KVe expressed. Delay in dealing with two incidents was only one symptom of the reluctance of the Thuringian administration to come into line with the Reich over the interpretation of the June 1922 decrees in the case of KVe⁽²⁰⁾. The Erkner incident in March 1923, in which the authorities were clearly at fault, brought a letter which was tantamount to an official apology from the Ministry (9th April 1923): this was duly published in the "Kriegerzeitung" (15th June 1923)⁽²¹⁾. Complaints sent by the Görlitz Bezirksverband to the local Landrat (25th July 1923) were speedily sent on to the state prosecutor⁽²²⁾.

In general, the attempts by the KB to obtain satisfaction from the authorities were dealt with promptly and, on the surface at any rate, satisfactorily. To what extent official action made any impression on local police provisions in general is doubtful. In their quest for satisfaction the KB used whatever "pressurising" means came to hand, the press (their own and the national dailies) and the Reichstag⁽²³⁾. The main result of contacts between KB and Innenministerium was to underline the weakness of the republicans - together with their good intentions,

(18) See p. 73.

(19) See p. 74.

(20) NH 919, October 1921.

(21) *ibid.* Erkner KV to KB, 10-3-23.

(22) *ibid.* Lower Silesia Bezirk, Lausitz, to Landratsamt Rothenburg 25-7-23.

(23) NH 919, "KH Mitteilungen" Sept/Oct 1921.

"Neue Preussische Zeitung" 30-9-21.

"Deutsche Tageszeitung" 5-11-21.

"Kriegerzeitung" 21, 15-6-23.

NH 915, KB to Reichstag member Budjuhn, 19-7-22.

while emphasising the inherent friction between "nationalists" and "socialists".

The starting-off point for a consideration of the legislation affecting the veteran associations, must be the terms imposed by the Allies in the Peace of Versailles. Despite rumours that the total dissolution of the KV movement was to be demanded, the eventual provisions were less severe: Article 177 mentioning "societies of discharged soldiers" by name, forbade "associations of every description, whatever be the age of their members" to concern themselves "with any military matters". Societies were "forbidden to instruct or exercise their members, or to allow them to be instructed or exercised in the profession or use of Arms." Any connection between themselves and the War Ministry or any other military authority was also forbidden. Westphal, in his comments on Article 177 in the KV Handbook pointed out that this would also include use of army bands. He continued by emphasising that "Any Verein, which as such still engages in shooting activities of whatever kind, places the KV movement in grave danger". The qualifying "as such" is worthy of note. Article 178 placed a total ban on any measure designed to further the cause of mobilisation with specific mention of "supplementary cadres" in the army itself. The Allies saw the purely "Regimentsvereine" as such a danger - likely to assist a possible future military expansion, and therefore banned them in the occupied zones. Altogether some 300 were affected. The threat of dissolution also hung over the general Kriegervereine in these areas (24). The treaty stipulations represented a considerable curtailment of KV activities, made all the more unpalatable by the realisation that even when for example, the Belgians appropriated KV funds and colours, no support could be counted on from the German government (25). Nevertheless

(24) Westphal, p.77-9//AA 15, 25-11-22, p.86

(25) NH 916, K81n RB to KB, 8-8-19.

as has been seen, the latter made no difficulties for the veteran associations up to August 1921, beyond those forced upon them by Allied pressure demanding the strict execution of the terms of Versailles. The Wehrgesetz of March 1921 and the July order which completed the severance of the Reichswehr from the officer and other associations was, of course, also in line with Seeckt's personal convictions; but the government order of 24th May dissolving the military associations - Freikorps, Einwohnerwehr, etc, was made with the greatest reluctance, only after sustained Allied pressure over several months which referred directly to the Articles 177 and 178⁽²⁶⁾. This reluctance was due to the fact that the authorities were actively financing and encouraging the unofficial military activities in East Prussia and Bavaria⁽²⁷⁾. May 1921 also saw further action by the Allies against ex-servicemen's organisations in the occupied territories. Thus DOB branches in Düsseldorf and Duisburg were banned⁽²⁸⁾. The following month a general ban on DOB, RANO (Reichsarbeitsnachweis für Offiziere) and Okulus was ordered by the Rhineland commission in the occupied zone⁽²⁹⁾.

In August the murder of Erzberger and the big NDO demonstration in the Berlin Stadion at last moved the Weimar government to initiate its own steps against the associations. As an important part of the emergency decree retired officers were forbidden to wear uniform and power was granted to the State Ministers of the Interior and their subordinates to ban regimental celebrations and occasions likely to be anti-republican and endanger the peace. General bans such as had already been issued by some ministers were to be avoided. This was a reference to

(26) e.g. FO 371/5961 C2317/386/18 (PRO).

(27) See p. 108.

(28) D-O-B1 16, 1-6-21, report of Bundestag.

(29) *ibid.* 22, 1-8-21, "Nachrichten der Bundesleitung": Note by RUCC 18-6-21.

the action of the Saxon authorities, which was overruled by the Committee of the Reichsrat in some specific cases⁽³⁰⁾, as with the "177 Regiment" (17th October 1921). The same session of the Reichsrat rejected, however, an appeal by the DOB against a police decision in Dresden not to allow a "war-guilt-lie" lecture⁽³¹⁾. The restrictions placed on the wearing of military uniform by ex-servicemen were formulated in detail by the Chancellor's order of 3rd October 1921: this was now limited to attendance at church on feast days, statutory festivals and funerals of comrades, attendance at important family occasions and rallies on statutory festival-days, attendance at social functions held by the Reichswehr and those held by non-political associations when attendance by Reichswehr members had been specifically approved by the local Wehrkreis commander. The wearing of non-service badges in public was specifically forbidden⁽³²⁾. This legislation was clearly directed against ex-officers, rather than ex-servicemen in general. It is unfortunate that acts of violence against general Krieger ereine tended to blur the distinction. The restraint shown by the German authorities was not shared by the Allies. In Aachen for example the Belgians imposed prison sentences and fines on a number of members of the "Officer Association of the Former 56th Regiment", who had "participated in the activities of a Verein which concerned itself with military things".⁽³³⁾ Protests by the big officer associations had little effect, although Deutsch National deputies in the Reichstag agitated that effective steps should be taken against the attacks on the KVe⁽³⁴⁾.

The attempt on the life of Sch eidemann and the murder of Rathenau in June 1922 brought a much more positive reaction from the government,

(30) *ibid.* 26, 11-9-21; 30, 21-10-21.

(31) NH 919 "Deutsche Tageszeitung" 5-11-21.

(32) Westphal p.86-7.

(33) D-O-B1 32, 11-11-21.

(34) AA, 6, 25-6-22, "Kampf gegen die Regimentsvereinigungen".

which indicated the extent to which socialist opinion had hardened against the KVe in the course of 1921 to 1922. Severing's comments in the Prussian Landtag on the 17th June were a foretaste of things to come: "Kreigervereinssparaden und Regimentsfeiern sind jedenfalls geeignet, den Bestand der Republik zu erschüttern". On the 20th June, speaking to a reporter of the "8-Uhr-Abendblatt" he stated that regimental functions were often addressed by ex-officers and right-wing politicians in terms attacking Reich and State governments. The first charge must be viewed as justified, despite the neutral public policy of the KB itself, while the second, though containing some truth, indicated the readiness of some socialists to condemn out-of-hand all the ex-servicemen's associations for the faults of a few. Reichswehrminister Gessler was still prepared at this time to defend the purely "Traditionsvereine" - those concerned with keeping alive the history and traditions of the old army, but not of course, involved in politics. The emergency decrees of the 26th June, following the murder of Foreign Minister Rathenau, gave authority to the state governments to prohibit meetings planned to demonstrate against Versailles (28th June 1922 was the 3rd anniversary), and further, to prohibit Regimentsfeiern or any assemblies of members of "former troop formations": the elastic wording was probably deliberate but created considerable problems of interpretation for local authorities. Thus a conference of Landräte in Hesse (3rd July 1922) had not been sufficiently informed by their Oberpräsident to be able to decide whether a Kreisverband Abgeordnetentag should be banned. It was, eventually, but doubts were still rife. Should, for example, a KV be allowed to carry their banner furled in public? This was left to the discretion of the local police. Although forced to tighten up his

original interpretation of the decrees, the Oberpräsident of Hessen-Nassau specifically excepted those KVe in the occupied zone, whose activities had already been much curtailed by the Allies. Here matters were left to the discretion of the Landräte. Official sympathy was by no means absent even in Berlin, where Deputy Police President Weiss found himself unable to condemn out of hand all "Regimentsabende", only a few days after Severing's specific inclusion of KVe in the ban⁽³⁵⁾. Severing, the Prussian Minister of the Interior had already issued an order banning meetings of "former troop formations" in general and on the 1st July added that KVe were specifically included⁽³⁶⁾. While the actual dissolution of political organisations such as Stahlhelm and Verband Nationalgesinnter Soldaten, covered in the original Prussian decrees, was completely justified, the savage total ban on KV activities in Prussia took no account of the purely social and welfare work of these associations which was unexceptionable in a political sense. The Berlin leaders secured a conference with the Prussian Minister on 7th July and the result of this was an amending-order of 15th July, permitting meetings in private to conduct purely "wirtschaftliche" affairs⁽³⁷⁾, but this, of course, applied only to Prussia. Further efforts by the KB were not without result. An approach to President Ebert brought the reasonable, if unhelpful reply that the measures were not political reprisals, but expedients to avoid provoking further unrest (17th August 1922). With Severing, more was achieved, and amendments were issued on 28th July and 4th August. Purely economic associations, as opposed to those based on tradition and comradeship, were excepted from the ban altogether. Not surprisingly, the socialist "Reichsbund der

(35) 180 Landratsamt Ziegenhain, 4186, 3138 (Ma)//AA 7, 15-7-22.

(36) NH 919, "Gesetzammlung für Thüringen" Nr 21/1922 quotes.

PLKV to Staatsanwaltschaft, Dortmund, 26-8-22.

RSHA 1028, Report of Innenminister 1-7-22 (K).

(37) NH 919, KB circular 15-7-22.

Kriegsbeschädigten und Kriegsteilnehmer" was mentioned by name:

private business meetings were permitted generally as were private ceremonies (such as funerals) as long as weapons, black-white-red badges or anything else capable of disturbing the peace were avoided. In the latter case, permission still had to be obtained from the local police⁽³⁸⁾. Here, as far as Prussia was concerned, the situation remained, until a stiff and well-publicised protest by Heeringen to Ebert was issued at the Kyffhäuser conference (10th September 1922). A further amendment was ordered by Severing on 29th September⁽³⁹⁾, which virtually lifted the limitations on KV activity in Prussia.

The implementation of the legislation over the country as a whole, provides an interesting comment on varying conditions and attitudes. In Württemberg, Lübeck, Bremen and Bavaria no functions were actually banned - this did not prevent a rousing joint protest in the latter state (against the decree in general) by the Bavarian Offizier-Regiments-Vereine, the Bavarian Kriegerbund (Bav. KB) and others, supported by the local DOB, NDO and VNS⁽⁴⁰⁾. In Anhalt, all celebrations were forbidden, except those held by individual regimental clubs: a letter to the "Magdeburgische Zeitung" claimed that this had raised considerable resentment among the many socialist workers who were still keen KV members⁽⁴¹⁾. In Brunswick, no events were forbidden, but none in fact held. In Hamburg, 25 specific functions were banned. In Hesse an initial general ban was modified on 11th August to allow indoor functions by non-regimental Vereine and outdoor social activities where approved by the local authority. The "Verband Hessischer Regimentsvereine" lodged a protest with the Reichsrat, but the amendment apparently did nothing to help their Vereine⁽⁴²⁾. In Baden, Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Oldenburg, general bans do not seem to have specifically included KVe.

(38) AA 9, 25-8-22, Verbandsnachrichten: AA 10, 5-9-22, p.62.

R43 1 766, 16, RUOO Report Nr. 80, 1-11-22 (K).

(39) AA 11, 25-9-22//RUOO report Nr. 80, (cit).

(40) AA 8, 5-8-22//MA 104267, 3-7-22, (MGS).

(41) D-O-B1 (S&W) 15-8-22, "Kriegervereine".

(42) AA 7, 15-7-22, n. 40-1.

On the other hand in Saxony and Thuringia, the first states to have Communists in their governments (October 1923) feeling against KVe was even now running quite high, and the effects of the June legislation were felt by them over a longer period. Saxony came into line with the Prussian amendments (7th August 1922), but in September its government dissolved an officer's Regimentsverein⁽⁴³⁾ and as late as December was still refusing to allow "Ehrensalven" to the KVe, granted again in Prussia on 29th September⁽⁴⁴⁾.

Passive opposition to the KVe was, however, at its worst in Thuringia. On 14th July the KB itself wrote to the state Minister of the Interior complaining about official inaction over two incidents involving theft of local KV colours. On 16th August, the initial general ban on all functions was modified to come into line with Prussia, as had been done already in Saxony. By November 18th no reply had been received from the Thuringian Ministry and a reminder was sent. This letter elicited the reply that consideration of the matter had come to a standstill as a result of the dissolution of the Regierungs-Kommissariat. On 19th December, Heeringen had a personal meeting with the head of the local "Weimarische Krieger- und Militärvereinsbund", General von Kessinger, who agreed to see what he could do in the matter. Kessinger had problems of his own, inasmuch that the Thuringian régime, while permitting local police to authorise "Ehrensalven", declined to modify the regulations officially. Other requests from KVe included that for permission to wear black-white-red ribbons at funerals. Failing to make any progress, Kessinger turned once more to Heeringen. He in turn

(43) AA 12, 5-10-22, Verbandsnachrichten.

(44) AA 17, 13-12-22, ibid.

approached Ebert⁽⁴⁵⁾, (conversation 8th January 1923). The affair was to drag on unsatisfactorily into the middle of the year and despite the French occupation of the Ruhr and the "turning-off" of official heat against the right, the state government seems to have declined to come into line with Prussia and by now, the rest of Germany. In this, their political instinct, and to some extent that also of the Saxon state government, was sound. The most innocent KV parade remained a potential provocation and cause of public disturbance. Clashes continued to occur (e.g. at Lübeck⁽⁴⁶⁾). Protests from Social Democrats remained unheard by the Weimar government. Alone of the German states, Saxony and Thuringia continued to watch "Regimentsfeiern" with the utmost suspicion. Thus Thuringia banned an investing ceremony planned by the Verein of Inf. Regt. 153 for the 3rd June 1923, and in Saxony a celebration of the Verein of I.R. 105 was stopped⁽⁴⁷⁾.

In general, relations between ex-servicemen's organisations and the government had undergone a certain amount of redefinition as a result of the emergency decrees of 1921 and 1922. Firstly, ministers had been made more definitely aware of the different shades of activity among the associations. The effective intervention of the KB leaders at ministerial level, helped of course, by Heeringen's long-standing acquaintance with General Groener⁽⁴⁸⁾, certainly enhanced the Bund's image and served to some extent to "re-hallow" the official and traditional co-operation between KB and State. On the other hand, events had also tended to highlight differences of outlook among the republican leaders of Germany. While Ebert, Wirth and men like Gessler accepted the assurances of the KB leaders and tended to view the connection as valuable, Severing and certain of the state governments (especially Saxony and Thuringia) were by no means as happy and tended to consider any

(45) R43 1 766, passim: RUOO report Nr. 80 (cit).

NH 919, KB to Thuringian government, 14-7-22, et seq.

(46) See p. 78.

(47) NH 919, 24, Heeringen to President Ebert 3-2-23, et seq.

AA 17, 15-6-23, p.16-7.

(48) "EPD", p.306

form of uniformed military activity in public by "old soldiers" as potentially provocative. Finally, to the ex-servicemen's associations in general, and to the KB in particular, the emergency legislation demonstrated the possible results of indulging in open anti-republican activity. The dissolution of groups like the "Verband nationalgesinnter Soldaten", and the confirmation of this by the Staatsgerichtshof was the clearest possible warning (as was the retention of the uniform restrictions despite protests from officer-organisations (e.g. the NDO, December 1922⁽⁴⁹⁾)). On the other hand the institution of special legal protection for permitted meetings - both from threats and actual violence could be seen as an inducement to good behaviour⁽⁵⁰⁾.

Important lines of communication also existed between veteran organisations and the government in other fields. The KB especially and also DOB were concerned with work of a social and economic nature and here an official connection (only of course practicable where the government officially recognised the associations in question) was vital to the satisfactory completion of KB and DOB welfare tasks. Thus in this field may be seen an important factor disposing the two most important ex-service organisations to co-operate with the régime. Other fields of co-operation like disarmament and public order are integrally bound up with the whole question of para-military Verbände and are discussed later. In general the KB followed the official government policy in this question. Thus in the years 1918 to 1923 local KVe played in some places an important part in the Einwohnerwehr. Subsequently they were active in the fields of pre-military training and Grenzschutz. Members of the officer associations continued to be employed individually,

(49) AA 17, 13-12-22.

(50) NH 919, KZ 15-6-23; Reichsgesetzblatt Nr. 37, 29-5-23.
R43 1 766, 18 et seq: dissolution of NVDS and VNS (K).

in more doubtful pursuits. In general the effect was to give some of the associations a more precise, unofficially-encouraged rôle in Weimar Germany, while at the same time, any such unofficial countenancing of "illegal" activities made the job of weeding-out dangerous para-military elements infinitely more difficult. Even the "controlled" activities tended to attract potential political extremists⁽⁵¹⁾.

Two other affairs brought about contacts between KB and government in the course of 1922-23 which were important in implication. They concern trades unions and ^{the} financial crisis of 1923. Popular animosity against KVe among Silesian miners and Potsdam factory workers gave rise to publicly displayed notices which were apparently attempts by trades unions to force KV members to decide between their jobs and their KV (i.e. expulsion from union membership under closed-shop conditions). In the first instance the KB took up the matter with the Reichsarbeitsminister (February) who replied expressing strong disapproval of "jede Art von Koalitionszwang" and recommending that the matter be taken up with the state authorities. An approach to the Regierungspräsident concerned elicited the reply that he was unable to take direct action in economic disputes and was forwarding the complaint to the Prussian "Minister für Handel und Gewerbe." He also pointed out the possibility of private prosecution for co-ercion. The Prussian Trade Minister requested the Regierungspräsident to investigate the complaint and to remind the shop committee concerned of their statutory obligation (§66-6 Betriebsrätegesetz) to safeguard freedom of association among the workers, under penalty of dismissal of the offending shop-steward or even dissolution of the entire shop committee. All offending notices should be removed and restrictions lifted. This was at the same time brought to the notice of the Breslau Oberbergamt, which similarly authorised the Görlitz Landrat to intervene.

(51) See p. 108.

In fact the Potsdam incident transpired to have been an unofficial action by an individual shift rather than the shop committee, and matters had already sorted themselves out: the management had removed the offending notice. In future, even official shop committee notices were not to be displayed "ehe sie zur Kenntnis des verantwortlichen Betriebsbeamten vorgelegen haben."

This incident is noteworthy inasmuch that although, of course, a wider principle was at stake, the Prussian government readily responded to the requests of the KB leadership to protect the rights of their members. Noteworthy also is the fact that the whole affair was sparked off by a KV procession in an industrial area⁽⁵²⁾.

The financial crisis of 1923 brought about an incident which better than anything else bears witness to the extent to which the KB was becoming associated at that time with the Weimar government. Owing to the increasing shortness of funds the annual "Kyffhäuser Kalender", usually issued in some 8-900,000 copies, and described by the "Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst" as "one of the strongest means binding local organisations to the Praesidium in country districts and small towns a kind of Hausbibel" (!!), was in danger of not being published. To avoid this, 100 million paper Marks were granted to the KB from special "Reichskanzlei" funds. In return a strong editorial influence was to be allowed the RZFH to whom, in addition to the head of the Press Department, the draft Kalender would be submitted. The loan was embodied in an agreement dated 29th May 1923, signed by Heeringen in person. In this a year was set for repayment and the KB expressly agreed to abandon "articles, pictures, advertisements or individual sentences likely to endanger the internal political peace". The draft Kalender contained a high percentage of government propaganda. In spite of this loan, the collapse of the Mark

(52) NH 919, PLKV circular 17-6-22.

endangered even a limited publication and on 7th September 1923 the RZFH put up a case to the "Reichskanzlei" for another loan and an additional non-repayable 50 milliard Marks. Some of the assertions made by the writer are worth investigating: Commencing with a description of the imminent danger of the KB Centrale in Berlin having to cease operations, as would the official weekly "Kriegerzeitung", he continued: "Die ausserordentliche, auch politische Bedeutung (sic) einer straffen Zentralleitung tritt bei dem Kriegervereinswesen besonders in diesem Augenblick hervor, wo der Mittelstand auf das Stärkste von dem Radikalismus von Rechts und Links umworben wird". The danger was that a failure of central control would result in the more extreme local groups giving uncurbed expression to their (right) radical tendencies - leading to agitation. "In Anbetracht der politischen Notwendigkeit diese gewaltige Organisation zusammen zu halten und sie bei den satzungsmässig festgelegten Bestimmungen der parteipolitischen Neutralität zu erhalten, hat die Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst seit jeher versucht, nicht nur die engste Führung mit dem Zentralvorstand aufrecht zu erhalten, sondern auch seine Autorität im Lande zu stärken". In return for the loan/gift the KB would be prepared to allow an editorial influence in the "Kriegerzeitung" and the monthly "Kriegervereinsvorstand". A strengthening of the central KB leadership would enable them to enforce the "political neutrality" clauses, especially in the matter of monarchism. In general the "Reichszentrale" praised Heeringen's loyal co-operation in explaining Germany's present situation and winning members to a "Freudige Mitarbeit" with the state⁽⁵³⁾.

In conclusion it should be pointed out that the contacts established between the Weimar governments and KB bound both to some extent for the future: they made especially difficult the KB's avowed intention of being both "politically neutral" and "patriotic". In the end the leadership was forced to be "politically neutral" by supporting a Centrist chancellor and "patriotic" by opposing the nationalist, "Vaterländische Parteien".

5. MILITARY ASPECTS: RELATIONS WITH THE ARMY

Relations between ex-servicemen's associations and the German Army underwent considerable modification as a result of military defeat and the adoption of the republican constitution. The long-standing official connection between the Imperial Army and KVe was a minor problem compared with that of the new officer- NCO- and ordinary serviceman's organisations, which were composed of both serving and "retired" men. The Treaty of Versailles brought additional difficulties in the shape of the disarmament of the civilian population and the reduction of the regular forces - together with the proscription of particular weapons such as aircraft and heavy artillery. A natural result of this was the necessity for the Reichswehr authorities to lean heavily on unofficial associations in matters of frontier and civil defence, and in the whole question of organising a trained reserve and the pre-military training of boys and young men. The gradual redefinition of the rôle of veterans' organisations in the early years of the Weimar Republic was largely the work of General von Seeckt and his minister, Dr. Gessler. The "solutions" they reached to the various problems confronted them in this respect were to prove inherently dangerous to the cause of republican government and paved the way for the rise in the fortunes of the NSDAP⁽¹⁾. And here, of course, the less exceptionable associations (politically speaking) which form the subject of this study, played an important and insidious rôle - for it was not always an easy task to distinguish the permitted and useful societies from the more subversive ones of the extreme Right, some of which even practised political assassination.

One of the first problems confronting the new leaders of the German army was the definition of relations between the Reichswehr and the new officer and NCO associations. In a DOB meeting of 28th January 1919 a certain Hauptmann Göring launched a bitter attack on the "Soldatenräte"

(1) Carsten, op. cit., passim.

which consisted, he claimed, entirely of "Junge Burschen und Juden"⁽²⁾. DOB and NDO were formed of both active and retired officers, just as the RdB embraced active and retired servicemen generally. This fact, together with the co-operation of the War Minister General Schellch, was the main source of the DOB's initial influence⁽³⁾. The opposition to the Kommandoerlass was supported whole-heartedly by both elements⁽⁴⁾. On 30th April 1919 the prestige of the DOB was immensely enhanced by official recognition from the War Ministry, which promised to assist its ".... Aufgabe, die wirtschaftlichen und Standesinteressen der Offiziere und Beamten des Heeres, der Marine und der Schutztruppen des Friedens - und Beurlaubtenstandes und der Inaktivität sowie ihrer Angehörigen und Hinterbliebenen zu vertreten". Correspondingly, one of the main departments was the "Heeresabteilung" with the subordinate "Berufsausschuss", devoted entirely to the interests of serving officers. Throughout 1919 the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" (now the official organ of the DOB) brought all the relevant orders of the Reichswehrministerium to the notice of its readers, serving in this way a highly useful information rôle. By the end of the year, despite the strictures of Versailles, the DOB had become a firmly entrenched and popular aspect of the military establishment. The Reichswehrministerium even entrusted the listing of officers' addresses to the association, officially requesting local governments to co-operate: i.e. "the third copy of the usual form" should be sent by the police to the DOB! At least one state government objected to this breach of administrative tradition, but in Munich, for example, the local DOB was even housed in the War Ministry, at least until February 1919 when it was turned out by the Soldatenräte⁽⁵⁾. But the DOB was the only officially recognised

(2) D-O-B1 5, 30-1-19.

(3) Nachlass Schellch 96, speech to DOB 21-12-18 (F).

(4) See p. 52.

(5) BMI 233, 12453, "DOB und Verhältnisse Offiziere". (Ka)/MA 104267 (MGE).

officer-association. The ill-considered attacks of General Graf Waldersee, the NDO president, on Groener and Schellch⁽⁶⁾, together with the extremist right-wing politics pursued by his association, led to a deepening suspicion on the side of both civil and military authorities. The situation was the same with regard to the other small, local Bünde: The "Bund der Deckoffiziere" (Kiel) was a left-radical group, of purely local significance⁽⁷⁾. Similarly, NCO-associations like the "Reichsbund Deutscher aktiver Unteroffiziere" enjoyed a passing influence in some places. Besides pursuing their economic and group interests in a similar way to DOB, their explicit ambition of securing "officer places" for regular NCOs, while consonant with a genuine revolution, was hardly realistic in 1919. The impetus given to the "Unteroffizier" cause by the example of men like Freikorps-leader Suppe was of little importance when one considers the "marriage de convenance" between the Ebert régime and the heads of army and civil administration⁽⁸⁾.

In fact, apart from a certain amount of local influence and a general "agitation" value, the main result of the activities of the veteran organisations beyond the KB and DOB was to convince Seeckt among others, that any association between Reichswehr and non-service organisations was undesirable. Already in February 1919 in his perceptive analysis of the situation⁽⁹⁾, Seeckt had condemned the inflammatory speeches emanating from the officers' side. In January 1920 he wrote to the Chef der Heeresleitung sharply criticising proposals to give statutory credence to a "professional group" (such as the Berufsausschuss of the DOB). Apart from being irreconcilable with discipline, the building of professional associations of active officers contradicted

(6) Nachlass Schleicher 15, 58-9. (F).

(7) IIM 65-8, I "Ahbold" (F).

(8) BMI 233, 12455-6, (Ka).

(9) See p. 53.

Seeckt's conception of "Standesbewusstsein des Offiziers". For such matters a "Heereskammer" within the service was the obvious answer. He continued by pointing out that a ban on officer membership of such non-service associations could also be used to exclude the "Republikanischer Führerbund" from the army. (This was mainly a local Berlin association and was dissolved voluntarily following the Wehrgesetz ban on Reichswehr membership in 1921. Whether this association ever enjoyed official support is not known. This was, however, officially denied by Noske in July 1919⁽¹⁰⁾). In a Parthian shot Seeckt wrote: "Dass eine Verbindung des Reichswehrministeriums mit dem DOB dem §177 der Friedensvertrages widerspricht, sei nur nebenbei erwähnt".⁽¹¹⁾ But the "Wehrgesetz" was a long time in the drafting. Meanwhile a serving Reichswehr officer (von Taysen) was to become 3rd President of the DOB and the organisation was to continue to prove itself invaluable in resettling officers and dealing with their special problems⁽¹²⁾. On 7th April 1919 General von Hutier (the 1st President of the DOB) and General von Radowitz (executive director) had a conference with Noske, the Reichswehrminister, in which the former were assured of continuing official co-operation, and of consultation in the drafting of the "Wehrgesetz"⁽¹³⁾.

Nevertheless, the close links between the DOB and the NDO and RdB was in the end to allow Seeckt and Noske to triumph over Reinhardt in this question. The "Reichsoffiziersbund" was founded (10th February 1919) in Dresden as a result of the exodus of dissatisfied "Feldwebel-Leutnante" from the main DOB. Initially the "Bund der Feldwebel-Leutnante" - they assumed the title "Reichsoffiziersbund" in October 1920. They pursued

(10) Nachlass Bredow 5, 17-7-19 (F)//BPD p.450.

(11) Nachlass Seeckt 8, Seeckt to Chef der HL, January 1920 (F).

(12) D-O-B1 10, 1920; 12-2-20 "Aus der Arbeit des DOBs".

(13) D-O-B1 24-4-1920.

stronger political lines, thus drawing on themselves unfavourable official notice, but at the same time maintained a close "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" with the DOB itself⁽¹⁴⁾. Similarly, the "Reichsverband deutscher Berufssoldaten" (RdB) founded in February 1919 as the "Reichsvereinigung aktiver Unteroffiziere" (which developed along strong "trades unions" lines, advocating among other things, collective bargaining) maintained "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" with the DOB⁽¹⁵⁾. The RdB had already attracted the suspicion of Seeckt by its activities during the "Kapp Putsch" (March 1920)⁽¹⁶⁾ and was now working hard to extend its influence in the police forces. In Munich, for example, the police commissioner was moved in July 1920 to refuse officially any co-operation with the RdB⁽¹⁷⁾. At the same time the Bavarian Wehrkreis banned Reichswehr attendance at their anniversary celebration⁽¹⁸⁾. In April the Praesidium of the DOB discussed their relations with the RdB: "Die Weiterführung der bereits bestehenden Arbeitsgemeinschaft wurde allgemein als **dringend erwünscht** bezeichnet".⁽¹⁹⁾ In May the first sign of a change in the official attitude to the DOB came in the form of a letter from the new Reichswehrminister Gessler, who had replaced Noske at the end of March. Henceforth, while the minister was prepared to co-operate in social and economic affairs, there could be no more discussion of military or internal service matters⁽²⁰⁾. In view of this, the assurances expressed by the RdB representative at the DOB Vertretertagung in June, of "continued fruitful co-operation", were a little optimistic⁽²¹⁾. In effect, the days of the "Berufsvereinigung der aktiven Offiziere" (DOB) and the "Fachgruppe Reichswehr" (RdB) were numbered.

(14) D-O-B1 1-5-20 p.344//BPD p.448.

(15) BMI 233, 12452 (Ka).

(16) Nachlass Reinhardt, Seeckt to Reinhardt, 14-10-20 (SH).

(17) Polizeidirektion Munich, 24a IIIF 11/202, letter 13-7-20 (MSO).

(18) *ibid.* "Sozial Demokrat" 1-7-20.

(19) D-O-B1 17, 1-5-20, p.344.

(20) D-O-B1 19, 1920. Gessler to DOB 6-5-20.

(21) D-O-B1 23, 1-7-20, Report of Conference.

In February and May the representatives of the two associations discussed the proposed legislation: already the Reichswehrministerium representative had expressed Seeckt's objections to the continued activity of such professional groups, particularly since the formation of a Heereskammer would obviate the need for any other organisation concerning itself with pay, allowances and pensions for serving officers⁽²²⁾. A further session of the professional representatives in July did nothing to dispel growing fears and led only to the formation of a joint committee.

Some army chiefs still favoured a closer collaboration with the veteran organisations but Seeckt decided to prohibit membership of Reichswehr soldiers to both political Bünde and DOB and RdB. "The disadvantages of the Bünde far outweigh their advantages - those Verbände which combine political and professional interests with economic ones, like the RdB and DOB, are the most dangerous. Even if outwardly they confine themselves to economic affairs, they form trade unions with which their members in course of time feel more strongly linked than with their superior officers. At times of political crisis the Bünde follow their political and sectional interests and deprive the army of its leadership"⁽²³⁾ (14th October 1920). Nevertheless, Seeckt and Gessler proceeded with caution as the DOB enjoyed a good deal of popularity among Reichswehr officers. In response to enquiries in Wehrkreis VII (Bavaria) it became clear that most officers favoured continuing membership of the DOB, despite the high subscription, but were not so happy about the connection with the RdB⁽²⁴⁾. In November, a Reichswehrministerium circular explicitly advised

(22) D-O-B1 25, 21-7-20.

(23) Nachlass Reinhardt, Seeckt to Reinhardt, 14-10-20 (SH).

(24) WK VII 2697, 38895, circular to regimental commanders 21-9-70 and replies (F).

2690, WK to 7'INF DIV/42 Schutzen Regt. 9-11-20.

against "Regimentsvereine" (i.e. those officer clubs of the "old army" composed of retired and serving officers) entering the DOB, in view of the prospect of the latter being banned to Reichswehr members⁽²⁵⁾. The DOB continued to fight and kept up a close association with many regular units. However, resignations of serving officers from the DOB led them to reappraise the situation vis à vis the RdB in December 1920⁽²⁶⁾. A meeting held by the Bavarian DOB in January 1921 was attended by representatives from most local army units; it was recommended that, although the professional group in the DOB should continue, agitation should be avoided and thus any participation in the joint committee (with the RdB). This sentiment was confirmed by an opinion poll among 365 serving officers, although the immediate severance of all relations between DOB and RdB was not thought necessary⁽²⁷⁾.

On 23rd March 1921 the long-awaited "Wehrgesetz" was issued, including (§§36 and 37) discretionary powers to ban membership of political associations and specified non-military ones. A few days later (1st April 1921) an order was issued by the Reichswehrministerium declaring certain organisations "political" (and thus banned to Reichswehr members). These were: party-political organisations, the NDO, the VNS and the Republikanische Führerbund - obvious selections⁽²⁸⁾. The question of the DOB/RdB was not so simply solved and the final decision was postponed for many weeks. The reasons for this may partly be seen in the troubled background of Silesia, and Allied ultimatums concerning reparations and military Verbände in May, not to mention a change of Chancellor: Wirth took office on 9th May. On the other hand, frequent entries in Hasse's diary indicate

(25) *ibid.* 2690, Reichswehrministerium to WK 20-11-20.

(26) *ibid.* DOB circulars 29-11-20, 9-12-20.

(27) *ibid.* DOB circulars 18-1-21, 18-2-21.

(28) *ibid.* 2905, 1924 circular listing proscribed organisations.

that the problem itself exercised the minds of the Reichswehrminister and the Heeresleitung⁽²⁹⁾. The prestige enjoyed by the DOB within the service was a factor to be borne in mind. When General von Radowitz wrote in the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" (11th May 1921): "Eine sehr peinliche Lage würde der Reichswehrminister allerdings mit einem Verbot der Zugehörigkeit zum DOB für die Offiziere der Reichswehr schaffen. Der Trennungsstrich, den ein solches Verbot zwischen dem ehemaligen Offizierkorps und der Offizieren der Reichswehr zöge, würde sich vielleicht doch in manchen Beziehungen zu ihrem Nachteil bemerkbar machen", he was voicing sentiments shared by many serving officers. The dissolution of military Verbände was ordered on 24th May in response to the Allied ultimatum of 5th May. At this time, however, no mention was made of the DOB and RdB. Seeckt finally achieved his long avowed aim with the order of 12th July banning Reichswehr membership of the two associations on the grounds of §37 of the Wehrgesetz. It is likely that this was achieved in spite of the most strenuous efforts by the DOB leaders, and that an important factor in the outcome was the Allied insistence on strict adherence to Article 177 of the Peace Treaty.

Having thus defined the relations between the Reichswehr and the more obviously political associations, there remained the question of the old Kriegervereine and the new regimental clubs. The long-established close co-operation between KB and the army was also ostensibly severed by Article 177 of the Peace of Versailles which specifically forbade any links between KVe and the War Ministry. Furthermore, KVe were forbidden to concern themselves with any form of military activity. Initially, this was strictly adhered to, at least as far as the central KB itself was concerned. Though shortly before the revolution KB leaders are to be found making a special tour of the Baltic provinces at the request of the General Staff⁽³⁰⁾, a year or so later suggestions that the KB should be an

(29) Carsten, p.111.

(30) NH 916, "KV Vorstand", March 1919; refs. Westphal's new book.

important factor in the re-building of state and army after the old model, are sadly denied by von Heeringen himself: the KB could now only incidentally further military sentiment by keeping alive history and tradition, and perhaps also, by bringing more actively inclined members into the local committees⁽³¹⁾. In fact the situation was not quite so bleak and joint functions such as "remembrance" parades, where Reichswehr bands and contingents marched side-by-side with KVe of the "Old Army", were soon once more a regular feature of German life.

The main difference between the old "Traditionsverbände" and the new ex-servicemen's organisations was in the right of the former to own and use full-bore rifles (i.e. army weapons, Models '71, '71/84, '88 or '98). Doubtless KVe stocks of these, especially more recent models, underwent considerable increase with the demobilisation of the field armies, and the Allied Powers were justified in seeing here a potential method by which the German government could circumvent the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty. The War Ministry attempted to make use of the KVe by authorising the exchange of older models in their possession for modern '98 rifles held in army arsenals, (July 1919⁽³²⁾). However, the determination of the Allies to enforce the disarmament of the German population led to the suspension of this order in November 1919, on the excuse that the "S-Patronen" issued with the '98 rifles could not safely be used in most KV ranges. In June of the following year the Reichswehrministerium was forced to order the withdrawal of all '98 rifles and their replacement by earlier models, "because of the terms of the Peace Treaty"⁽³³⁾. In view of the earlier policy, the "nil-returns" by many KVe suggest that a fair number of modern weapons remained in private hands and were not

(31) *ibid.* 243, Heeringen to Duncker 22-12-19.

(32) LA Gelnhausen 6514, XVIII Armee Korps to Ob. präs. Kassel: (Hesse-Nassau). refs. Kriegsministerium order 24-7-19 (Ma).

(33) LA Ziegenhain 3139, "Einziehung von Gewehre", refs. Reichswehrministerium order 19-6-20. (Ma).

declared⁽³⁴⁾.

In the course of 1920 the inspectors of the Military Control Commission began to make their presence felt, despite the protective goodwill adopted by some State Interior Ministries towards KVe and shooting clubs⁽³⁵⁾. The uncompromising attitude of the Allies at Spa (July 1920), however, served to make the German government take their disarmament obligation more seriously. In August a Disarmament Law was passed and a commission established to put it into effect. With regard to the surrender of weapons the provincial Kriegerverbände were already serving a useful function in presenting bulk requests to the local army authorities for the older weapons required in exchange for the '98s. By July 1920 these were limited to the 71 and 71/84 models⁽³⁶⁾. By August, the Landräte were demanding immediate delivery of all '88 and '98 weapons without any exchange, so the question of compensation had to be considered. The Reichswehrministerium put this matter to the Reichsinnenminister who was now responsible for all dealings with KVe⁽³⁷⁾; but there is no evidence that anything in this line was done until much later (Besatzungsleistungsgesetz of 15th April 1927)⁽³⁸⁾.

The British government kept a close watch on the progress of the surrender of weapons. By January 1921 some 3 million rifles and carbines had been handed in, but returns from major industrial areas, Bavaria, East Prussia and other rural areas were still considered inadequate⁽³⁹⁾. In view of the total number of rifles declared as still in the possession of the "Ortswehr" (East Prussia) (some 40,000 against 11,000 (Army) and 5,000 (Schupo)) this is understandable. This figure probably represented only a part of the total actually retained by KVe, etc⁽⁴⁰⁾, but the German military authorities at least, certainly connived at this retention.

(34) *ibid.* list.

(35) e.g. Württemberg F205/475, "IAMCC", to WMI, 2-2-20, 5-9-21 (L).

(36) BMI/PS "Bad. KB", "Badischer KZ" 20-7-20 (Ka).

(37) LA Wolfhagen 1413, Kav. Division IA to Regierungspräsident 13-1-21: Landratsamt letter 10-8-20 (Ma).

(38) See p. 173.

(39) FO 371, 5854, C1271 DMI memo 21-1-21 (PRO).

(40) *ibid.* 5981, C2027 DMI notes 15/21-1-21.

Nevertheless, all the indications are that shooting on army ranges with full-bore rifles ceased, at least for the moment. On the other hand, despite official KB strictures on the subject, it seems probable that KVe continued their shooting activities indoors, first with air rifles and later with small-bore rifles⁽⁴¹⁾.

Similarly, despite Article 177 of Versailles, the Reichswehr authorities saw no reason why the activities of purely "Traditionsverbände" should be curtailed. In spite of French concern with the spread of "Regimentsvereine" and the action of their spearhead organisation, the KB, in circulating their addresses - ("... die Bedeutung dieses Bundes, der sich nach dem bekannten Berg in Thüringen nennt, wo der Sage nach, Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossa, schlafend wartet bis die Stunde kommt, das er die ganze Welt unter seine und Deutschlands Herrschaft wird bringen können"⁽⁴²⁾). Minister Gessler continued to place much value on "tradition" as long as this was not exploited for political ends⁽⁴³⁾. In December 1921, in reply to an enquiry from the Thuringian Minister of Interior, the Reichswehrministerium denied that steps could or should be taken against "Regimentsfeiern" on the grounds of the presidential decree of 28th September 1921⁽⁴⁴⁾. Seeckt's instructions linked with Gessler's September 1921 circular defined the relations between Reichswehr and the "traditional" associations: although membership of political and otherwise objectionable veteran organisations was banned to serving soldiers on grounds of politics and maintenance of discipline, attendance at their functions was merely regulated. Official participation of Reichswehr troops at non-service events was only by approval of the Reichswehrminister; unofficial participation was subject to the consent of the Wehrkreis commander. Participation of individuals in Verein

(41) BMI/PS "Bad. KB", "Badischer KZ" 30-7-20, report of 36th Abtag. Westphal p.77-9.

(42) MA 104267 "DOB," 21. Rhineland "Reichskommissar" (20-7-21) quoting "Militarismus" article in French Nachrichtendienst 16-7-21 (MGS).

(43) Nachlass Bredow 5, Gessler circulars 13-7-21, 5-9-21 (F).

(44) ibid. unsigned copy dated 10-12-21.

functions was permitted, unless these were held by political parties or had a political content: otherwise, any educational, instructive, social or "kameradschaftlich" meetings, and patriotic remembrance services, could be attended⁽⁴⁵⁾.

The veterans' organisations also played a part in the unofficial military and pre-military training carried on in Weimar Germany from the outset. The troubled years following the end of the war produced a number of defence demands, internal and external, which could not be met by the remnants of the Imperial Army or the 100,000 man Reichswehr that succeeded it. The internal dangers, primarily from left-wing extremists, were countered by volunteer home-guard formations with a strictly local function, and the more definitely mobile and military "Freikorps". The external danger, mainly that of hostile action from Poland, necessitated a frontier defence force in East Prussia, Pomerania, New Mark and Silesia, again composed of volunteers who were largely ex-Freikorps men. The home-guard formations, sometimes called "Bürgerwehren", survived until 1921, when, reluctantly, the government ordered their dissolution in accordance with the Allied ultimatum of May 5th. The "Grenzschutz" formations were to survive either as "Arbeitsgemeinschaften" or other secret military groups organised by societies such as the "Heimat-verbände", "Landbund" and "Stahlhelm". The important difference was that this was encouraged and assisted by the Reichswehr, despite the opposition of Severing, the Prussian Interior Minister. Indeed, these secret activities were to assume many forms in the ensuing years and in some measure affect all sorts of Verbände⁽⁴⁶⁾. Basically both the frontier forces and the Bünde which succeeded the Einwohnerwehr, were composed of right-wing extremists, men to whom military discipline and comradeship, combined with a sense of adventure was the only way of life: men to whom socialism and the republic were

(45) *ibid.* //AA 7, 15-7-22.

(46) Carsten *op.cit.* P.147 et seq.

anathema. The difficulties that the official Reichswehr connection with such groups raised for the forces of law and order were considerable.

The part played by such veteran associations as the KB and DOB in these unofficial organisations is not easy to determine. The KB leaders discouraged the establishment of KV - "Selbschutz" bodies, but recommended the participation of members in local Bürgerwehren⁽⁴⁷⁾. Nevertheless, in some places KV did establish local "Guards" which co-operated with the authorities in keeping the peace⁽⁴⁸⁾. Similarly in Bavaria, the KVe do not appear to have played much part in Escherich's "Einwohnerwehr" as such⁽⁴⁹⁾, although it is likely that many individual members were also KV members. On the other hand, most of the ex-servicemen's organisations co-operated with the "Bayerischen Ordnungsblock", the "bürgerlich" association with similar aims to the Einwohnerwehr, with whom relations were close and cordial⁽⁵⁰⁾.

In March and April 1919 the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" carried a large number of recruiting notices from the various Freikorps, together with articles emphasising the need to "Save the Ostmark and the East Frontier"⁽⁵¹⁾, thus furthering the official policy of the Reichswehr heads. The attitude adopted by the Badischer Kriegerbund over the question of recruiting for "Grenzschutz Ost" was probably typical of the Landesverbände: all possible assistance was extended as long as this did not damage the interests of Baden itself, which also needed volunteers⁽⁵²⁾. In addition to assistance given in recruiting, there is no doubt that KVe in East Prussia were engaged, as such, in Grenzschutz activities. Polish intelligence sources in 1920 alleged that the East Prussian Heimatdienst (whose head Dr. Müller, "a well-known local monarchist", came under the orders of the Wehrkreis-

(47) NH 916, 15-3-19.

(48) *ibid.* 191-2, Gifhorn.

(49) Kanzler *op.cit.* p.43.

(50) *ibid.* p.73.

(51) D-O-B1 5, 30-1-19; 14, 3-4-19; 15, 10-4-19 etc.

(52) BMI/PS "Bad. KB", Protokoll of 35th Abtag 1919 (Ka).

Commander) had a special organisation to co-ordinate and finance "Selbstschutz" by setting up Einwohnerwehren in the country districts and "Kriegsvereine" and "Sportvereine" in towns⁽⁵³⁾. Charges that the DOB was "merely a military branch of the Heimatdienst" made in a British report of November 1920 are not fully justified, but suggest at any rate the existence of an official connection⁽⁵⁴⁾. French sources claimed that the head of the Rhein/Westfalen "Bürgerhüte", the middle-class Civil Guard similar to Orgesch, (the Bavarian Einwohnerwehr), was one Dr. Schmidt of Elberfeldt, who was also head of the local DOB and had close links with Orgesch and the local SIPO. This participation of veteran associations other than the political Wehrverbände in the unofficial auxiliary forces encouraged by the Reichswehr is important, since the privileged position enjoyed by KV and DOB branches in Germany as a whole facilitated a much greater degree of stability than that of the periodically harrassed successors to the Freikorps. In East Prussia, this activity by the Kriegervereine as such, was to continue throughout the Weimar period: The meeting of the KB Praesidium held on the 30th April 1932 considered a proposal by the East Prussian provincial Kriegerverband, who wanted §2-1 of the second statute of the KB - "It does not engage in military affairs, particularly not in weapon training and practice" - modified "because it does not match the facts!" Horn's attitude to this proposal was that although it was all very well for the frontier areas, a public change would not be desirable⁽⁵⁵⁾.

The proscription of the para-military associations in 1921, did not of course prevent the continued employment of their personnel in the Grenzschutz, or, of course, the re-embodiment of some Freikorps in the "Black Reichswehr" of 1923. By and large, however, there was no subsequent "unofficial connection" with these groups as such, - only with

(53) FO 371, 4795, C12284/676/18 Intelligence Report 13/19-11-20 (PRO).

(54) *ibid.* C13572, 27-11-20 to 3-12-20.

(55) NH 931, "Kurzer Bericht" of Praesidium meeting 1-5-32.

the tolerated associations such as the Stahlhelm and KB. But this "unofficial connection" was to increase in importance with the years - especially in the field of pre-military training.

Preparation of teen-age boys for military service had long been an established rôle of the KVe, and although this was specifically forbidden by the Peace Treaty - there could be no objection to continuing youth training in the fields of rambling, gymnastics, sport and general "cultural" activity. And after all, as Westphal himself points out in the official handbook: "Soll das Deutsche Vaterland in der Zukunft wieder zur Blüte gelangen, so kann dies nur geschehen, wenn ein körperlich und geistig gesundes Geschlecht in der Deutschen Jugend heranreift"⁽⁵⁶⁾. Although the importance of forming individual youth groups is emphasised in several KB publications, (e.g. "Wesen und Wirken") the establishment of one "Kyffhäuserjugend" belongs to the period after 1923. For the time being, the KB leaders were content with maintaining contacts with the "Jungdeutschlandbund". Specifically military training - as in small-bore shooting - doubtless occurred in some KVe, but no centralised policy of secret pre-military training, as such, seems to have been followed at this date. But, of course, the ultimate military end to all such activities was tacitly recognised by the majority of those involved.

Broadly speaking then, the relations between the German army and the ex-servicemen's associations were redefined on the lines laid down by the Treaty of Versailles. At the same time the separation of the Reichswehr from potentially disruptive associations was in full accord with the views of General von Seeckt. Thus the KB lost its establishment "monopoly" and the way was open for the development of rival organisations of comparable strength and, ultimately, dangerous political complexions. Local contacts of a social and ceremonial nature continued nevertheless, and these tended

(56) Westphal p.243.

to increase the suspicion of the Reichswehr already felt in some socialist and republican circles. The "tolerated" associations tended in some cases to become "fronts" for thinly disguised anti-republican activity. This fact, and the overlapping of membership with more radical right-wing Verbände increased the problems of the forces of law and order, as did the retention of unofficial, if useful contacts in questions of frontier-defence and general pre-military training. This last aspect was to assume considerable importance in the spread of militarism and revanchism among the middle and lower classes.

6. THE POSITION OF KB AND OFFICER ASSOCIATIONS AMONG THE "PATRIOTIC" ORGANISATIONS

STATISTICAL SURVEY⁽¹⁾

GENERAL:

Population of Germany (1919)	60,000,000
Men with Military Training	12,000,000
Veterans of World War	9,000,000
Ex-"Front" Soldiers	4,300,000
Pensioned Disabled (1924)	720,000
Pensioned Dependants (1924)	1,600,000
Ex-Officers (World War)	266,000
Ex-Officers (Pre-War)	10,000

(1) Rough estimates: Westphal p.108 (KB), Centralverein Zeitung 10-12-26, exaggerated (Kampfblunde), D-O-B1 11-3-20 (DOB), R43 1 766-65: KZ 1-9-23 (Marineverein) (K), IIM65-7 Statutes 1927 (Marine Offiziersverein) (F), 24a iii F.11/202 (MSO) (Reichsbund der Zivildienstberechtigten), Alan Bullock, "Hitler", p.67, (SA) NS 10/108 Reinhard's analysis 1936 (Regimentsvereine. Waffeneinige).

"MODERATE" ORGANISATIONS

Kyffhäuserbund (1922)	2,200,000
Deutscher Offizier-Bund	100,000
(Marine Offiziersverein (1927)	4,100
(Deutscher Seeverein (1925)	37,000
Reichsbund der Zivildienstberechtigten (1930)	130,000
Regimentsvereine	400,000
Waffenringe (Cavalry 65,000 (1933)) (Pioneers 35,000 (1933))	200,000

MONARCHIST AND KAMPFVERBÄNDE:

Nationalverband Deutscher Offiziere (1923)	10,000
Reichsoffiziersbund (1926)	8,000
Stahlhelm (1926)	300,000
Jung-Stahlhelm (1926)	100,000
Jung-Deutscher Orden (1926)	70,000
Wehrwolf (1926)	85,000
Wiking (1926)	8,000
Olympia (1926)	3,000
S.A. (Nazi) (1923)	15,000

LUDENDORFF'S VÖLKISCH MOVEMENT: ("Tannenbergbund")

Frontkriegerbund (1926)	40,000
Deutsch-Völkischer Offiziersbund (1926)	3,000

Bearing in mind overlapping membership which it is not possible to estimate, one may nevertheless come to a number of general conclusions from these figures: firstly, the number of ex-servicemen in the "moderate" associations (those that more or less maintained neutrality in the party-political sense) was approximately 3 million - the majority in the KB itself. The number of men in monarchist and Kampfverbände was between 1

and 1½ million. The Ludendorff "Völkisch" movement probably never exceeded 40,000 and declined with the fortunes and reputation of Ludendorff himself. The S.A. was to increase in size some 400,000, the new socialist "Reichsbanner" was to exceed the 3 million mark and the communist "Rote Frontkämpferbund" was to reach some 100,000, but these developments belonged to the years after 1923. The KB began the period with considerable advantages from the point of view of numbers, prestige and organisation.

The difficulties confronting the Kyffhäuserbund after the war have been discussed already⁽²⁾. Losses due to the Treaty, doubts concerning the future of the movement in the new republic, a post-war reaction against militarism, the effects of the socialist campaign against the KB - all led to a drop in membership and even the withdrawal or dissolution of whole Vereine. From 2,800,000 members and 32,000 KVe in 1913, the numbers had fallen to 2,500,000 in 1918 and continued to decline. In 1922 there were 2,200,000 members in 23,000 KVe. Statistically, the situation only began to improve after the financial crisis of 1923⁽³⁾, although individual Landesverbände displayed an earlier recovery: In Baden, membership had fallen from 143,000 to 93,000 in 1918 - and risen again to 95,000 in 1922. But the "Badischer Kriegerbund" was never to regain its pre-war eminence⁽⁴⁾. In Württemberg, membership had fallen from 142,000 to 124,000 in 1918 - risen again to 127,000 in 1919. It continued to improve and passed the pre-war total as early as 1924-5⁽⁵⁾. When one considers the fortunes of the corresponding Imperial naval association, the "Deutscher Flottenverein" (founded in 1898, reached a peak of some 1,124,000 members in 1913, fallen to 100,000 in 1920 and 37,000 in 1925⁽⁶⁾), notwithstanding the less glorious rôle played by the

(2) See p. 9-10.

(3) Westphal p.108, Saul op.cit.

(4) BMI/PS "Bad.KB", (Ka).

(5) WMI 206, (L)//1479 Staatsministerium Stuttgart; J45 Flugschriften Nr. 191, "Württ. Kriegerbund 1927" (SH).

(6) BPD p.432.

German Navy in the war, it must be concluded that an important part of the energies of Heeringen and the central leadership in the years 1918 - 1923 was devoted to the fight for the very survival of the KB - and that this fight was ultimately successful in spite of the development of rival organisations. One of the main difficulties overcome was that of finance: the low subscription rate (1 DM p.a.) was maintained, the KB press made to run at a profit and a certain amount of aid acquired from government sources and, locally, from trade and industry, or in country districts from the landowners⁽⁷⁾.

The Deutscher Offizierbund had both advantages and disadvantages when compared with the KB. The dynamic and growth of a new organisation was countered to an extent by the financial burdens of creating an administrative structure and establishing a news-sheet. The former became disproportionately large - possibly because of the application of the "jobs for the boys" principle⁽⁸⁾; the latter was solved temporarily by the adoption of the long-established "Deutsches Offizierblatt". However, disagreement between Lt. Col. Sichting, head of the Bund's press department (and later director of the NSDAP Wehrpolitisches Amt⁽⁹⁾) and the proprietor, Lt. der Reserve Stalling, led to an acrimonious law suit and the setting up of an independent "Deutscher Offizier-Bund Nachrichtenblatt"⁽¹⁰⁾. Despite a basic 12 Mk subscription and other payments to the local groups and the news-sheet⁽¹¹⁾, the independent publication nearly proved the undoing of the Bund. By late 1922 inflation had imposed a virtual freeze on the DOB's activities⁽¹²⁾. It was ultimately to recover, backed by advertising and direct aid from trade and industry⁽¹³⁾. The DOB soon had some 400 local groups, many of which were also Offizier-Regimentsvereine, and was strongest in Berlin, Breslau, Hamburg, Munich and

(7) BPD p. 307//See p. 14-15.

(8) AA 5-10-22 p.70.

(9) NH 1870, "Wehrpolitisches Amt", "Völkischer Beobachter" 28-10 and 13-9-22.

(10) D-O-B1 1-7-20, 1-3-22, 11-3-22, 5-10-22.

(11) ibid. 1-7-20.

(12) AA 5-8-22.

(13) See p. 195.

Königsberg⁽¹⁴⁾. Membership contained a high proportion of former reserve officers, and additionally such groups as police-officers and ex-officer-cadets⁽¹⁵⁾. In general, these first years were also a period of struggle for the biggest officer association, particularly in the face of the re-orientation forced upon them by the Wehrgesetz⁽¹⁶⁾ and the need (so they felt) to preserve their "élitish" character⁽¹⁷⁾, vis à vis the ordinary soldiers' clubs and the "mixed" KVe.

The Nationalverband deutscher Offizier experienced similar problems to the DOB, but had the advantage of not having to worry about being branded "political" - having no welfare rôle which demanded official negotiations with the government agencies. The smaller officer associations were never really of national significance on their own: the ROB and MOV usually followed the line of the bigger associations⁽¹⁸⁾, just as the Bund Deutscher Marine Vereine followed that of the KB⁽¹⁹⁾.

The retrenchment of the KB and the survival of the new veteran associations in the Weimar Republic was, of course, a reflection of the weakness of the new Germany, forced to lean as it was, on the support of the old army and civil service. More than anything else it permitted the careful cherishing of the, in 1918, somewhat tarnished cause of militarism and the old caste- and honour-concepts of the Imperial officer corps. This was soon, remarkably soon, to blossom again in the civil population, with catastrophic results.

The relations between the moderate associations themselves are politically interesting as a reflection of the prevailing disharmony in Germany at large. Between 1920 and 1923 a highly promising attempt to weld together the different interest groups, came to nothing. The

(14) BPD p.447// "DOB" 15-5-29.

(15) D-O-B1 15-5-19, Nr. 32/1919, Nr. 20/1920, Nr. 18/1921//
24a iii F.11/202 (MSO).

(16) See p. 103-104.

(17) See below, p. 119.

(18) D-O-B1 (S&W) 5-5-22, Verbandsnachrichten.

(19) NH 910, 52-60

dissolution of the old Imperial Army led to the formation of the large numbers of "Regimentsvereine" - some "officers only", others NCOs and men only, while a few were from the outset composed of both elements, and were generally termed "Regimentsverbände". In course of time the different types of regimental association tended in places to amalgamate to form joint officer/man clubs anyway, but in the early years the majority had not yet achieved this. Unfortunately the existence of the various regimental organisations was an obvious source of trouble between the existing veteran societies: DOB and NDO each wanted to attract the officer clubs, while the KB naturally enough hoped that the ordinary "Regimentsvereine", if not the "Verbände", would find their way into the KB Landesverbände (there had already been some thousand or so "Regiments KVe" in the pre-war Prussian Landesverband⁽²⁰⁾). Socially and politically this was by far the preferable course, and would have happened naturally had the KB still occupied its "establishment" position. Alas, no official initiative from the army or the government appears to have been forthcoming, and the main contenders were left to fight over the regimental associations among themselves.

The original rivalry between DOB and NDO, and the differences in outlook with regard to political activity, particularly the NDO attacks on the former DOB president Schellch, certainly never prevented their co-operation in the field of patriotic propaganda. Joint declarations were common throughout the period⁽²¹⁾. Nevertheless, in the course of 1920 competition for the officers' regimental clubs tended increasingly to sour relations⁽²²⁾. Negotiations between the two took place at the end of 1920 and beginning of 1921 and resulted in a more or less open rift.

(20) AA 25-11-22.

(21) D-O-E1 1920 Nrs. 7,9,12,17. 1921, Nrs. 8,14,26,30,32. S&W 15-8-22.

(22) D-O-B1 17, 1-5-20, p.344//Nr. 19, 21-5-20. p.393.

Mutual recriminations were exchanged in public, Major von Jena of the NDO going so far as to criticise the lax social criteria applied by the DOB in recruiting members (May 1921)⁽²³⁾. Things began to look like going in the DOB's favour. On 12th July 1921 a certain measure of agreement was achieved between DOB and the Berlin "Offiziersregimentsvereine" and an "Ehrenschutzverband" was set up⁽²⁴⁾. At the beginning of 1922 the president of the DOB, General von Hutier, approached Lt. Gen. von Hülßen with the idea of setting up a loose "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" of the Prussian officer clubs which would be independent of the existing officer associations. Hülßen agreed to co-ordinate the necessary negotiations, but progress initially was slow⁽²⁵⁾.

At this stage the issue became confused once more with discussion of a "Reichsverband" of "Regimentsverbände", which brought in the whole question of relations between officers, their associations and the KVe. This idea of setting up an entirely new ex-servicemen's organisation composed of joint officer/man regimental clubs had been raised in the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" in March 1920 by Major von Stephani⁽²⁶⁾, but dropped at the instigation of the DOB itself⁽²⁷⁾. The proprietors of the paper always maintained a wider, pro-KB outlook than the DOB leaders, and often advocated officers joining their local KV⁽²⁸⁾. Although a large proportion of KV presidents before the war had been reserve and Landwehr officers, and 2.8% ex-regulars, they had never been particularly active in the local work of the Verein, beyond the more formal functions of their offices. Overall, the pre-war hierarchy of the KB had survived intact, with an even smaller participation by reserve officers⁽²⁹⁾. Some Landesverbände tried to promote a closer relationship by changing the rules

(23) *ibid.* Nr. 8, 11-3-21, 21-5-21.

(24) *ibid.* Nr. 22, 1-8-21.

(25) AA 18, 25-6-23, Hülßen's final Report.

(26) D-O-B1 12, 27-3-20, p.267-8.

(27) *ibid.* 17, 1-5-20, p.344, Hutier's notice; 19, 21-5-20.

(28) *ibid.* Nr. 32, 1919: "Offiziere und Kriegervereine".

(29) See p. 21.

governing "Einzelmitglieder" - the more prestigious and higher subscribing status of the ex-officer. In Baden, for example, these had now to join their local KV⁽³⁰⁾. But such steps did little to improve the situation. Although it has been estimated that some 100,000 ex-officers remained KV members⁽³¹⁾ it is likely that a large proportion of these were either employed higher than Verein level, or were older, pre-war officers, or at least not particularly active members. The challenge of the new "officers only" movement had made its influence felt on the KB. For several reasons the tendency was for the DOB or NDO member to avoid additional membership of a KV - unless, of course, their regimental association happened to be one. While financial motives played a part (multiple subscriptions) the main reason was a social one: having achieved officer status as a result of the war, they wished to enjoy its privileges as long as possible. This attitude provoked the reaction that ordinary ex-servicemen "wollen nicht in Vereine, wo Offiziere und Unteroffiziere den Ton angeben"⁽³²⁾.

General von Heeringen sincerely welcomed the fact that officer and man were tending once more to come together (in the "Regimentsverbände"), but naturally enough was concerned that some of these composite associations were leaving the KB⁽³³⁾. Moreover, what concentration among these associations was taking place, was happening outside the KB, (e.g. Bavaria and Hesse⁽³⁴⁾). Having severed its connections with the DOB, the Stalling Press ("Deutsches Offizierblatt") decided to throw in its lot with the biggest veterans' group (April 1922) and following extensive negotiations with Hülsen and Heeringen, opened in October a campaign to attract the "Regimentsverbände" into the KB. This would have been the best solution socially and politically, for any overt coalition of regimental clubs would have attracted the deepest suspicion of the Allies.

(30) BMI/PS "Bad. KB" Protokoll 1919 (Ka).

(31) BPD p.307.

(32) AA 15-6-23.

(33) AA 15-4-22.

(34) AA 15-7-22.

Heeringen's long statement in the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" of 25th November 1922 displays a deep awareness of the social and political hatreds at work in Weimar Germany. His suggestions that all ex-officers should seek membership of the KVe - on equal terms with other members is convincingly penned: "Je mehr der Offizier hinter dem Vereinsmitgliede verschwindet, desto besser. Jeder begriffliche Unterschied zwischen den Vereinsmitgliedern ist vom Übel ... Der frühere Offiziere darf sich im Verein nur durch seine Tätigkeit hervortun und muss hierin seinen Stolz sehen". He continued by recommending the initiation of negotiations between regimental associations and KVe at all levels⁽³⁵⁾.

At a big public meeting of the representatives of the various veteran groups (9th December 1922), among them von Hülßen, von Heeringen, General von Fabock (NDÖ), Adm. von Schröder (NDO) General von Radowitz (DOB) and Major Soldan (Stalling Press), the division of opinion became obvious - should the new association be restricted to the officer clubs or include the "Regimentsverbände" in general? No vote was taken on this and the affair was referred to a joint "work committee"⁽³⁶⁾. On this the DOB found itself in a minority of one - and after several sessions agreed reluctantly to co-operate in setting up a "Kartell" of the composite associations; "Leitsätze" were soon drafted and approved⁽³⁷⁾. Although such a solution would have been equally repugnant to DOB and KB, and was also likely to run into political trouble, especially in view of the troubled background of 1923, it was the only one possible in the circumstances, and could well have led to greater co-operation with the KB. The question of a news-sheet gave the DOB the excuse it had been seeking. Again in a minority of one, it championed the claim of its own newly established periodical against the Stalling Press paper. Despite the conciliatory attitude adopted by the other major organisa-

(35) AA 25-11-22.
 (36) AA 25-6-23, 20-12-22.
 (37) AA 25-6-23, 15-5-23.

tions the DOB finally announced that "supported by the KB" they condemned the whole agreement so far achieved, (25th May) and returned to their original standpoint, a coalition of Prussian officers' regimental clubs. The claim with regard to the KB was unjustified and there is no evidence to suggest that its leaders were no longer willing to co-operate in the formation of the Kartell. It is possible, however, that not only the political situation, but also a hint from government circles (Germany was currently adopting a more conciliatory attitude over reparations: Notes of 2nd May and 7th June), finally persuaded the work committee to dissolve and bring the affair to a close, (25th June)⁽³⁸⁾. Another factor was, of course, by no means irrelevant. Possibly stemming from their co-operation on the committee, negotiations had taken place between DOB and NDO, who in April, agreed to settle their differences and conclude an alliance for the regulation of their future joint activities. This was cemented by the acceptance by Field-Marshal von Hindenburg of the "Schirmherrschaft" of both associations. Ironically, on the occasion of the reception by Hindenburg of Waldersee and Hutier, the two presidents, the old Field-Marshal expressed the pious wish "dass beide Verbände fortan dem Vaterlande ein leuchtendes Beispiel deutscher Einigkeit sein werden"⁽³⁹⁾. Since the action of the DOB was at least to contribute to the failure of one of the most promising social developments in the whole history of the veteran associations, the prospects for "deutsche Einigkeit" were far from rosy.

While the years 1918-1923 saw a drawing together of the various officer associations (the DOB establishing "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" with ROB

(38) AA 8-5-23, 15-5-23, 25-5-23, 5-6-23, 25-6-23.

(39) AA 25-4-23.

and DVOB (1920), the Bund der Marine Offiziere (1919), the officers' regimental clubs (Ehrenschutzverband 1921). and finally the NDO (1923) - not to mention some Unteroffizier groups, and the militant RdB.⁽⁴⁰⁾ the rift between these new organisations and the KB if anything widened. Ultimately, many of the new "Regimentsvereine" and "Regimentsverbände" did find their way into its ranks; but the lack of any general consolidation in these vital early years considerably impaired the authority of the only big, moderate organisation, whose leaders, like Minister Gessler, recognised the need to heal social and political hatreds. The attitude adopted by the KB in these years towards all other veteran groups was generally conciliatory and even benevolent. In the case of the naval associations (Bund deutscher Marinevereine) Heeringen intervened personally with the Prussian authorities so that they could hold their 1922 conference in Magdeburg. Already by 1923 some 135 out of the 256 Marinevereine were also KVe of the KB. Attempts in 1922-23 for an organisational coalition seem to have failed, because the naval Bund pitched its demands too high. It was also their conference in 1923 that rejected (narrowly) the suggestion that negotiations be renewed. Nevertheless, relations remained cordial and the Marinevereine generally followed the KB lead⁽⁴¹⁾. In East Prussia, General Kahns headed both the local DOB and the East Prussian Provincial Kriegerverband. In Bavaria particularly, relations with the officer associations and the Verband Bayerischer Militäranwärter remained friendly. Here, more value was placed on the co-operation between officers' clubs and the ordinary regimental clubs - but the tricky question of relations with the KB found no more satisfactory solution than elsewhere⁽⁴²⁾. Thus the badly needed concentration of the ex-servicemen's associations failed to materialise, and apart from co-operation in the field of patriotic

(40) See p. 101 // D-O-BI 21/1919 (Reichsverband aktiver Unteroffiziere).

(41) R 43 I 766/65, KZ 1-9-23. (K).

(42) Nachlass Gayl 19, Staatsbürgerliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft to Gayl 19-21-21// 24a III F. 11/202, "Bay. Staatszeitung" 4-7-21. (MSO) // MA 104267 Report 2-6-20, Points for Conference 10-11-21 (MGS).

propaganda; the two main branches followed divergent paths.

Also of importance were the links between such moderate associations as KB, and to a lesser extent DOB, and the extremist anti-republican organisations which succeeded the Freikorps and Einwohnerwehr. From the outset the NDO and DVOB were connected with the two main trends in the "patriotic" camp, the former with the monarchists and Major General Graf Rüdiger von der Goltz, the latter with Ludendorff and the "Völkisch" movement, which at this time included the Nazis. The DOB while maintaining "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" with both groups⁽⁴³⁾ was closer to the von der Goltz camp, and early on co-operated with the ex-Baltic Freikorps leader's "Vereinigung Vaterländischer Verbände", as did NDO and ROE⁽⁴⁴⁾. What is surprising is that they nevertheless retained their official government recognition. The KB did not find it so easy to define its position vis à vis the patriotic societies - for while sharing their general nationalist/militarist outlook, they stopped short at serious attacks on the republic. Thus although their Bavarian branch (Bayerischer Kriegerbund) participated in the foundation of the Bavarian Patriotic Association in November 1922⁽⁴⁵⁾, the main KB never joined and was consequently much criticised by other societies. This decision was particularly difficult inasmuch that some 100,000 ex-Freikorps men ultimately joined the KVe⁽⁴⁶⁾ and the KB leaders wished to remain on good terms with the new general veteran association, the "Stahlhelm". There was also a growing link at the top, personnel-wise, with the NDO⁽⁴⁷⁾. In 1923 Heeringen was still prepared to co-operate with the Stahlhelm, whether in writing short articles for inclusion in "Festzeitungen" or in big joint rallies (e.g. Halle 1925); but their political connections and activities, quite apart from their concurrent rôle, made the association

(43) See p. 122.

(44) S & W 5-5-22; D-0-B1 21, 11-6-20.

(45) Kanzler op.cit. p.74-5.

(46) BPD p.307.

(47) See p. 22.

increasingly suspect in the eyes of republicans and hence it became difficult for the KB to maintain close ties. (The "Bund der Frontsoldaten", like the left-wing "Reichsbanner", ceased to be a purely ex-servicemen's association in the mid-1920s)⁽⁴⁸⁾. Local links between KVe and Kampfverbände existed everywhere, especially in the frontier districts where both were actively engaged in an auxiliary defence capacity⁽⁴⁹⁾. Here, of course, all right-wing groups tended to work together: in Chemnitz, for example, the local Stahlhelm was alleged to have been set up by the co-operation of DOB, VNS and DNVP elements⁽⁵⁰⁾.

While not yet a problem, these links, together with a certain patriotic common ground, were to create severe difficulties for the KB leaders in the future.

7. MONARCHISM: RIGHT-WING PARTIES

The abdication and flight of the Kaiser in November 1918 followed an explicit withdrawal of confidence on the part of the army leadership⁽¹⁾, and was in general accord with public opinion. Nevertheless large sections of the officer corps of the old Imperial Army regretted the passing of the monarchy, and from the earliest days of the revolution there was talk, albeit only casual, of a restoration⁽²⁾. This was to provide the back-bone for an important section of anti-republican agitation throughout the Weimar period.

(48) NH 906, 8, "Nordhuser Allgemeine Zeitung" 21-7-23//Berghahn op.cit. p.148.

(49) See p. 109-110.

(50) FO 371, 4795, C12070/676/18: Intelligence Summary 29-10 to 5-11-20 (PRO).

(1) Carsten op.cit. p.6-7.

(2) FO 371, 3776, C151566, C156345/4232/8, "Recent Reports from Germany" 8-1-19 (PRO).

The official change of policy undertaken by the KB, substituting general "patriotism" for the former loyalty to the Kaiser, was only slowly accepted by the KVe in general. Expressions of gratitude and loyalty were forthcoming from both individuals and whole Vereine, but the Berlin Centrale consistently declined to associate themselves with them on the grounds that this might be construed as an act of enmity to the present government⁽³⁾. The big Landesverbände were not nearly so cautious; at the Abgeordnetentag of the Badischer Kriegerbund (March 1919) an emotive demonstration of regret was made when the Archduke resigned his protectorship of the association. All the delegates rose from their seats in tribute to him⁽⁴⁾. In June 1919 the KB leadership was forced to deny rumours that they had sent a large sum of money to the ex-Kaiser⁽⁵⁾ although their defence in the ensuing months of the Landrat, dismissed for being involved in a "monarchist" incident at Karlsthal⁽⁶⁾ and replies to complaints from "loyal" Kriegerverein members, indicate that a good deal of sympathy existed for the Kaiser in official "Kyffhäuser" circles⁽⁷⁾. Again, the terms in which the Berlin Centrale declined to join a protest from a Bavarian Kreis chairman are unmistakable: "Wir haben - mit Freude gesehen, wie energisch Sie gegen die Entfernung der Kaiserbilder aus Schulen und amtlichen Räumen vorgehen"⁽⁸⁾, but at present such an official protest would be dangerous. Similarly, several requests for an official birthday greeting to the Kaiser in January 1920 were rejected only on grounds of political expediency: "Obviously all honourable members retain deep in their hearts honour and sympathy for our old ruling house and the Monarchy"⁽⁹⁾.

In 1921 on the occasion of the death of the Kaiserin, an official letter of sympathy was sent to Doorn, couched in the traditional terms -

(3) NH 909, 197-9.

(4) BMI/PS "Bad.KB" Protokoll 1919 (Ka).

(5) NH 909 201.

(6) See p. 70 and 83.

(7) NH 916, 200.

(8) NH 916, KB to Gen. von Winneberger (Bavaria) 15-11-19.

(9) *ibid.* KB to Neuwedell KB 6-1-20.

"Your Imperial Majesty, etc". A few days later in a speech to a meeting of the praesidium Heeringen stated: "Man darf wohl sagen, unser Kaiserpaar hat eine Musterehe für das ganze deutsche Volk geführt"⁽¹⁰⁾. Again sentiments expressed by Fink von Finkenstein (it is not clear whether this was the general, later one of the KB leaders or his brother, the Graf, who was for a while actually part of the Kaiser's entourage at Doorn), aroused criticism from a few readers of the "Kyffhäuser"⁽¹¹⁾. In November 1923 an article welcomed the return of the Crown Prince to Germany in enthusiastic terms. After describing how he had declined an offer of the throne made on 1st December 1918, in the interests of internal peace, the "Kriegerzeitung" expressed the pious wish that the hour of his return may be a blessed one⁽¹²⁾.

Monarchist sentiment remained alive then, at all levels of the biggest of the ex-servicemen's associations, but, like other aspects of KB policy, was at no time used really to embarrass the republican government. It was rather one of several facets of the militarist/tradition-honouring image established over the years.

The officer associations expressed sympathy for the Kaiser more openly: the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" regularly marked the Kaiser's birthday including that of January 1919⁽¹³⁾ and printed several articles designed to improve the image of the Crown Prince⁽¹⁴⁾. Nevertheless, the privileged position enjoyed by the DOB as the only officially recognised officer association, induced the leadership, like that of the KB, to keep such articles moderate in tone. Not so the NDO, described in 1921 as "considerably more reactionary than the DOB", with its offices in the same building as other monarchist Verbände ("Deutscher Wehrverein", etc)⁽¹⁵⁾.

(10) NH 906, 8-9, 19-4-21.

(11) NH 909, 206, 1.

(12) NH 911, 266, KZ 18-11-23.

(13) D-O-B1 4, 1919.

(14) *ibid.* Nr. 5, 1921; AA 6, 25-6-22.

(15) FO 371, 5981, C3612, Intelligence Notes, 5/11-2-21 (PRO).

The NDO rapidly became more closely associated with von der Goltz's "Vaterländische Verbänden" and the violent type of anti-republican/ monarchist demonstration that immediately preceded the murder of Erzberger (August 1921)⁽¹⁶⁾. It is again worth emphasising that contacts between NDO and KB at the leadership level were to be much stronger than those between DOB and KB and this was to increase the dilemma of nationalism or political neutrality that was even now beginning to face the KB. It is highly doubtful to what extent even the old officers took the possibility of a Hohenzollern restoration really seriously. The personalities of both Kaiser and Crown Prince aroused virtually insuperable difficulties, and the officers' concept of honour and popular disenchantment with the Weimar Republic tended to preclude talk of a limited, constitutional monarchy. The way out of this tricky question of honour became abundantly clear when Mussolini seized power in Italy at the end of 1922 - a regency exercised by a "strong man" ostensibly on behalf of a figure-head Hohenzollern. This had the advantage that Hindenburg and even, initially, Hitler, could be viewed as exercising this function. Certainly, no alternative solution ever seems to have passed the stage of discussion. It is certainly possible to view monarchism as little more than one strand in the propaganda of the nationalist opposition. Versailles, "war-guilt" and reparations formed the main issues throughout the period.

The attitudes of the veterans' associations towards monarchism and patriotic and militarist propaganda, inevitably made them the friends of the DNVP and DVP.

During the early years of the republic the attitudes developed by the various ex-servicemen's organisations to the political parties of the right displayed important differences. From the very start the officer associations leaned towards the DNVP. Thus NDO meetings were attended by party

(16) See p. 56.

representatives⁽¹⁷⁾ and a close association was soon established with von der Goltz, the monarchists and the "Vaterländische Verbänden"⁽¹⁸⁾.

At the very beginning of 1919, articles in the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" (a few days before its "adoption" by the DOB) recommended political action to the DOB, as the best way of achieving its economic aims⁽¹⁹⁾ and even printed an appeal from the DNVP - "Offiziere auf zur Wahl"-for officers to canvas for the party⁽²⁰⁾. In the same issue Maj. Gen. Otto Schulz challenged the non-political stand adopted by the DOB at their meeting of 14th December 1919 in Potsdam⁽²¹⁾, and recommended various other possibilities for political action. The first official DOB issue of the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" (16th January 1919) printed a survey of the various parties, and while avoiding any specific prescription, made it quite clear that German officers can only vote one way: "die Deutsch-nationale Volkspartei Ihre Losung ist das nationale Deutschland, Sicherheit, Ordnung, Schutz des Eigentums und eine feste staatliche Autorität, ihr Ziel nach innen und aussen die allmähliche politische und wirtschaftliche Wiedergeburt des Reiches auf der Grundlage der alten Wirtschafts und Gessellschaftsordnung"⁽²²⁾. On January 23rd, after the National Assembly elections, an article by Major Constantin Hierl, later a well-known Nazi, opposed any unilateral party attachment for the DOB, and instead suggested that the aims of a small association would best be furthered by agitation directed at all parties and government departments⁽²³⁾. The conviction that a general political agitation of this sort should be maintained continued to hold sway⁽²⁴⁾, but the issues immediately preceding the Reichstagswahl of 6th June 1920 once more adopted a line hostile to

(17) Nachlass Scheüch 108, "Kreuzzeitung" 30-1-19, refs. meeting 29 Jan (F).

(18) FO 371, 5974, C17493 (PRO).

(19) D-0-B1 1, 2-1-19, p.4.

(20) *ibid.* 9-1-19, p.18.

(21) *ibid.* p.23.

(22) D-0-B1 3, 16-1-19.

(23) *ibid.* 23-1-19, p.69.

(24) *ibid.* 8-5-19, account of conference 24/26-4-19; *ibid.* 27-3-20.

the left. The number printed on 1st June carried a full page appeal by the DNVP which listed a number of ex-officers standing as official candidates⁽²⁵⁾. The following year, on the occasion of the Prussian Landtag elections (20th February 1921) a full page notice called upon members to "vote DVP"⁽²⁶⁾. The reason for the change is not known, though the close ties between DNVP and the rival officer association (NDO) may be partly responsible. After 1921 the DOB in fact appears to have settled down and taken its statutory neutrality more seriously, probably to safeguard its remaining (and advantageous) official links with the government.

The KB, as has been seen, adhered reasonably consistently to their public policy of Überparteilichkeit and despite "patriotic", and even "monarchist" overtones, refrained from any overt party involvement. That is not to say, of course, that they were above enlisting the support of Deutsch National Reichstag members when occasion demanded.

8. COMMUNISM

The disservice done to the cause of democratic government in Germany by the left-wing extremists was marked and lasting. Spartakist/Communist disturbances in 1919, 1920 and again in 1923 threw the Republic back upon reliance on the Freikorps and other military Verbände. On the other hand initial dangers inherent in the lack of clear-cut divisions on the political left (SPD - USPD - KPD) were removed in 1920, when the split in the USPD produced an obvious ideological distinction between "socialist" and "communist". This of course also gave the KPD a larger following, but it

(25) *ibid.* 21-5-20, p.398; 1-6-20, p.249.

(26) *ibid.* 1-2-21. p.68.

was largely to dissipate this advantage through internal dissension and ill-considered policies. Although the parliamentary influence of the KPD was to improve after 1923, when, in October, members even secured ministerial posts in Saxony and Thuringia, for most of this early period communism was probably in no way a serious threat to the existence of the republic. On the other hand, societies were set up to deal with the "red menace" and the KB was quite prepared to co-operate with these by providing members' addresses to facilitate the circulation of propaganda⁽¹⁾. Similarly, occasional moderately worded articles in the officer-press pointed out the disadvantages of communism⁽²⁾. Locally, of course, clashes did occur between KVe and left-wing extremists, especially in 1922-23, but by and large these perhaps should be regarded more as popular demonstrations of an anti-militarist nature. Certainly, the "fight against Bolshevism" had not yet assumed the importance for the KB that it was to have later. The vast majority of KVe retained a staunch "nationalist" outlook, which effectively excluded all but the most moderate socialists and democrats from their ranks except perhaps in the most staunchly working-class areas. It was correctly assumed that veteran organisations were in themselves bulwarks against communism. The "Rote Frontkämpferbund", and indeed the socialist "Reichsbanner", had to develop separately from the existing associations and belong to the period after 1923. These moreover, were never purely veterans' organisations.

SUMMARY:

The conclusions to be drawn from this examination of the activities of the major ex-servicemen's organisations during the troubled years after the war have become reasonably clear. The KB and to a lesser extent the DOB,

(1) NH 917, PLKV to Potsdam Reg. Bez. 9-8-19.

(2) D-O-B1 3-4-19: "Brot oder Bolschewismus".

while finding complete political neutrality incompatible with a "patriotic" standpoint, both preferred the advantages of co-operating with the republic to the dangers attached to direct opposition. In this way they were able to pursue important social tasks, assisted by the State, and especially in the case of the KB, succeeded in establishing contacts at the highest level and thus exercised a certain amount of influence with the Weimar government. This policy of co-operation was perhaps initially forced upon the KB by the course of events and the initiative of others. Subsequent to the restoration of order in Berlin in 1919, this policy was the conscious choice of the leadership, which in view of the nature of the KB organisation, found it possible to impose it on the rank and file. It is likely that this helped to neutralise an important section of public opinion potentially hostile to the republic. Had the KB leadership at any time decided to drop its "neutrality" (which was after all, initially merely an emergency and temporary step), and throw its weight into the anti-republican camp, this would have gained immensely in prestige. In view of the ambiguous attitude adopted by the Reichswehr leadership during the Kapp Putsch ("Reichswehr will not fire upon Reichswehr") any concerted effort by the right in these years could seriously have endangered the existence of the Weimar Republic. That none was made was due partly to external and internal threats that induced a certain temporary solidarity between "republicans" and "reactionaries" and partly to a holding-back by large sections of the moderate/conservative lower classes.

If the policies of the leaders tended to promote the immediate stability of the Weimar system, this was not necessarily so with all the local KVe or indeed the smaller officer associations. While the latter added their voice to the growing anti-republican clamour, the former constituted in their public functions a source of provocation to the

substantial non-militarist elements in the working classes. When one considers that there were some 30,000 Kriegervereine all over Germany and that in many country districts, especially of East Elbia, the KB was the ONLY political (in the widest sense) organisation, this provocation clearly played a part in the long-term deepening of antagonism between left and right. The whole concept of veteran associations is designed to promote militarist attitudes. During this period an increasing number of Kriegervereine were actually engaged in military activities as such, or in things like small-bore shooting and gymnastics which increase the military capacity of a civilian population in a tangible sense.

These early years saw the foundation of the general lines of activity pursued by the veteran associations throughout the period. In some respects, however, these foundations were not that secure. "Überparteilickeit" and "patriotism" were already proving not wholly compatible; new initiatives were developing on the right; the parliamentary power of the KPD increasing on the left; the centre, moderate bloc was under attack from both sides, and weakened by bitter rivalries of a social, traditional and political nature from within. The propaganda activities of all the ex-servicemen's organisations tended to promote the interests of the super-nationalists on the right, and, with the failure of the Weimar authorities effectively to control the patriotic associations, constituted a long-term danger to the Republic of the first order.

SECTION THREE

1923 - 1928

1. General Propaganda
2. Attitude to Social Democracy
3. Local Influence
4. Relations with the Government
5. Military Aspects
6. Relations with the "Patriotic Associations"
7. Monarchism and Right-Wing Parties
8. Communism

SUMMARY

1. GENERAL PROPAGANDA

During the first troubled years of the Weimar Republic, the press activity of the KV movement developed around the twin principles of aggressive nationalism and "Überparteilichkeit". While avoiding overt ties with any political parties, the vigorous public utterances of men like General von Heeringen often came close to criticism of the policies of the Weimar governments. This was probably one of the factors that led the chief government propaganda agency - the "Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst" - to stress the importance of securing an interest in the 390,000 weekly circulation of the national and provincial "Kriegerzeitung". The financial "treaty" of May 1923 certainly secured for the "Reichszentrale" an influence in the preparation of the 1923 Kalender, and together with the policy of co-operation, which had consolidated contacts between KB and republic at all levels, it ensured a general influence over the whole KV press, at least for the immediate future. Besides this official connection, there were also links with the work of the Foreign Office sponsored "Arbeitsausschuss deutscher Verbände", and the efforts of this body in the field of "war guilt" must be borne in mind when attempting an assessment of KB propaganda after 1923⁽¹⁾.

The man in charge of the KB press throughout the Weimar and Nazi periods was Otto Riebicke (1889-1965). The son of a clergyman, he served as a reserve officer from 1914 to 1917 when war injuries made further active service impossible. He entered the official Kriegs-Press-Amt and became its head in June 1918, no mean achievement for a young man of 29. After the war he entered the Press and Information Office of the KB and it was largely due to his efforts that the "Kriegerzeitung" survived the 1923 inflation. Following this, and to some extent aided by the retirement of the old chief executive, Geheimrat Westphal, Riebicke was able to re-organise the KB press department⁽²⁾. In addition to the chief propaganda organ, the

(1) See p. 96, 47.

(2) "Kyffhäuser", March 1965 (F).

"Kriegerzeitung", with its various supplements ("Parolebuch" - official Bund news and directives; "Wege der Jugend"; serialised novels; picture section, etc), there were a number of special periodicals (e.g. monthly "KV Vorstand") and booklets to mark such occasions as Hindenburg's 80th birthday in 1927⁽³⁾. Under Riebick's energetic guidance journalistic and technical standards improved considerably - as did circulation: (in 1930, over 70,000⁽⁴⁾ - more than the peak circulation of the pre-war "Parole": 67,800 in 1913⁽⁵⁾). Riebicke was to become an active Nazi sometime before the "takeover" in 1933 and on occasions was to come into conflict with General von Horn who succeeded Heeringen in 1926⁽⁶⁾.

A closer look at the "Kriegerzeitung" during the years 1923 to 1929 soon reveals that propagandawise the KB was following a much stronger line, independent of the "Arbeitsausschuss". Certainly, attention was paid to the "war-guilt-lie": "Wider die Lügenpropoganda" (18th January 1925) comparing French and German military statistics, reports of Hindenburg's remarks on the subject (7th June 1925) and advocating co-operation over the petitions of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für vaterländische Aufklärung" (5th July 1925): "Wie Kriegslügen wachsen" (front page 31st October 1925)⁽⁷⁾. The bulk of "political" column space was nevertheless devoted to the most extreme anti-French propaganda. With frequent reference to the Foreign Legion troops in Germany and continual emphasis on Germany's disarmed state the "moral" is often pointed with crude (and effective) cartoons, such as that depicting a naked and innocent "Germany" bound and being ravaged by black soldiers bearing swords (1st March 1925). Attention was also given to Poland⁽⁸⁾, Russia⁽⁹⁾, and the "Feindbund" generally: thus an official

(3) "Hindenburg zu Ehren".

(4) "Sperlings Zeitschriften", 1931, Leipzig.

(5) Saul op.cit.

(6) See p. 22-23.

(7) KZ 1925, Stadtbibliothek Wuppertal.

(8) KZ 16-8-25, "Polens Verdrängungspolitik".

(9) KZ 22-2-25, "Germany's Position in Mid-Europe".

statement by Heeringen in January 1925 characterised the failure of the Allies to evacuate the "first zone of occupation" by 10th January, as nothing less than a preliminary step towards fixing France's eastern frontier on the Rhine!⁽¹⁰⁾. In 1924, the KB joined the officer associations and the Stahlhelm in a strongly worded protest against the resumption of military control, "die allein Französischem Sadismus entspringt!"⁽¹¹⁾. But this is by no means all: repeated statements carry this specific hatred of France and Poland to its ultimate conclusion - the advocacy of a future war of "revenge". In 1924, talk of: "entrissene Gebieten - den Gedanken, auch Hüsserlich mit uns wieder vereint zu werden - damit einmal die Stunde kommt, die Alldeutschland (sic) vereinigt zu Schutz und Trutz und Wehr"⁽¹²⁾. "Es Kommt die Zeit, wo die Rächer für angetane Schmach aufstehen, wo man wieder lernt, dass es auch Deutsche in der Welt gibt, die geachtet werden müssen"⁽¹³⁾. "Das Preussen verlorengangene Territorium muss zurückgewonnen und Polen in seine Schranken zurückgewiesen werden"⁽¹⁴⁾. "Die Zeit der Schande wird und muss vergehen. Unsere Pflicht aber ist es, zu streben, dass der Tag der Freiheit und der Grösse bald kommt"⁽¹⁵⁾. Prophetically, discussing "Das Anschlussproblem" and the plight of the German minorities in Czechoslovakia, while recognising that perhaps the moment was not propitious for embarking on agitation in favour of Anschluss (the French had just left the Ruhr and the Locarno conference was shortly to commence) - "Das Deutsche Reich hat die grosse historische Aufgabe, alle die Staaten Mitteleuropas, die heute balkanisiert kaum lebensfähig dahinvegetieren, die aber alle auf deutschem Kolonialboden gegründet sind, unter seine Führung zu sammeln"⁽¹⁶⁾.

(10) KZ 18-1-25: // AA 3/1925.

(11) D-O-B1 15-3-24, front page.

(12) New Years Message 1924, BPD p.308.

(13) KZ 22-2-25, "Why we must not lose faith in Germany's Future".

(14) ibid.

(15) KZ 9-8-25, "Hinein in die Militär-und Kriegervereine".

(16) KZ 17-9-25.

In addition to this oft-repeated message, several editions of the "Kriegerzeitung" concerned themselves with issues of a military-technical nature, such as a complete number (19th April 1925) devoted to flying and its importance for the state: or ballooning and airships (24th May 1925). In these connections, the KB was seen acting as a sounding-board for Reichswehr leaders who, since 1922 had had German officers trained in Russia and were concerned in broadening general interest and civilian activity in flying⁽¹⁷⁾.

Despite the marked militarist, revanchist trends in KB propaganda, discussion of more abstract ideological concepts - such as "Führertum" - display at this time a noticeably moral, even Christian complexion "Nicht der Führer ist das Gültige, sondern das Amt. Alles blosse Macht üben wollen ist gemein." Leaders must be morally irreproachable with adequate experience in a subordinate rôle. Example is all important⁽¹⁸⁾.

1925 saw the death of President Ebert and the election in his place of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg marked the beginning of the end for republican government in Germany. "No matter how Hindenburg might comport himself in the immediate future" wrote Eyck, "his selection ... was a triumph of nationalism and militarism and a heavy defeat for the Republic"⁽¹⁹⁾. True he secured only a small majority over the Centrist Wilhelm Marx; true also that the Communist Thälmann wrested from the latter a vital 2 million votes. Nevertheless, this event was the clearest possible indication of the successful retrenchment of the old ruling classes and the rehallowing of their once so discredited policies, still more so, of the success of nationalist propaganda which fastened so avidly on to every action of Germany's former enemies after the ill-fated Versailles Treaty. At this time the presidential election was not quite so "political" as it was to be in 1932. Heeringen's support for Jarres was well-known, although

(17) Carsten op.cit. p.143.

(18) KZ 8-2-25 "Wege der Jugend"; 2-8-25; 31-12-26 "Gedanken über Führertum".

(19) Eyck op.cit. Ip.340.

considerations of political neutrality prevented his signing the "Löbell Committee's" declaration. The "Kriegerzeitung" thus supported Jarres in the first ballot (if without actually naming him)⁽²⁰⁾. The Bund came out unfeignedly in favour of Hindenburg in the second, thus provoking criticism from the big Catholic Landesverbände⁽²¹⁾.

This trend of propaganda activity continued throughout the "middle-period" of the Weimar Republic. The very first number of the new "Kyffhäuser" (7th January 1926) announced that "the year of the great struggle against Versailles has begun" and while re-stating the old cry of "Überparteilichkeit" ("Wir wollen nicht klagen gegen Land oder Verfassung oder Regierung") the affinity with the growing clamour of the extreme Right is unmistakable - even to the extent of including explicitly racist comments ("die Gelben und Schwarzen" on the one hand, and the "weisse Weltherren" on the other⁽²²⁾). By 1927, the official statements of the Bund were receiving more notice in the national press, as were the national events, instituted by the KB, in conjunction with other associations⁽²³⁾. Such was the 2nd German "Reichskriegertag" held on 2nd/3rd October 1927 in Berlin, marking Hindenburg's birthday. The Hauptkriegerverband Berlin issued a special "Festschrift" on this occasion, reproducing Hindenburg's letter to the KB: "Ihn zu stärken und damit die Vorbedingung für den Wiederaufstieg des Vaterlandes zu schaffen, muss unsere grosse, dauernde Aufgabe sein". This theme of rearming Germany (which was, of course, already to some extent secretly underway), was pointed by a long article concerning "Unsere Reichsmarine", which dwells on the disparity of the Navy vis à vis those of the other countries of Europe. This essay does not bear

(20) KZ 22-3-25 "Parolebuch"//Nachlass Gayl 23: "Berlin Lokalanzeiger" 14-3-25 (K).

(21) KZ 12-4-25, "PB"//Nachlass Gayl 23://Schulz-Luckau, op.cit. p.79.

(22) KY 7-1-26 "An des Jahres Schwelle" (KB).

(23) NH 906, 29, report of Horn's speech in "Der Tag" 9-1-27 (K).

the stamp of the professional journalism of the KB press department, and constitutes an emotional glorification of armed might, the belief that "a show of strength" is good for trade, as well as concern with the status of ex-patriate Germans - in fact all the outdated and discredited concepts of European colonialism at its worst⁽²⁴⁾. The question of the "geraubten Kolonien" themselves was only of secondary importance and did not crop up so frequently. Indeed, all mention of the colonies was omitted from the twelve Leitsätze formulated in September 1928, although at least one Kreisverband protested at this⁽²⁵⁾.

Such then was the most important field of propaganda activity exploited by the KB. Certainly, the minds of many ex-servicemen were initially receptive to the type of article described above; certainly, other factors and other organisations were at work. Nevertheless, propaganda of any sort feeds on itself: while not alone in initiating "public opinion" it can certainly, at times, sustain and deepen existing hatreds, thus shaping political powers that are not always amenable to control. In their "locals", their places of work, and, especially, in their own families, Kriegerverein members were specifically required to "spread the word"; and those who read the "Kriegerzeitung" were well-armed for everyday political debate.

Still more influential in their way, were the big public demonstrations and the speeches made by the leaders of the organisation (both of which were to find their way increasingly into the national press - assisted by Riebicke's policy of sending "press releases" to all the important national and local dailies). All local parades were in essence demonstrations - even if merely funeral processions - and thus constituted a form of propaganda activity. When these were magnified many hundreds of times, they tended to influence not only the participants (who were of course immensely boosted

(24) "Hindenburg zu Ehren" p.30 et seq.

(25) NH 906, protest by Halle KKV (K).

morale-wise), but all spectators, whether well-disposed or not, and had even wider political effects. Such was the KB/Stahlhelm "Moltke" Festival in Halle (11th May 1924). 70 special trains helped to bring some 100-150,000 men of all "patriotic" groups (Stahlhelm, Wehrwolf, NSDAP, etc) to what came close to being a monarchist demonstration on the grand scale. A Reichswehr band and Traditions Company from Moltke's old regiment even played the Imperial Hymn, "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz". Among those present were Prince Oskar, Field-Marshal von Mackensen, Ludendorff, Scheer, Schröder, Maercker and Einem. The salute at the 2½ hour long march-past in column of eight was nevertheless taken by Generaloberst Kriegsminister a.D. von Heeringen, president of the Kyffhäuserbund. Reports of this occasion, at which four communists and one policeman were killed, and many others injured, soon found their way into the Foreign Ministries of the allied nations, placing renewed strain on Anglo-German relations and leading the Prussian Ministry of the Interior to ban public demonstrations for a while. This was not all - with the fall of Poincaré's government in June came widespread rumours of a general German uprising⁽²⁶⁾.

A similar co-operation of nationalist groups, on a smaller scale, was seen in June 1924, in Hamburg, this time initiated by the "Hochschulring deutscher Art" against the "war-guilt-lie". Besides the dignitaries of Hamburg and various right-wing political parties, the local Kriegerverband and local branch of the "Vereinigung der Vaterländischen Verbände" also took part⁽²⁷⁾. Reports of this demonstration went to the Reichskanzlei.

On 10th August 1924 the KB held a great "Heldenehrung", complete with choir and orchestra, on the Kyffhäuser Mountain⁽²⁸⁾. Also with a religious motif, were the series of services in the summer of 1925 at the Kyffhäuser

(26) FO 371, 9825, C7885 & C8129; 9826, C11467/2977 (PRO).

(27) R 43 1 770/31 (K).

(28) AA 8-7-24, p.173.

Monument, inaugurated by the 7th June "Kriegerfest" (march, parade, service, patriotic address, march-past: evening concert in the "Burghof": torchlight procession). Subsequently came two evangelical services (21st June, 5th July), one RC Service (19th July) and the Kyffhäuser Jugendfest (2nd August). In the middle of June were held the Rhineland Millenary celebrations. Rallies at Solingen and week-long KV celebrations elsewhere involving the "Völkische Freiheitsbewegung" and Prince Eitel Frederick, not to mention the usual Reichswehr bands and the presence of Stresemann and seven other ministers at the opening, gave the British Foreign Office some cause to suspect the German Foreign minister of encouraging the militarist-nationalist-monarchist movement. In addition a letter of the Ministry of Interior apparently approved nationalist demonstrations in the Rhineland, so that the British government were quite justified in drawing the attention of the German Ambassador to the matter - which seemed likely to threaten the Anglo-German negotiations being carried on, now at a "delicate stage".

The only defence the German government could put forward was the rather doubtful claim that the letter was a forgery⁽²⁹⁾. Shortly afterwards came the big Hamburg shooting festival (22nd/23rd August)⁽³⁰⁾. All this, and the accompanying build-up in the KV Press, was merely a prelude to the biggest public demonstration yet seen in Weimar Germany: the 1st "Deutsche Reichskriegertag" in Leipzig (17th/19th October 1925). Here a mass parade on the now familiar pattern included some 120,000 veterans (40,000 Stahlhelm), 15,000 members of "patriotic societies" and a large Austrian contingent. Messages of greeting read at the big parade on the 18th included those from the Crown Prince, Hindenburg, the Minister des Innern and the President of the DOB. The resulting national press coverage was considerable, as was the hostility from Social Democratic papers⁽³¹⁾.

(29) FO 371, 10757, C6574 & C6812/6306; 10758; C8374/6306 (PRO).

(30) KZ 12-4-25.

(31) KZ 6-9-25, 25-10-25, 8-11-25.

From the point of view of the veteran organisations, the first Reichskriegertag was a striking success. Two years later, on the occasion of Hindenburg's 80th birthday, a repeat performance was staged in Berlin itself. The second Kriegertag⁽³²⁾ (2nd/3rd October 1927) had its climax in a massive rally in the Stadion, accompanied by all the colour and pageantry that the Reichswehr museums could muster. Historic banners and uniforms pointed the theme of Germany's glorious military past. Although the Prussian Minister des Innern placed a ban on the carrying of sticks and umbrellas, and on the wearing of non-Kyffhäuser insignia, this was no more than a vain gesture. To what avail were the understandable doubts of convinced republicans when the President of the Weimar Republic, its armed forces and officials, took part in what was a militarist and nationalist demonstration in the best tradition of Imperial Germany? Not only did such events arouse the liveliest suspicion among foreign observers, but they did much to make respectable the extreme views of the right-wing political parties. More than anything else, the fact that successive republican governments sought to appease nationalist, militarist sentiment and its personification in Hindenburg - and even dabbled in the dangerous business of propaganda itself (i.e. the "Arbeitsausschuss") - made inevitable a situation in which any policy of fulfilment of the hated Treaty obligations was tantamount to treason in the eyes of vast sections of the German populace. Although the obstacles were formidable, even in these middle years of the Republic - with renewed economic growth and financial stability, surely an attempt could have been made, with reasonable prospect of success, to stop this dangerous trend in "revanchist" propaganda? Alas, those responsible for the government of Germany preferred to use it as a means of strengthening their hand vis à vis the Allies. And by the time the Nazis began attracting

(32) "Hindenburg zu Ehren" p.42 et seq.//Nachlass Schleicher 99, report by Lt. Col. von Ledebur 25-10-27.//NH 906, 36 "Württbg. "KZ" 3-7-27, p.256.

mass public support the "point of no return" had already been reached.

To the KV press and the big public rallies must be added a third type of propaganda - which, of course, often involved all three types together - the speeches of the leaders of the Bund. Both Heeringen and Horn were men ideally suited to lead any national organisation with a respectable, conservative "image". Both were men of intelligence and integrity, with more than average (for army officers) ability as public speakers. With the prestige of their rank and position, not to mention their own personalities they were usually able to dominate their immediate subordinates⁽³³⁾. Horn particularly realised the value of personal contacts and insisted on all the central staff getting out and speaking at even Kreisverband meetings. On at least one occasion, the whole Berlin Centrale was sent out to canvas the policy of the leadership⁽³⁴⁾. The speeches made by these men obviously reflected the trends already discerned in the KV Press, discussed above: "Deutschland über alles ist uns kein leerer Begriff, sondern eine Tatsache". "Wir stellen unser Vaterland über alles. Unser Symbol ist Schwarz-Weiss-Rot" (1925⁽³⁵⁾). This type of statement, together with allusions to the great past and heroic deeds of fallen comrades, was probably fairly typical of Heeringen's addresses: simple and effective, particularly if followed by the request for the assembly "to stand, in silent tribute to the Kaiser"⁽³⁶⁾. Horn on the other hand, paid much more attention to purely ideological concepts: "Wiederweckung der deutschen Seele, der deutschen Gemütswerte und damit der idealen Weltanschauung. Unser Volk müsse wieder religiös werden, es müsse wieder erkennen lernen, dass nicht alles käuflich sei, sondern, dass das Nichtkäufliche den Wert eines Menschen, eines Volkes, ausmache", thus reported "Der Tag in January 1927"⁽³⁷⁾.

(33) See p. 15.

(34). February 1932.

(35) "Heeringen an den Kriegervereine", p.41, July 1925.

(36) NH 906, 10 Heeringen at Neuruppin conference July 1925 (K).

(37) NH 906, 29 "Der Tag" 9-1-27 report of Horn's speech at KB meeting: also in other papers (K).

But not all Horn's speeches at this stage were carefully prepared and circulated to the press⁽³⁸⁾, although this trend towards courting publicity had increased considerably. Besides a high moral, ideological tone, Horn's concept of the rôle of militarism in Germany's future was little different from that of any other ex-general. At Stuttgart (11th June 1927), after stressing the worth of "der alte Soldatengeist" against "Pazifismus und Materialismus", he continued: "Ein gesundes Volk kann sich auf die Dauer nicht mit der Sklavenrolle abfinden, in der wir heute stehen. Der Wehrgedanke und die Wehrhaftigkeit sind darum nötig". Freedom is possible only via nationalism, not internationalism⁽³⁹⁾. Probably one of the most comprehensive statements of policy made by Horn in these years was that at the September 1928 Vertretertagung on the Kyffhäuser. After references to the "brutale Gewalt des Versailler Vertrages" and "Versklavung mit der sogenannten Schuldflüge" he turned to the question of pacifism: "Den Frieden wollen wir alle haben und besonders wir alte Soldaten, die den Krieg wirklich kennengelernt haben, sind die letzten, die den Krieg herbeisehnen. Wir wollen aber FREI und gleichberechtigt sein, und nur ein Volk, das den Geist der Wehrhaftigkeit nicht preisgibt, das nicht auch noch seine geistigen Waffen fortwirft und das, einig in seinem vaterländischen Wollen, in der Lage ist, sich sein Recht, seine Gleichberechtigung und seine Freiheit zu erzwingen". He went on to attack internationalism and materialism, again from an almost religious standpoint, and to blame class-hatred, misunderstanding, etc, for most of the ills in present-day German society⁽⁴⁰⁾. Following this build-up, Horn announced the twelve new "Leitsätze" - guiding principles for the activity of the Bund in the difficult years lying ahead. On the practical side, the various existing fields of work are listed including opposition to the "war-guilt-lie" and an open avowal of the target of inculcating "Wehrhaftigkeit" - by implication at any rate, espousing the cause of

(38) NH 906, 35 Horn to Major General Bucholz 5-7-27 (K).

(39) NH 906, 36, report in "Württ. KZ" 3-7-27 (K).

(40) *ibid.* 41.1 Press Circular 20-9-28.

military and pre-military training, especially for the Kyffhäuserjugend. On the personal, moral side great emphasis is laid on the noble virtues, with particular mention of idealism, conscience, personality, devoutness (Frömmigkeit) and the family. Finally, for the nation in general, unity, will-to-freedom, honour and justice, are to be combined with military preparedness⁽⁴¹⁾. While the moral, religious side of the Leitsätze is undeniable, the other provisions lack something in precision. Certainly Horn at this time tended to play down the "revanchist" side of German nationalism, and the main trend of KB propaganda in the remaining years was towards "Gleichberechtigung" (following official, government policy). Nevertheless, talk of a "will-to-freedom", a "fight for German honour", military preparedness and keeping in touch with ex-patriate Germans is capable of a much more aggressive interpretation. When one considers that many of Horn's colleagues, especially the influential Riebicke, were of a less moderate frame of mind - and often gave expression to their views in speeches and the pages of the "Kyffhäuser" one is forced to the conclusion that this lack of precision in the Leitsätze was deliberate. When a press circular only a few weeks later could conclude: "Kyffhäusergeist ist ebenso national wie sozial - ebenso allumfassend wie auf das einzelne gerichtet"⁽⁴²⁾, leaving aside the sinister juxtaposition, one must recognise once more the principle of "Überparteilichkeit" in a new guise. The nature of KB "neutrality" between 1923 and 1929 will be examined in subsequent sections. For the moment, one must conclude from this survey of the general propaganda activity of the Bund that, despite the official government lead given in this field, despite the somewhat more ethical approach of the new leader, von Horn, the KB, in conjunction with nationalist and militarist elements both within the establishment and on the extreme

(41) "Leitsätze" in 1930 Jahrbuch etc.

(42) NH 906, 55.1 Press Notice 8-10-28 (K).

political Right contributed significantly to the growth and dissemination of an intransigent, vengeful spirit among the people of Germany - and in so doing paved the way for the Nazis in a tangible manner.

As with the KB, the main propaganda activity of the DOB was in the fields of nationalism and militarism, although there existed slight differences in emphasis and a more definite political bias to the Right. The DOB announced its official co-operation with the "überparteilich" "Arbeitsausschuss deutscher Verbände" in May 1925, and subsequently took a share in the "petition" activity of the "Aufklärungsausschuss betr. die Kriegsschuldfrage"⁽⁴³⁾. Similarly in 1928, the "DOB" publicised the activities of the "Deutscher Kampfbund gegen die Kriegsschuldfrage"⁽⁴⁴⁾. The trend taken by the pacemakers of the "patriotic" Verbände soon, however, induced the DOB to take up a more radical position than the officially sponsored "Arbeitsausschuss". Government policy involved a repudiation of war-guilt at home while avoiding a direct confrontation with the Allies. Thus, while Stresemann spoke publicly to this effect on 29th September 1924, a corresponding note to the Allies, though prepared was not sent⁽⁴⁵⁾. Similarly in 1927, Hindenburg, Marx and Stresemann, all voiced "anti war-guilt" sentiments in public. On 1st May 1928, shortly before the Reichstag elections spelt the end of the Marx government, the DOB in common with such groups as the "Vereinigung der Vaterländischen Verbände", Deutsche Adelsgenossenschaft, NDO, NSDAP, Stahlhelm and Wehrwolf, sent a strongly worded demand to the Chancellor, that Germany's agreement to Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty be officially repudiated in a note sent to all the Allied Powers⁽⁴⁶⁾. Thus, the DOB threw in its lot with the "national opposition" and committed itself to the support of the more radical propaganda of the Nazis and Stahlhelm which so much disturbed Germany

(43) "DOB" 16, 5-6-25: Nachrichten der Bundesleitung.

(44) "DOB", 15-3-28, p.323.

(45) Eyck, op.cit. Vol I p.316-17.

(46) "DOB" 25-5-25: Nachrichten.

between 1928 and 1933.

It is not surprising that the spirit of the old officer corps manifested itself in other equally objectionable directions. The series "Gedenke, dass du ein Deutscher bist!" by General von Cramon, often embodied the sharpest expressions against Social Democracy and pacifists generally⁽⁴⁷⁾. The candidature of Jarres for the first presidential ballot in 1925 was canvassed, unlike the KB, by name⁽⁴⁸⁾. Sometimes the DOB leadership gave expression to the tacit anti-semitism practised in the local groups: in a circular of January 1924, officers with connections to any internationally orientated ("in pazifistischem und jüdisch-marxistischem Sinne") group⁽⁴⁹⁾, are viewed as "beyond the pale".

In other respects the nationalist and militarist effusions of the DOB are little different from those of the KB: the importance of forwarding the "Wehrgedanke" was the subject of the first unanimous resolution of the 1927 conference⁽⁵⁰⁾, and recurred frequently. Stress was laid on the development of Polish armed might⁽⁵¹⁾, but the main attack was direct against France⁽⁵²⁾, and such promising international developments as the Locarno Pact met with scant enthusiasm⁽⁵³⁾. The question of colonies also found an occasional airing⁽⁵⁴⁾.

The NDO continued along the lines it had laid down from its foundations, despite the difficulties of the "Uniform-Verbot" and the restrictions laid on public demonstrations by the emergency decrees of 1921 and 1922. The only real difference from the DOB was its more specific avowal of a restoration of the Hohenzollerns. In 1924 the NDO was prominent in the patriotic movement to mark the 10th Anniversary of the outbreak of war⁽⁵⁵⁾. Demonstrations in conjunction with DOB, ROB and other "Vaterländische

(47) e.g. "DOB" 34, 5-12-28, p.1386.
(48) "DOB" 1925, p.198, 226, etc.
(49) D-0-B1 29, 5-2-24, p.29: Verbandsnachrichten.
(50) "DOB" 15, 1927, p.827.
(51) "DOB" 15-8-28, 5-10-28.
(52) "DOB" 18, 1925, p.516; 25-7-25 (Front page); 5-8-27 p.945.
(53) "DOB" 5-10-25, p.974: "unsatisfactory impression".
(54) "DOB" 15, 1927; report of May conference; also "DOB" 18, 1928, p.739.
(55) AA 24-6-24, p.161.

Verbände" against the Locarno Pact, at the end of 1925, were in the event sabotaged by the weather⁽⁵⁶⁾. Concern with the war-guilt question produced demands for official repudiation as early as 1925⁽⁵⁷⁾. Every move by the Allies was greeted with the utmost hostility⁽⁵⁸⁾. In 1925 the election of Hindenburg was advocated as a chance to "purge" parliamentary-democratic elements from the state apparatus. In 1927 the March conference came out in favour of "ein Völkisches Deutsches Kaiserreich". Admiral von Schröder's speech gave voice to the anti-French revanchist spirit prevailing on the Right⁽⁵⁹⁾: only the "Teutonic Furor" of the whole German race could save the country. It is hardly surprising that Jewish circles described the NDO as overtly anti-semitic⁽⁶⁰⁾. Following the KB's example in late 1928, the NDO published its own programme: the re-establishment of an imperial dictatorship under the Hohenzollerns, the purification of the German race ("Alles ... Undeutsche ... rücksichtslos zu beseitigen"), conscription, youth training (for all children over 10), recapture of the colonies, etc⁽⁶¹⁾. All this, it should be emphasised, in 1928, when the NSDAP had only 12 seats in the Reichstag.

The NDO was, however, by no means always the officer association closest to the Nazis. This position belonged initially to the "Deutsch-Völkische Offizierbund" - one of the important constituents of Ludendorff's "Tannenbergbund". General Ächter, leader of the DVOB and formerly head of of the Bund Oberland, had taken a prominent part in the Hitler-Ludendorff Putsch of 1923. Ächter was present in the Bürgerbräukeller in full uniform and, it was suggested in a letter (January 1924) from the Bavarian Army Command to the Reichswehr Ministry, was subsequently mistaken for Lossow

(56) R 43 1 770, 71-73 (K).

(57) AA 26, 8-7-25: AA 31, 19-8-25.

(58) D-O-B1 12, 23-3-27.

(59) BPD p.447//D-O-B1 12, 23-3-27//Deutsche Zeitung 14-3-27.

(60) Centralverein Zeitung,, 27-12-23, 10-12-26.

(61) "Gedenkschrift des NdO zum 10 jährigen Bestehen", (DZA 1, "Stahlhelm" 1903.

(the Wehrkreis GOC) or Dänner (Munich Commandant): hence the participation of students from the Infantry and Pioneer schools. Whatever the truth of this may be, the action of the DVOB in November 1923, together with Ludendorff's enmity to the Bavarian Crown Prince, led to very strained relations not only with the local Reichswehr, but also with the three officer associations who had condemned the Putsch: DOB, NDO and the Verband der Bayerischen Offizier-Regimentsvereinigungen⁽⁶²⁾. Propaganda-wise the DVOB was, therefore, the most radical of the officer associations, being the only one actually to advocate and attempt illegal methods of changing the status quo. After the final breach between Hitler and Ludendorff in 1925, the DVOB was gradually succeeded by the NDO as the officer group closest to the NSDAP.

In general, the propaganda activities of the officer associations became more explicitly political and anti-republican between 1923 and 1928, which was due especially to the benevolent attitude of the old Field-Marshal/President. While the KB endeavoured to maintain its neutrality, it equalled the DOB in the general nationalist, militarist field and this, in the long run, was probably more important: in the words of the pacifist Prof. Förster: "Military propaganda with all the organisation and training connected with it must have, and has already had, the most fatal influence on the general attitude of the German people towards the program of your Prime Minister as to the reconciliation of the French and the Germans on the basis of a European arrangement"⁽⁶³⁾.

2. ATTITUDE TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

During the early years of the republic, the KB had adopted and maintained an uneasy neutrality towards socialism. Although many local KVe still

(62) WK VII 4050 (F).

(63) FO 371, 9825 C8280/2977/18 letter dated 1924. (PRO).

discriminated against socialists, many accepted them and in some they even formed a majority. Nevertheless, the old enmity was never far from the surface on either side. Socialist "Frontkämpferbünde" were already coming into existence outside the KB. The anti-republican activities of the Nazis and other extremist groups on the Right, and the increasing importance of the Stahlhelm, tended to accelerate this process, particularly in view of the contacts between these associations and the KB. These new socialist Vereine also included moderate middle-class elements and this political range was reflected in the initial foundation of the "Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold" in Magdeburg (February 1924), where DDP and Zentrum worked side-by-side with the Social Democrats. With the official blessing of Ebert and Severing the outlook for this association was bright and within a year its membership passed the 3 million mark, thus becoming the biggest association of its kind in Weimar Germany, although, of course, many of its members were not ex-servicemen. Financed by the SPD, trades-unions, Jewish and international pacifist organisations, it rapidly assumed the shape of a political Kampfbund, similar to the SA, Stahlhelm and Rote-Frontkämpferbund. This, and the co-operation with the French occupation authorities soon led to the withdrawal of some "bürgerlich" elements. Thus the Centrist Wilhelm Marx resigned in July 1927. The policy of the Weimar government in encouraging the conflict between rival political Kampfbünde cannot be too strongly deprecated. The new republican organisation made additional difficulties for the KB, particularly with regard to its policy towards Social Democracy⁽¹⁾.

Already condemned by the still influential "Deutsches Offizierblatt" as "vaterlandsfeindlich" (August 1924)⁽²⁾, the Reichsbanner was the subject of

-
- (1) Rohe op.cit., pp. 30, 37-8, 43-44, 51, 68-70, 73-75.
Nachlass Marx 265, Hörsing to Marx 22-5-25; Marx July 1927; Gen. Cramon to Marx 1-12-24 (KH).
- (2) AA 24-9-24.

many enquiries to the KB Centrale during the summer of 1924. The September conference discussed the issue and produced a carefully worded statement: the ostensible aim of the Reichsbanner was not condemned, but in view of the obvious party-political bias and its antipathy towards the KB's emphasis on the cultivation of military tradition: "...ist die Zugerhörigkeit unserer Mitglieder zum Reichsbanner S-R-G mit unseren Grundsätzen nicht vereinbar"⁽³⁾. Many KVe drew the obvious inference from this and immediately wrote to their Reichsbanner members threatening them with expulsion⁽⁴⁾. In many cases men gave up their membership of the socialist organisation, rather than lose the advantages of the KB welfare schemes. For this reason the Reichsbanner general meeting, as late as 1926, refused a similar declaration of mutual exclusion⁽⁵⁾. On the other hand, where socialists or members of the Reichsbanner predominated, whole KVe occasionally "defected" from the KB⁽⁶⁾.

Although the Reichsbanner was thus initially condemned as "political" and not as "socialist", 1925 saw a definite hardening of the official KB attitude against socialism. In April the "Kriegerzeitung" carried a long article, "Schwarzrotgold und Schwarzweissrot" by Senatspräs. a.D. Schmölder (Kassel), in which the history of the controversy was carefully examined: "Schwarzrotgold" is honoured, as the banner under which German patriots dreamed between 1815 and 1867; "Schwarzweissrot" is preferred as that under which they achieved and defended national unity between 1867 and 1919. The Allies are blamed primarily for subsequent conflicts, inasmuch that they had labelled the one as the badge of "pacifism" and the other as that of "militarism" and "imperialism." The article nevertheless concluded with a scathing attack on the Social Democrats, who are described as unpatriotic, pacifist

(3) AA 16-11-24.

(4) e.g. Tilsit: NH 1906, 4: "Vorwärts" 7.10.24.

Aschaffenburg: NH 906, 5: "Münchener Zeitung" 13-1-25 (K).

(5) Rohe op.cit. p.127.

(6) See p. 162. //Rohe p.72: Gefrees ("Reichsbanner" 15-4-26).

and subscribing to "war-guilt"⁽⁷⁾. Certainly, socialists attacked the old colours from the outset, and adopted the new ones in an effort partly to display the good intentions of the new Germany in the international field. Their failure to achieve a real "revolution" in the wider social and political sense, made the flag controversy inevitable, and in the long run, was to make the position of moderate nationalists impossible.

The Reichsbanner itself claimed often enough that they were not hostile to the KB, but only to the Stahlhelm⁽⁸⁾. This may have been so initially, but there is plenty of evidence to indicate the existence of political hostility on both sides, at all levels. On 25th July, Dr. Haas, the DDP Reichstag deputy, condemned KB policy as "verderblich und verächtlich" and followed this up with an attack in the "Berliner Tageblatt", whose Chief Editor Theodor Wolff was one of the DDP members of the RB Reichsausschuss⁽⁹⁾, (16th August). As a reply to this, the KB devoted an entire issue of the "Parolebuch" (the 4 side official supplement to the "Kriegerzeitung") to the subject "Reichskriegerbund und Reichsbanner"⁽¹⁰⁾. The bulk of the evidence adduced dwelt on the anti-militarist, pacifist tendencies of the Reichsbanner; also their attacks on the Kaiser, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, their SPD/DDP political sympathies and acts of violence against "patriotic" associations. The underlying vein of hostility towards Social Democracy was unmistakable. And yet, at the SPD party conference in Heidelberg in September 1925, the old proposal to ban party members from simultaneous membership of KVe, was once more rejected. At the same time, the KB conference re-affirmed the decision of 1924. Apart from Social Democratic fears that they would be the losers if the choice was enforced, it is likely that they hoped the continued presence of their sympathisers in the KB ranks would continue to force the Bund to adhere to what was

(7) KZ 26-4-25.

(8) Rohe p.127-8.

(9) *ibid.* p.70.

(10) KZ 30-8-25.

left of its "neutrality"⁽¹¹⁾. The Kriegertag in Leipzig provoked a good deal of criticism in socialist papers and the "Kriegerzeitung" continued periodically to print material critical of the revolution, the Reichsbanner and socialism⁽¹²⁾.

The KB stand against the Reichsbanner seems to have met with some success. At the beginning of 1926 it was alleged even in socialist papers that it was in some areas (Saxony, especially) losing members to the KVe. At the same time, Heeringen appears to have been in touch with Reichstag-deputy Schwarzer and it is possible he was contemplating the return to the pre-1915 state of affairs, when Social Democrats were excluded from the KVe. Schwarzer wrote in reply, that although Social Democrats were fundamentally enemies of the KVe "praktisch wurden die "stillen" SOZI immer schon geduldet ..." and had never been bothered (behelligt) in Bavaria and other South German states. Heeringen's death at the end of 1926 and the election of von Horn does not seem to have ended consideration of once more excluding Social Democrats. Prior to a Vorstand meeting in summer 1927, the influential Bavarian Kriegerbund wrote to Berlin: "Das Verhalten der Sozial-Demokraten in der Nachkriegszeit hat jedoch wiederholt die Frage aufwerfen lassen, ob die Duldung sozialdemokratischer Mitglieder in unseren Vereinen angezeigt erscheint. Tatsache ist jedenfalls, dass dort, wo Überzeugte Sozialdemokraten in unseren Vereinen sind, bes. wenn sie die Führung an sich gerissen haben, nicht der Geist herrscht, den wir wünschen. Andererseits, sind viele Mitglieder, bes. aus dem Arbeiterstand, meist nur aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen Mitglieder und Angehörige sozialdemokratischer Organisationen". This matter was recommended for discussion, as the KB was at the time under attack from "patriotic" circles⁽¹³⁾.

Clearly, important sectors within the KB felt the need for greater

(11) NH 915, Württmbg KB to KB, 17-9-25//KZ 20.9.25.

(12) KZ 8-11-25: "Nachwort zum Reichskriegertag": "Was uns die Revolution brachte".

(13) NH 915, 19 et seq.//NH 913, 170. Bay KB 22-5-27.

definition, both of the Bund's rôle and of its membership. Had the steps against socialists been taken, this would have been valuable progress towards adapting the KB to the political situation in a "party" sense (like the Stahlhelm and Reichsbanner) and perhaps, ultimately, of linking it with the fortunes of one political party, or, better still, a new grouping of parties. Nothing alas materialised. Probably the statutory "neutrality" and the advantages of this in the field of relations with the army, etc, were considered insuperable.

While the KB thus stopped short of expelling its socialist members, the state of affairs that developed in the years following the 1924 decision to ban membership of the Reichsbanner was now virtually one of undeclared war. The "Leitsätze" which the KB adopted at the end of 1928, were vigorously attacked by "Vorwärts", the socialist daily, who saw them as an avowal of the aims of the "Schwarz-weiss-rot" opposition, and recommended that the Reichswehrminister (General Groener) should recognise this lapse from "Überparteilichkeit" and sever the army's connection with the KVe⁽¹⁴⁾. That the Leitsätze are capable of this, among other interpretations, is suggested by the inclusion of a carefully worded message by General von Horn in a whole series of anti-republican articles printed in the 9th November 1928 edition of the "Niederdeutsche Zeitung" - designed to condemn the revolution. Other contributors included Hugenberg, Class, von der Goltz, Westarp and Seldte⁽¹⁵⁾.

Certainly all connections between KVe and the Reichsbanner were by no means severed. In 1927 a "Heldengedenkfeier" instituted by the Berlin Hauptkriegerverband was attended by ministers, ambassadors, Reichstag-president Löbe, Reichsbanner leaders, etc⁽¹⁶⁾. Such events, however, were

(14) NH 906, 42 "Vorwärts" 22-9-28; 53, "Reichsbanner" 30-9-28.

56 "Sächsisches Volksblatt" 9-10-28 (K).

(15) *ibid.* 57, letter from "Niederdeutsche Zeitung" 23-10-28.

(16) Nachlass Stresemann 7143, H 150280, "Welt am Montag" 21-11-27. (FOL).

uncommon. Hostility between KVe and Reichsbanner at the local level, brought the KB into conflict with the Roman Catholic Church.⁽¹⁷⁾ This, and the implacable hostility of all "patriotic" circles to "pacifism", led the KB in the years between 1923 and 1929 considerably to harden its attitude to Social Democracy and redefine its "Überparteilichkeit" in a nationalist, militarist sense.

The officer associations had from the outset taken a stronger line towards the revolution and the republican parties. Predictably, the attitude of the NDO was one of outright enmity. As early as October 1924, the NDO leaders branded all Reichsbanner members as "the traitors of 1918", and the following month forbade any member of the NDO to attend any sort of ceremony - even a religious one - where Reichsbanner members were officially present: "Das Reichsbanner ist ein international-sozialistischer Verband, mit der entmannenden Parole: Nie wieder Krieg! und hat als Führer und Förderer Männer wie Ebert, Severing, Deimling, Hörsing an der Spitze .."⁽¹⁸⁾ The attitude of the DOB was only slightly less extreme. Already in the middle of 1924, together with a number of other organisations, a statement was issued attacking the Reichsbanner leader General von Deimling, because of his attitude to the old colours⁽¹⁹⁾. DOB members expressing sympathy with the Reichsbanner (and there were not very many) were attacked and even expelled from their local branches. In 1925, the DOB adopted new "Richtlinien" including: "Er bekämpft den Geist des 9. November, er bekämpft den Geist, der in den Farben "Schwarz-Rot-Gold" sein küsseres Symbol gefunden hat"⁽²⁰⁾. This surely was far more than refutation of the Reichsbanner. In the course of 1925 the DOB made much of socialist attacks on the officer corps in the Reichstag, over the "Uniformverbot"⁽²¹⁾,

(17) See p. 161 et seq.

(18) NH 1906, 3 "Münchener Post" 10-10-24: refs. NDO Circular (K). AA 39, 16-11-24.

(19) D-O-B1 28, 23-8-24.

(20) AA 22, 10-6-25 "DOB und Demokratie".

(21) See p. 176.

and retaliated by condemning socialist leaders such as General Freiherr von Schönaich⁽²²⁾. In the ensuing months the Marine Offizier-Verein waged its own campaign against such men as Kapitän-Lt. a.D. Kraschutzky, an itinerant preacher of the pacifist "Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft" and later the political and economic editor of "Das Andere Deutschland". Similarly with Admiral Truppel. The MOV only narrowly managed to keep its "political neutrality" officially recognised - and thus retain its links with the Weimar Navy⁽²³⁾. Particular odium was reserved for the "hochverräterischen Pazifist Föhrster" - Prof. Wilhelm Föhrster, the editor of "Menschheit", who certainly maintained close links with the British authorities⁽²⁴⁾. Another strand in the DOB's anti-socialist policy was the attention given to the "stab-in-the-back" myth - as in the long article based on Herzfeld's "Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und die Auflösung der nationalen Einheitsfront im Weltkrieg", which pilloried the Majority Socialists as well as the Independents⁽²⁵⁾. Similarly, the publicity given to ill-considered Reichsbanner attacks on ex-officers, sometimes with joint protests against these in company with the more moderate veteran groups - all tended to create and nurture hostility to the republican parties⁽²⁶⁾. These trends were continued throughout 1928, and in May, the front-page declaration on the coming election ... "Bekämpfung internationalen pazifistischen und unvölkischen Geistes" ... was a clear prescription in the party political sense⁽²⁷⁾.

In general, the attitudes of all the ex-servicemen's organisations towards Social Democracy seem to have hardened perceptibly in the middle years of the Weimar Republic, largely as a response to the militant pacifism of the Reichsbanner. Pacifism achieved a limited increased

(22) "DOB" 1925, p.145.

(23) IIM 65-7//Nachlass Schleicher 26, 8. (F).

(24) See p.149.//D-O-B1 10-8-27 "Hochverrat".

(25) "DOB" 35, 1927, p.1467.

(26) "DOB" 38, 21-12-27, p.1517.

(27) "DOB" 15-5-28; 25-3-28; 5-12-28 ("Gedenk dass Du ein Deutscher Biat").

credence among the lower classes immediately after the war, but the aggressive militarism inculcated in the old Imperial officer corps was carried over into the Reichswehr and from the outset many serving officers gave voice to anti-pacifist, revanchist sentiments: "Germany must die if the pacifist and democratic ideology becomes stronger! Versailles was a wrong built on lies: this must be expunged one day by force ..." wrote Lt. Col. (later General) Joachim von Stülpnagel in 1924⁽²⁸⁾. This attitude was exactly that canvassed in civilian Germany by the officer associations, with increasing boldness in the years 1923 to 1929. The efforts of the officer-controlled propaganda of the KB tended in the same direction, although under General von Horn the attempt was to be made to follow a more moderate nationalist line and to co-operate with the government. But by 1930, with the electoral successes of the Nazis, the damage had been done.

3. THE LOCAL INFLUENCE OF VETERAN ASSOCIATIONS

It is highly doubtful whether German popular sentiment could ever have regained a healthy complexion after 1923, even if a wise and moderate internal policy had been consistently applied by successive republican governments. For, besides inflaming opinion, in a palpably nationalist, militarist sense, the French occupation of the Ruhr brought in its train a host of lamentable consequences: the final collapse of the Mark wiped out the savings of the industrious middle-classes who had hitherto not actively opposed the republic. Similarly, anyone who had sold property in the months preceding the stabilisation of the currency was left penniless. The Bavarian crisis and the separatist movements in the

(28) Nachlass Schleicher 26, Memo 20-2-24 (cit. Carsten) (F).

Rhineland immeasurably damaged the authority of the central government, while the intervention of the Reichswehr in Saxony and Thuringia only served to deepen the tensions between Left and Right. The republican army became increasingly linked in the public mind with the forces of reaction - with some justification in view of the secret contacts with the Wehrverbände. Particularly in urban industrial areas social-political hatreds were almost irretrievably deepened. In response to the boost given to the activities and numbers of the "patriotic" societies⁽¹⁾, there came into being such left-wing associations as the Communist "Rote Frontkämpferbund" and the socialist "Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold". Instead of banning all political Kampfverbände, and indeed any association likely to disturb the peace of the localities, the Weimar government chose the dangerous path of playing one side against the other. So, while the years 1923 to 1929 saw a return to economic health, and indeed, a general enhancement of Germany's image abroad, due largely to the policies of Stresemann, internally, the country remained in a state of unrest, to which the propaganda activities of the veteran associations and the behaviour of their local branches contributed considerably.

In the years after 1923 the situation in the localities became increasingly difficult as a result of the attitudes adopted by the clergy, albeit with the best of intentions. Relations between the religiously and politically neutral KV and the Evangelical and Catholic Churches had hitherto been completely cordial. The 1902 Erlass of the Evangelical Ober-Kirchenrat had ordered relations with the former: KV contingents accompanying a funeral of an ex-comrade were subject to the direction of the officiating clergy in such matters as their position inside the church, where the colours were to be left during the service

(1) FO 371, 9826 C11429/2977: "Secret Associations" 16-7-24 (PRO).

(at the altar or at the door i.e.), and how the music of the KV band or choir was to be co-ordinated with that of the service⁽²⁾. The Catholic Church issued a more detailed instruction in 1899 (Erlass of the Cardinal Prince-Bishop of Breslau) which was given statutory weight for all Prussian dioceses by the Ministry of Interior: the order of the procession was regulated, though local custom was recognised; priest and KV chairman were to agree on the co-ordination of music; no special place inside the church could be claimed by the KV members for themselves or their colours; the latter, if unconsecrated, could not be carried ceremonially inside the church and must be left just inside the door: at the grave, the military "Ehrensalven" etc, could only follow the religious ceremony⁽³⁾. Common sense usually ensured satisfactory collaboration, although the questions of "local custom" and "unconsecrated colours" were a field for possible conflict - as later events were to prove. However, when trouble came, it was more the symptom of a changed relationship than the regulation itself being a casus belli.

The general "Germanic Christian" attitude of the long-established KB was shared by the DOB who shaped their religious policy in the light of Hindenburg's remarks on the subject: old officers were requested by the 1925 DOB conference: ... "Dem Frieden im Volke zu dienen, die Einheit deutschen Blutes sowie die christliche Gemeinsamkeit zu fördern und die sozialen Gegensätze wo immer sie können, überbrücken zu helfen"⁽⁴⁾. In this there is just an echo of the anti-semitic, Völkisch attitudes prevalent in most other ex-servicemen's associations from the NDO and ROB to the Wehrverbände of Ludendorff ("Tannenbergbund") and the Nazis⁽⁵⁾. Other than in a general ethical sense the words quoted are without meaning.

(2) Westphal p.96: "Erlass" 6-1-1902.

(3) *ibid.* "Erlass" 4-11-99.

(4) AA 1-7-25, report of DOB conference June 1925.

(5) Centralverein Zeitung 10-12-26.

One of the biggest "soziale Gegensätze" remained that of officer and other-rank which the DOB had been at considerable pains to perpetuate. In the KB on the other hand there is every reason to suppose that Christianity in both the religious and the ethical sense played an important rôle, especially in smaller communities where it tended to survive throughout the Nazi period⁽⁶⁾. Where conflict between clergy and KV in the years 1923 to 1929 occurred, it was mainly the result of the Churches' failure to distinguish between the KVe and other right-wing associations. As will be seen, this failure was becoming increasingly understandable. Both from the point of view of "simultaneous membership" and from that of the public activities of the KVe themselves, the distinctions could at times be extremely blurred. An examination of certain "representative" incidents from these years will indicate why.

A KV funeral at Leitzkau, (Kreis Jerichow) in May 1923, was accompanied by the usual parade with the old colour flying. This was inscribed - as were the majority - with the words, "With God For King and Fatherland". A local official noticed this and had proceedings instituted against the KV chairman for displaying "ein aufreizendes Abzeichen" in the sense of the June/July 1922 emergency regulations. The chairman's conviction in November to 3 months' prison and 100 marks fine was quashed on appeal - a decision which seemed to countenance the public display of monarchist banners!⁽⁷⁾ In 1924 several joint functions were staged by KB, Stahlhelm, Wehrwolf, etc, sometimes in conjunction with the Nazis⁽⁸⁾, and frequently also in conjunction with the Reichswehr⁽⁹⁾. Sometimes political parties endeavoured to make capital out of such events⁽¹⁰⁾. Either way, these functions and the open expression in non-occupied territories of "a warlike

(6) See p. 218.

(7) KZ 7-6-25 "Die Kriegervereinsfahne ...".

(8) e.g. Halle, May 1924: FO 371, 9825 C7885 (PRO).

(9) e.g. Halle; Königsberg, March 1924 FO 371, 9839 C7070/7070 (PRO).

(10) Leipzig Kriegertag (p.141.)//Berlin: FO 371, 9865 C12392 (PRO).

spirit" was viewed by the Allies with deep misgivings. "Let us be united and we shall again appear as Victors in the terrible strife of Nations" was allegedly stated at a Kriegertag in August (Gummersbach)⁽¹¹⁾. If this was indeed so, it lends some colour to the memorandum by Lord Kilmarnock⁽¹²⁾ that, "The Rhine Army consider - that the Communist societies are at present no danger to the authority of the German government, but that the nationalist societies on the other hand are an incentive to Civil War and a direct menace to the Republic".

In 1924 the Roman Catholic bishops' meeting at Fulda (August) discussed the activities of such Wehrverbände as the Stahlhelm and formulated highly critical resolutions ("Stahlhelm" had adopted a Völkisch type "Aryan Clause" in March in line with the more overtly anti-semitic associations⁽¹³⁾). The effect of the Fulda meeting soon made itself felt in the parishes. At Paderborn, the priest warned against participation in the Jungdeutsche Orden, Stahlhelm and the KVe, while advocating the socialist "Reichsbanner"⁽¹⁴⁾. The Kurhessen Kriegerbund complained to Berlin about this and other incidents, such as the sermons of a Jesuit, Pieper, on the theme "Völkischer oder biblischer Gott", and the warnings by a Catholic headmaster against Jungdo, the Vaterländische Verbände, and, by implication, the KVe⁽¹⁵⁾. The KB had already taken up a hostile attitude towards the Reichsbanner⁽¹⁶⁾ and in August 1925 came out openly on the side of the "patriotic" societies, devoting a whole edition of the Parolebuch to a list of Reichsbanner misdemeanours and pacifist press activities⁽¹⁷⁾. Probably one of the main factors in the timing of this announcement was the serious incident

(11) FO 371, 9812 C13532 (PRO).

(12) *ibid.* 9826 C14770/2977, 18-9-24 (PRO).

(13) Berghahn *op.cit* p.101.

(14) NH 918, 119, correspondence with KKV Paderborn (1925). (K).

(15) *ibid.* 120-21.

(16) See p. 151.

(17) KZ/PB 30-8-25.

in Aplerbeck (Ruhr) in May, which displays all the familiar signs: an industrial area where three events were planned to take place more or less in the same place at the same time: one held by the local KVe, one by the Reichsbanner and one by the Rote Frontkämpferbund. Despite the personal assurances of local police chief Dimmick (who was a Reichsbanner committee member) the KVe were attacked, not by the Communists but by the socialist association, and although many police and Landjäger were present no preventative steps appear to have been taken⁽¹⁸⁾. Correspondence between KB and localities was dragged out over several months via Kreis and provincial levels - in the end little seems to have been achieved.

Also in August, the official section of the "Kriegerzeitung", the "Parolebuch", discussed KV banners, their colours and inscriptions. In line with the legal decision in the Leitzkau case, the use of the black-white-red colours with the imperial dedication was advocated on historical grounds. Similarly, new banners could well be exact replicas of the old ones. Only where new KVe were designing a colour for the first time was the old inscription (not the colours) to be replaced!⁽¹⁹⁾ In this light it is hardly altogether surprising that the RC Church listed the KB along with the other associations "guilty of utterances against the State, its flag, its representatives, the Church and the bishops"⁽²⁰⁾. The inevitable result of all this was the tendency for local RC clergy to turn more towards the Reichsbanner and away from the KB. In some places this even culminated in a mass exodus of KV members from their Verein, setting up a new Reichsbanner branch at the instigation of the local priest⁽²¹⁾. Events of this nature and especially the rigorous policy of separation pursued by the Catholic Church in the question of youth associations

(18) NH 919, Hollinde to KB 3-7-25 etc.

(19) KZ/PB 16-8-25.

(20) NH 918, Jungdeutschlandbund to Karwiese, 19-8-25: Kaplan Czeloth's "Klarheit und Wahrheit" (K).

(21) NH 918, Münchow (Grenzmark) to Karwiese 3-9-25 (K).

certainly worried the KB leaders. In September 1925 contacts were taken up with the Centrist Landtag member von Papen, in the hope of sorting matters out⁽²²⁾, but in fact, with all its official declarations against "international-pacifist" organisations⁽²³⁾, the KB had "cooked its goose" as far as the Catholic Church was concerned.

Certainly the KB had been at fault in openly siding with organisations like Wehrwolf who could publish such matter as, "HATE, HATE, HATE we must learn to HATE, we must burn with HATE!! To HELL with the love-your-enemy rubbish!"⁽²⁴⁾ On the other hand, such sentiments in no way corresponded to the attitudes either of the KB itself, or of the average KV member. It would have been more to the credit of the Church, had it approached the leaders of the big ex-servicemen's organisations in an attempt at conciliation, rather than condemning them out-of-hand and forcing such "moderates" into more extreme positions. But the RC campaign went on⁽²⁵⁾: Catholic ex-servicemen even began to form associations outside both the KB - and the Reichsbanner⁽²⁶⁾. In general, the year that saw Hindenburg's election, also produced new difficulties with regard to the orientation of the KB itself - difficulties which resulted largely from conflicts at the local level - although the increasing participation of such associations as Stahlhelm in political matters was also an important factor.

1926 saw a marked increase in radical violence in the localities - especially from the side of the Communists. A KV member was murdered (December 1925⁽²⁷⁾), and imperial monuments desecrated (March 1926⁽²⁸⁾). In April a very serious incident in Karlshorst on the outskirts of Berlin resulted from a clash between coincident events of the local Kreis Kriegerverband and the Communist "Frontkämpferbund". Thirty

(22) NH 918, letter to Papen (7-9-25) (K).
(23) KZ/PB 16-8-25: DKWG instructions of 1-12-24.
(24) NH 918, Duisberg KV to PLKV 30-11-25; enclosure: "Wehrwolf" 1-10-25 (K).
(25) *ibid.*
(26) NH 921, 45 (e.g.) Berlin 1925 (October) (K).
(27) NH 919, 50, "Montag" 28-12-25 (Schmeden) (K).
(28) NH 917, 75, "Der Tag" 28-3-26 (Wittstock) (K).

Jungdo members were attacked by a Communist mob outside the station; order was only restored (by an inadequate police contingent) after three people had been bayoneted and the officer in charge had given the orders "Kneel - Aim - Prepare to Fire!"⁽²⁹⁾ A further incident in May at Friedenau prompted the KB to write in protest to the Prussian Minister for Peoples Welfare: "Dem Minister dürfte bekannt sein, dass kaum ein Sonntag vergeht, an dem nicht harmlose Jugendvereinigungen, die dem staatlich gebildeten Jugendpflege-ausschüssen zum grossen Teil angehören, überfallen und verprügelt werden"⁽³⁰⁾. The Prussian Minister of the Interior seems to have ensured that some of the accused at any rate were brought to justice⁽³¹⁾. Similarly in Frankfurt am Main, Communist rowdies (some seventeen out of a crowd of over 300) who attacked a Kyffhäuser youth group with knives and sticks were brought to justice⁽³²⁾. Probably the most serious attack on KVe took place in Neunkirchen (Saar) in July. A long-planned festival of some 55 KVe from all over the Saar was to take place on the 18th. Despite the strenuous opposition of the local Burgomaster and Landrat, the Allied Control Commission authorised at the last minute a joint counter-demonstration by Communists, trades unions and a few Reichsbanner members, ostensibly "against war". Predictably, the result was a full-scale riot in which some 800-1000 Communists attacked the KVe - inflicting serious injuries on some 20 participants; one old man subsequently died. Despite the attempts by the Control Commission to put all the blame on the KVe, the fault clearly was with the former, and there may well be some truth in the charge that French agents had been at work. Of course, such a large demonstration as a Kreis Kriegerverband festival was an obvious provocation in an industrial area, but power to stop it lay in the

(29) NH 919, "Berliner Morgenpost" 27-4-26 (Front page) (K).

(30) *ibid.* Friedenau KV letter 5-5-26; PLKV to Prussian Minister 3-6-26.

(31) *ibid.* Prussian Minister of Interior (6-9-26).

(32) *ibid.* PLKV to KKV Frankfurt 14-7-26 et. seq.

hands of both Commission and local authorities. To override the latter and authorise such a counter-demonstration at the last moment was grossly irresponsible. The long trial of some 35 defendants which took place in March of the following year heard some 110 witnesses and made nonsense of the official "Commission" statement after the riot⁽³³⁾. Although official German sympathy, as here, was often on the side of the KVe, and more than once their "restraint" when attacked was praised⁽³⁴⁾, this was not always so. In Frankfurt a Kyffhäuser youth leader was sentenced to one month's imprisonment and 3 year's probation for what looks like a retaliatory sortie in the evening following a well-organised attack by Communists earlier in the day⁽³⁵⁾. Besides actual clashes between KVe and Communists in public, there also occurred victimisation of workers who were KV members. One Karnatschke (Berlin-Johannisthal) was forced to quit two jobs within a week because his son was a member of the Bismarckbund and he himself in the local Landwehrverein⁽³⁶⁾.

Relations with the Catholic Church do not seem to have materially improved during 1926. The attitude taken by both the KB and the local bishop, when difficulties arose between a left-wing Cologne priest and the local Kyffhäuser Jugendgruppe, was that these could only be settled by discussions on the spot, between priest and KV chairman⁽³⁷⁾. On the other hand the RC Church opposed any establishment of separate Catholic KVe and at least one purely RC Verein ("St. Mauritius") had entered the Prussian Landesverband in 1925; so far this had presented no problems⁽³⁸⁾. At this time the first difficulties were experienced with the Evangelical clergy. In Reuss a large KV remembrance parade was told (quite unjustifiably) to leave their colours at the vicarage - and not to take them into

(33) *ibid.* "Saarbrücker Zeitung" 19-7-26; *ibid.* 27-4-27.
 (34) *ibid.* "Hamburger Nachrichten" 14-8-26.
 (35) *ibid.* KKV Frankfurt/M to PLKV 8-9-26.
 (36) *ibid.* Berlin-Johannisthal KV to "KH", 3-10-26.
 (37) NH 918, Köln KKv to PLKV 12-9-26 et seq. (K).
 (38) NH 921, Saxon LV to KB, 20-5-26; reply 7-7-26 (K).

the church⁽³⁹⁾.

By 1926-7 Germany was feeling the benefits of the economic recovery and such acts - relieving international tension - as the withdrawal of the International Allied Military Control Commission. Incidents between KVe and Communists continued in the industrial regions of Berlin and Silesia⁽⁴⁰⁾; KV demonstrations continued to attract the notice of the Allies⁽⁴¹⁾; acts of hostility to Evangelical clergy occasionally found attention in the national press⁽⁴²⁾. It was at this difficult point in the development of the KB that the ailing von Heeringen finally died and was replaced by a much younger recently retired Reichswehr general - von Horn. Here was a need for leadership in the fullest sense of the word, particularly in the task of defining the position of the biggest genuine veterans' association vis à vis the Right and the moderates. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Horn fully grasped the need at this stage.

Incidents with Communists continued through 1928. In Seelow (January) some 50-60 men armed with stakes attacked a KV house. Although one local paper evidently exaggerated events, there seems to be some substance to the suggestion that the local Landrat had taken insufficient measures to protect the KV⁽⁴³⁾. Other events of this type took place, and in Schnelwen, Hamburg, a trade union forced a driver to resign from his KV⁽⁴⁴⁾. Relations with both churches continued to present problems. Despite strenuous efforts by the leaders of the Silesian branch the local Catholic authorities (General Vicariat of the Breslau Prince-Bishop) refused to modify their attitude to the Kyffhäuser Jugend associations. While there is some colour to the Church's attitude that "religious neutrality" was hardly appropriate for RC children when more suitable alternatives existed, one must nevertheless agree

(39) NH 918, Reuss LV to KB 12-6-26 (K).

(40) NH 919, PLKV to Hauptkriegerverband Berlin 5-4-27; PLKV to Silesian Prov. KV 27-8-27 (K).

(41) FO 371, 12151 C7144/4105 Solbach am Lahr (PRO).

(42) NH 918, "Berliner Tageblatt" 22-11-27: "Weil die Fahne nicht geweiht war!"(K)

(43) NH 919, PLKV to RB Frankfurt/O 31-1-28 (K).

(44) NH 919, Pinneberg KKV to PLKV 24-7-28 (K).

with the local KV leaders who regretted the lack of co-operation "especially in these days of disunity"⁽⁴⁵⁾. The Church was firmly of the opinion that the KVe were responsible for maintaining "Kriegsgeist"⁽⁴⁶⁾. In the Evangelical press, articles hostile to KVe appeared at this time: one such naive, even ludicrous example, prompted the KB to take up the matter with the Evangelical Oberkirchenrat, and the local Konsistorium eventually expressed a measure of regret at the article⁽⁴⁷⁾.

In general, the provocation engendered by KV activity at the local level was allowed to continue unchecked through the middle years of the Weimar Republic. The mistakes of local authorities in their handling of the inevitable counter-demonstrations especially by Communists, and also Reichsbanner groups frequently led to serious disturbances. More important, the increasing difficulty of distinguishing KVe from the violent extremists of the Right, led to growing tension between KB and Church at every level: when Nazis staged political meetings on Sundays at war memorials - to take an extreme example - is there any wonder⁽⁴⁸⁾? From the religious and ethical standpoint, the KVe of the KB never belonged to the apostles of hate on the Right. Alas, the common ground of nationalism and militarism was effectively to prevent the desperately needed re-definition of the moral standpoint of the greatest of the veterans' associations.

4. RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT

The main feature of relations between the ex-servicemen's associations and the Weimar governments in the years 1923 to 1929 was the lack of a steady policy on the official side and the ambiguity of the political activities of the various veteran groups. The nationalist and militarist common ground

(45) NH 918, Silesian Prov., KV to PLKV 28-8-28 (K).

(46) NH 918, Munsterburg to Silesian Prov. 26-9-28.

(e.g. In Breslau "Katholisches Sonntagsblatt" 16-9-28).

(47) *ibid.* Bielefeld KV to PLKV 8-9-28.

(48) LA Gelhausen 6290, Landjäger letter 1-10-28 (Ma).

shared by the latter prevented the moderate organisations like the Kyffhäuserbund from clearly defining their positions vis à vis the undesirable aspects of the more radical ones. This, and the resulting suspicion of the Churches, made political co-operation with the government difficult. Where such co-operation did take place (Reichswehr, Foreign Office and the Economic Ministries) it made the tasks of the Interior Ministries in the field of "law and order" almost impossible to deal with. The failure of the Weimar governments to forge closer links with the KB during these middle years (Heeringen had shown himself quite amenable to such a step in 1923) was in general a reflection of existing political disunity - (especially in the moderate parties) - and in particular a result of the continued toleration of political "Kampfbünde": The "Rote Frontkämpferbund" (KPD), the "Reichsbanner" (mainly Social Democrat), the "Stahlhelm" (DVP/DNVP), and the SA (Nazi). This toleration did more than anything else to deepen party political rivalries. As the moderate parties did not have their own "Kampfbund" they ultimately found themselves at a considerable disadvantage, particularly as the influence of Stresemann and the DVP on the Stahlhelm began to decline after 1925⁽¹⁾. To start with, of course, the "Reichsbanner" was intended to embrace all moderate elements in Germany⁽²⁾, but the predominance of the socialist group led to the gradual withdrawal of other political parties. The "Jungdeutsche Orden" indeed amalgamated with the DDP in 1930⁽³⁾, but by then, the 20 Reichstag seats they could muster in the face of 107 Nazi and 77 Communist ones would suggest that "liberal democracy" was virtually a lost cause in Germany. The time for the consolidation of the moderate parties had been much earlier. In the middle 1920's, such a consolidation could have found

(1) Berghahn op.cit., p.117 etc.

(2) Rohe op.cit. p.70.

(3) Eyck op.cit. II p.274-9.

political support from, for example, the KB - particularly if it had been formed on the basis of a policy of constitutional monarchy. Even failing this, the outright ban of all veterans' organisations outside the "non-political" Kyffhäuserbund, and a restoration of this to its former "establishment" rôle could have done much to safeguard the existence of liberal democracy. But by 1930, the anti-"System" hatred of the political Right had made inroads even among the "ordinary" men who formed the bulk of the KB membership. The question, whether or not an attempt to dissolve the political Kampfblünde could have met with any success, (even supposing one of the coalition cabinets could have agreed on this step), must almost certainly be answered in the negative, once Hindenburg had become President; for his protection of the right-wing associations made steps against Nazis (and hence also Communists and Socialists) extremely difficult. Before Hindenburg's election the British Foreign Office certainly considered in connection with "Nationalist Societies": "Unfortunately their strength is such that no German government could dissolve or disarm them, even if it would"⁽⁴⁾. Another memorandum refers to the "hesitating attitude of the (German) government to the whole question"⁽⁵⁾. The Halle demonstration on 11th May 1924⁽⁶⁾ together with the activities of ex-servicemen's associations including KVe in the occupied Rhineland in June 1925⁽⁷⁾ led to Allied representations, and even to the suspicion that Stresemann was encouraging the militarist-nationalist-monarchist movements. Similarly in 1926 the activities of especially the Stahlhelm threatened to prevent the termination of military control⁽⁸⁾. The attempts by the German Foreign Office to harness the dynamic of nationalist propaganda date back to 1921⁽⁹⁾ and although

(4) FO 371, 9826 C11429/2977: "Secret Associations" 16-7-24 (PRO).

(5) *ibid.* C11467/2977: memo on "Nationalist Societies".

(6) See p. 140.

(7) FO 371, 10758 C8374/6306 (PRO).

(8) Berghahn *op.cit.* p.93.

(9) See p. 47.

Stresemann lived to regret his continuance of the policy, the real "whirlwind" was to be reaped by Brüning.

Voices of warning were often enough heard against the toleration of the Verbände. A 1925 memorandum in the Reichskanzlei lists the KB after the Stahlhelm, Wehrwolf, and Jungdo as "rechts eingestellt"⁽¹⁰⁾, but the KB continued to invite chancellors like Luther and Marx to their ceremonies⁽¹¹⁾. It was only in 1928 that the withdrawal of the Bavarian Kriegerbund from the "Vereinigung der Vaterländischen Verbände" began to indicate the attempts by Horn, albeit hesitatingly, to define the relations of the KB to the political Right⁽¹²⁾. Prior to this, the co-operation that existed between KB and the associations of the Right naturally tended to blur the (very real) differences that still existed. The Prussian Ministry of the Interior circular following the Halle demonstration in 1924⁽¹³⁾ observed with some justice: "It is clear to every neutral observer that for some weeks the organisations of the Right have been working on a co-operative plan to produce an overheated political atmosphere in the country The extreme Right have apparently not learnt their lesson from these events and they must realise that demonstrations of this kind produce an even stronger reaction from the extreme Left, and afford the latter, in their own eyes at all events, some justification for similar excesses"⁽¹⁴⁾. As a consequence, open air demonstrations in, for example, Berlin and Breslau, were banned for the immediate future. Generally, however, the distinctions laid down in the periodically circulated lists of the "Reichskommissar für die Überwachung der Öffentlichen Ordnung"⁽¹⁵⁾ and the careful definitions of "military" Verbände to exclude e.g. small-bore rifle

(10) R43 I 770, 43: Memo on Patriotic Associations (K).

(11) *ibid.* 152.//R 43 I 766, 84 e.g. (K).

(12) R 43 L 770 167, Munich representative to Reichskanzlei 28-11-28 (K).

(13) See p. 141.

(14) FO 371, 9825 C8129 quotes (PRO).

(15) Polizeidirektion Munich, 24ATUF 11/202: 4-11-25 (MSO).

shooting⁽¹⁶⁾, were observed, and the "privileged" position of the KVe was protected locally⁽¹⁷⁾.

Another question that tended to create suspicion of the KB in republican circles, and one that was soon to lead to friction with the police authorities, was that of the Reichsflagge (black-red-gold) and the old Imperial colours (black-white-red). The attitude of the KB to their "historic" colours has already been mentioned⁽¹⁸⁾. Although legally permitted, the display of the old colours constituted a standing provocation to all republican elements. Understandably, "Schwarz-Weiss-Rot" was equated to monarchism and what was understood to be the policy of the DNVP. This was undoubtedly the "Achilles Heel" of the KB "Überparteilichkeit". The question was often discussed in the KV press and the claim made that adherence to their traditional colours was not incompatible with political neutrality⁽¹⁹⁾. The doubtful nature of this contention was frequently emphasised when, on occasions such as the 1925 conference at Neu Ruppin, Heeringen combined a passionate declaration of loyalty to the "old" colours with a request to the assembly to stand in tribute to "unserem einstigen Allerhöchsten Kriegsherrn, Seiner Majestät dem Kaiser!"⁽²⁰⁾ At this time, of course, the KB was coming under attack not only from the Left, but from the Right, who claimed that it "schwankte zwischen Schwarz-Weiss-Rot und Schwarz-Rot-Gold"⁽²¹⁾. While the compatibility of "Schwarz-Weiss-Rot" with "Überparteilichkeit" may be doubted, the accusation that adherence to the former was calculated to threaten the very existence of the Republic could not in every case be sustained; there is a ring of sincerity in the KB

(16) R 58, 1028 (Fol.1): Prussian Innenministerium circulars 16-11-25, 20-7-26; Reichsinnenminister to Thuringian government 28-1-25 (K).

(17) See p. 164-5.

(18) See p. 162.

(19) NH 906, 9 "Kyffhäuser Korrespondenz" 1-1-25 (K).

(20) *ibid.* 21-24: account of 39th DKWG conference July 1925.

(21) *ibid.*

defence: "Ohne den Zusammenhang mit der Vergangenheit, in der das Reich geschaffen wurde, ist sein Fortbestand nicht möglich"⁽²²⁾.

1926 to 1927 saw a sharpening of an already bitter controversy: the Hindenburg/Luther order of 5th May 1926 ("an almost incomprehensible piece of political folly"⁽²³⁾) which enforced a wider use of the "Schwarz-Weiss-Rot" "merchant ensign", created a storm of protest which led to Luther's resignation a few days later. The following year, seeking to curb the growing use, private and otherwise, of the old colours in Reichswehr circles, Gessler ordered that these could only be displayed where also the Reichsflagge of Black-Red-Gold was flown. " .. in the present situation in Germany the use of the black, white and red colours; without the simultaneous showing of the national colours of black, red and gold is a political demonstration ..."⁽²⁴⁾ (15th August 1927). After a good deal of delay Horn decided to adopt the Reichswehr instruction for the KB. His directive was published in "Kyffhäuser" (20th November 1927), and was met with as much hostility from "Vaterländisch" circles as was the original instruction by Gessler. Horn was forced several times to defend his action and had more and more to take his stand on a genuine "Überparteilichkeit"⁽²⁵⁾. It is likely that the 14th September 1928 Prussian Abgeordnetentag on the "Kyffhäuser" accepted his policy with some misgivings - and only after a stirring speech in which the General issued his new "Leitsätze", and left no room for doubt that the Bund's colours remained "Schwarz-Weiss-Rot"⁽²⁶⁾. Reception of this speech was mixed. Although there is no reason to doubt Horn's personal sincerity in wishing to follow the Gessler order, it is likely he was becoming increasingly aware of the strong vein of intransigence in both the Praesidium and the organisation as a whole, where anything of a "patriotic" nature was concerned. Hence the imprecise penning of the Leitsätze and the omission of any attempt to take a

(22) *ibid.* 26, New Year's Notice 3-1-26 (KY/PB).

(23) Eyck II p.66.

(24) Carsten *op.cit.* p.262.

(25) "DOB" 34, 1927: Nachrichten (December)/NH 906 "Unsere Fahne" (draft, early 1928).

(26) NH 906, 1928 (K).

stand against the criminals of the extreme Right on moral grounds. The "Daily Telegraph" (25th September 1928) report of Horn's speech does not indicate a full appreciation of the issues at stake, but is probably fairly typical of public reaction in Germany as well - at least, outside nationalist circles: The "non-political" and "Schwarz-Weiss-Rot" policy -"shows that the Kyffhäuser League is not only reactionary, but also seditious and hypocritical. The Black-White-Red stand much more ambiguously for reaction and monarchy than any doctrinal programme. The impression is strengthened by the enunciation of the principle of the cultivation in grateful memory of the deeds of our heroes and great men of princely and non-princely blood For the rest the programme dwells repeatedly on the necessity of maintaining and stimulating the military spirit....." It was difficult to "run with the hares and hunt with the hounds" at this time. This was also the reaction of one Landrat (in Saxony) who in a circular referred to "the well-known programmatic declaration of the KB" and goes on: "Er erkennt also die verfassungsmässigen Reichsfarben nicht an, stellt sich somit auf einen staatsfeindlichen Standpunkt und ist demzufolge zu den rechtsgerichteten Wehrverbänden zu rechnen"⁽²⁷⁾. Whether the Landrat in question formed this opinion independently or was merely following the lead of the Reichsinnenminister, Severing, is not known. The latter's similar public remarks on the subject caused Horn's protest to the Reichswehrminister (13th October 1928). Groener, only a few days previously, had sprung to the defence of the KVe in the Reichstag: there was no objection to Reichswehr co-operation with them as they were mostly non-political⁽²⁸⁾. A similar attitude prevailed over the question of disarmament: the "Besatzungsleistungsgesetz" (5th April 1927) provided for compensation (mostly retrospective) for surrendered rifles: 18 marks for each of the first eight (the number required for the Ehrensalven), 5

(27) NH 906, Magdeburg RB to PLKV 19-11-28 (K).

(28) *ibid.* 56, "Sächsisches Volksblatt" 9-10-28.

marks for each additional weapon⁽²⁹⁾.

In summary, co-operation between KB and the Weimar government at this time was chiefly via the Reichswehrministerium (see below), and, of course, in the field of welfare. The attempt by the Foreign Office to exploit nationalist sentiment in the "war-guilt" question had proved to be a double-edged weapon. KB co-operation seems to have been with both the Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst and the Arbeitsausschuss deutscher Verbände - and even so displayed highly independent tendencies. The forces of law and order, at least at the Reich and Prussian Innenministerium were (correctly) sensible of the dangers inherent in even the "unpolitical" KVe, but were largely hamstrung by their colleagues. Official participation at every type of veterans' function, by everyone from Hindenburg to the Landräte, continued - with, of course, regional differences - throughout the period⁽³⁰⁾. Imperial traditions died hard. Thus, although the "privileged" position of the KB was officially preserved - if with some misgivings - there was nevertheless, at this time, no concerted effort by successive chancellors to deal constructively with the rôle of ex-servicemen's organisations and Wehrverbände generally. Groener was to make an attempt in this direction, but this was to be a classic example of "too little, too late".

Lacking the size, prestige and more moderate political outlook of the KB, the officer associations enjoyed only a very limited entrée to the rulers of Weimar Germany, although the election of Hindenburg in 1925 certainly provided an additional important channel. DOB maintained official relations with the government in the field of welfare. Both DOB and ROB often had official representatives at their main meetings⁽³¹⁾. All associations, including the radical NDO and DVOB, had some local contacts with the army⁽³²⁾, nevertheless, the sharply anti-republican attitude of

(29) KY/PB 24-4-32.

(30) Nachlass Stresemann 7143, H150280 (FOL).

(31) DOB: MA 104267, DOB to Ministerpräsident 15-5-25 etc (MGS).

ROB: AA 31, 19-8-25: refs. Königsberg conference.

(32) See p. 190.

the latter two effectively prevented official contacts, even in the military field. This is understandable, when for example an NDO meeting at Stuttgart (1927) included a two-hour harangue condemning revolution, constitution, parliamentary government and all post 1918 régimes, with special reference to Stresemann's foreign policy⁽³³⁾.

Republican circles in general were particularly suspicious of the ex-officers. Severing, the Prussian Minister of the Interior, was acutely aware of the dangers inherent in political demonstrations by ex-officers wearing uniform and it was largely due to his efforts that the "Uniform Verbot" was maintained from 30th August 1921, to 26th August 1925, despite the most strenuous opposition of the associations. The right of retired soldiers to wear their old uniforms had always been regulated, both by law and by custom. Officers retiring with the rank of major-general or above had this right automatically, while others had to apply for it, although approval appears to have been fairly general in the case of ex-regulars. The deadline for the granting of such applications had been 31st December 1922, and the unauthorised wearing of uniform could be punished by a fine of 150 Marks or six weeks' imprisonment. Ex-regulars, so authorised, could wear their uniforms at any time, although custom tended to limit this to special festive or public occasions. Ex-reservists (and here it should again be noted that the majority of the officers of the 1914/18 War belonged to this category) were only legally entitled to wear uniform under the same circumstances as they had when actually "serving". With minor variations from corps to corps, these were mandatory:- besides "service" occasions and ceremonies attended by the Kaiser, - they were elections to Officer Councils of Honour, Kriegerverein parades and ceremonies, and those of other official social clubs; left to the wishes of the individual were certain patriotic festivals and his own marriage⁽³⁴⁾.

(33) F205, 318: 19-1-27 report of activities of Maj. v. Sodenstern in Stuttgart (L).

(34) "DOB" 27, 1925, p.864-5.

The deliberate abuse of this privilege by ex-officers led to the severe restrictions introduced on 30th August 1921 by emergency presidential decree. According to this, the chancellor was empowered to issue regulations governing the wearing of uniform by ex-servicemen in general, and the corresponding instruction of 3rd October 1921 very sensibly restricted the exercise of the privilege to certain special occasions, and those approved by local Reichswehr commanders for the attendance of their officers and men⁽³⁵⁾. Despite protests and even condemnations issued by some Prussian courts, the restrictions were maintained⁽³⁶⁾. Ex-officers had to attend the funeral of the dead Kaiserin in civilian clothes; in Saxony, all uniformed officers had to carry a special identity pass, which the police were empowered to demand; in Holstein, police were empowered to arrest on the spot any ex-officer in uniform on the streets⁽³⁷⁾. Only with the election of Hindenburg in 1925, almost four years after the original decree, were the restrictions lifted (presidential decree, 30th August 1925). The republican parties were not content to give in to this without a fight and some weeks before this decree was issued, the Luther government (DNVP - DVP - Zentrum etc) introduced in the Reichstag a measure designed to "regulate" the wearing of uniform. Despite the fact that this measure had backing from even moderate and nationalist circles, and had already been approved by the Reichsrat, the DOB condemned it⁽³⁸⁾. The venom of socialist attacks on the officer corps in the course of the debates, and doubtless, the attitude of the new Reichspräsident, had the effect of persuading Reichswehrminister Gessler to agree to the lifting of restrictions without any preliminary statutory safeguards⁽³⁹⁾. The DOB was naturally pleased at this step and expressions of approval of the Luther

(35) See p. 87.
 (36) D-O-B1 24-5-24// "DOB" 5-3-25.
 (37) D-O-B1 1-11-24.
 (38) "DOB" 18, 1925: p.516.
 (39) "DOB" 21, 1925: p.633-4, Nr. 27, p.864-5.

government⁽⁴⁰⁾ accompanied strict directions to their members not to misuse the regained privilege, in particular not to wear uniform where such could be deemed provocative, or at party political meetings⁽⁴¹⁾.

Although the attitude of the DOB in the matter of uniforms is understandable, the wisdom of the government in dropping the restrictions altogether is questionable, for this once more left the decision to the discretion of the individual officer. The Luther government and Hindenburg's election had already been the signal for a reintensification of patriotic militarism by all veterans' associations (eg. the "Kriegertag"). Now, one more of the visible ways of distinguishing tolerated demonstrations from the activities of the extreme anti-republicans, was removed.

Despite this undeserved success, the DOB continued to apply pressure to Luther - as in the question of the "war crimes" trials - and no close links were established with his administration⁽⁴²⁾. In general the DOB displayed a political attitude considerably to the right of the KB, though not quite as extreme as that of the other officer associations. In 1925 all the ex-servicemen's organisations supported the candidature of Jarres⁽⁴³⁾, but in other "patriotic" matters, feeling was less unanimous. While, for example, the KB accepted Gessler's controversial "flag" instruction, the DOB criticised it sharply, along with the KB's compliance⁽⁴⁴⁾. In May 1928, the DOB's pre-election message advocated "Bekämpfung internationalen, pazifistischen und unvölkischen Geistes", which narrowed the field somewhat. In the following months the DOB expressed public sympathy for those "patriots" (murderers) condemned for "Fememörde" after an admittedly long time-lag (five years)⁽⁴⁵⁾. Similarly, they were to approve the Stahlhelm "Volksbegehren" in October 1928, an act rejected by

(40) "DOB" 25-8-25: Front page: "Die Grosse Politik".

(41) FO 371, 9826 C11429/2977: "Secret Associations" 16-7-24 (PRO).

(42) "DOB" 25-11-25, 15-12-25 (refs. Hutier's letter).

(43) "DOB" 14-3-25.

(44) "DOB" 25-8-27, p.1017: Nr. 34, Dec 1927 p. 1433.

(45) "DOB" 15-5-28, "Zum Wahltag"; Nr. 18, 1928, p.739.

the KB on the grounds of being "political". The more directly critical, even hostile, attitude adopted by the DOB to successive Weimar governments went hand in hand with a more explicitly anti-socialist policy, and this not only precluded any socially or politically valuable co-operation between the two, other than the formal welfare connection and local, unofficial, links with the army, but also tended to increase government suspicion of the ex-servicemen's organisations in general - even, unfortunately, the more moderate KB. Nevertheless, and perhaps typical of Weimar Germany, police officers, as opposed to Reichswehr officers, were at no time forbidden membership of the DOB⁽⁴⁶⁾, although this did not prevent energetic action by some local police against other members, even of exalted rank⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Probably the most important and insidious contact between the officer associations and the government of the Weimar Republic in these middle years was via the new President, Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. Here, the influence of the head of the NDO, Admiral von Schröder, was particularly strong. Even before 1925 Schröder (together with the Stahlhelm leader Dösterberg) tried to use his friendship with Hindenburg to political advantage: in summer 1924 he approached the old Field-Marshal with the request that he take what steps he could to stop the independent and disruptive activities of General Ludendorff. The connection was obviously open to abuse, and in March 1926, when Hindenburg was coming in for considerable criticism from the Right for his protection of Stresemann, the Wiking Bund/NDO leader Major von Sodenstern went so far as to suggest publicly that the President was in favour of provoking a Communist Putsch --- (so as to be able to use the army to intervene and thereby introduce far-reaching constitutional changes). This was a disgraceful episode and Hindenburg issued a stern rebuke to the Right via the Admiral. However, one

(46) "DOB" 5-5-25; p.341.

(47) e.g. arrest of Gen. v. Wrisberg 1-4-27: ("DOB" 15-4-27).

thing the old Field-Marshal valued above all else was the approbation of his old comrades. Only a few weeks after this incident he sent the NDO leader to the Prussian premier, Otto Braun, in an attempt to persuade him to ban parades by the Communists in May. Although nothing concrete was achieved on this occasion the trend was becoming clear. Hindenburg's personal contacts with the leaders of the veterans' associations were playing an increasing part in encouraging him to intervene in political matters and use his powers on behalf of "national" circles. With the magnificent gift of the Neudeck estate on the occasion of his 80th birthday in 1927, the Kyffhäuserbund and Stahlhelm, who took the initiative in this matter, were ensured of the President's lasting gratitude. His protection of all types of "patriotic" society, together with his growing tendency to interfere in political matters, played a definite part in the final dissolution of the Weimar Republic (48).

5. MILITARY ASPECTS

"The events of the year 1923 induced the Reichswehr to accelerate its clandestine armaments and preparations for mobilisation, to recruit volunteers, to buy arms abroad, and to prepare for an armed clash with France". Although such aspects as the re-embodiment of some Freikorps in the "Black Reichswehr" were to disappear with the return to normality, this policy of secret military preparation was to continue in all fields, and especially in frontier districts, involving close co-operation between Reichswehr and Verbände such as the Stahlhelm (1). Co-operation and contacts at all levels were also maintained with the moderate veterans' associations, although as far as the Reichswehrministerium was concerned, these contacts

(48) Walter Görlitz, "Hindenburg", pp.246, 275, 279, 291.

(1) Carsten op.cit. p.220-232.

were more casual and personal; it was at the local level that such co-operation was most fruitful.

Officially, all connections between the army and the various ex-servicemen's organisations had been banned by the Treaty of Versailles. Similarly, membership of political and certain non-political associations had been forbidden to regular soldiers by the Wehrgesetz and its amplifying orders - while attendance at their meetings was regulated and subject to the approval of army authorities⁽²⁾. In addition to these provisions, even the activities of the army in frontier defence had been officially severely curtailed by the Gessler/Severing agreement of 30th June 1923⁽³⁾. In fact, however, the spirit of these arrangements was never observed, and in many instances even the letter was flagrantly broken. In the case of the KB all official connections with the Ministry had been broken off in 1919, but it was only some five years later that the organisation officially amended its statutes: §2-1 now included: "Er befasst sich nicht mit militärischen Dingen, namentlich nicht mit Ausbildung und Übung im Waffengebrauch"⁽⁴⁾. But the East Prussian branch was already deeply involved with the other associations like Stahlhelm and Heimatbund in the Grenzschutz⁽⁵⁾. It was this branch of the KB that staged a big rally in connection with the laying of the foundation stone of the Tannenberg Monument. Freier von Gayl, head of the closely connected "Staatsbürgerliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft", exchanged personal letters with von Seeckt and Col. von Fritsch, the local Chief of Staff, on the subject of Reichswehr participation⁽⁶⁾. The public ceremonies and rallies of the KB and its local branches were in fact regularly attended by Reichswehr contingents, in line with Gessler's policy of encouraging such "non-political" associations⁽⁷⁾. All too

(2) See p. 107-8.

(3) Carsten p. 229.

(4) KZ 22-2-25: Decision of Sept. 1924 conference.

(5) See p. 109.

(6) Nachlass Gayl 21 (K).

(7) See p. 107.

frequently, alas, these rallies were also attended by other "patriotic Verbände" and sometimes assumed the character of anti-republican demonstrations, and provided a casus belli for the Socialists and Communists. Incidents thus provoked in 1924/25 led Gessler further to define relations with the veterans' organisations on 20th April 1925: serving soldiers were permitted to attend social or sporting functions held by any club, unofficially, as long as the local Wehrkreis commander had given his consent. Where only bands were to attend, other commanders were competent to consent as long as the associations concerned were not forbidden to serving soldiers under §37-8 of the Wehrgesetz. Bands and choirs in uniform where approved, could take part in the parades and march-pasts of KVe and regimental associations, but not in processions⁽⁸⁾.

On a smaller scale, officers of the Reichswehrministerium often attended the conferences of even such extreme associations as the NDO. In May 1924 Lt. Col. von Stülpnagel, Head of the Department II within the Truppenamt⁽⁹⁾, attended an NDO meeting at which General Graf Waldersee (the president) criticised the Reichswehr and Seeckt so sharply that he was forced to leave⁽¹⁰⁾. In the same memorandum Stülpnagel referred to the speech made by General von Fabeck (later a KB leader) at a regimental charity conference at the Opera House, in which a much more favourable line (to the Reichswehr) was taken. There were other examples of criticism from the side of the officer associations: In 1926 a letter from the NDO to Hindenburg, critical of the Locarno Treaty and certain (supposed) military provisions, was forwarded to Schleicher for answer. In the same year, Major von Sodenstern (Wikingbund/NDO) attacked Schleicher in the "Deutsche Zeitung" accusing him of engineering Seeckt's dismissal. In 1927, both major

(8) See p. 160, //KZ/PB 21-6-25.

(9) Carsten p. 199.

(10) Nachlass Schleicher 26, 6: Memo 28-5-24 (F).

officer associations attacked the new "flag" instruction⁽¹¹⁾. On the other hand, the attitude of the KB was consistently pro-Reichswehr and this was rewarded by continued official recognition and such marks of favour as the reception of the Vorstand by President Hindenburg⁽¹²⁾. Only a matter of days after his dismissal, Seeckt was offered the vacant presidency of the Bund. Since he stood "above party politics" and held the high rank of Generaloberst he was the ideal successor to von Heeringen. He nevertheless could not be persuaded and it is likely that the first approaches to the recently retired General von Horn were made at his instigation⁽¹³⁾. Even so, the election of Horn with his several years of top command in the Reichswehr, certainly paved the way for closer co-operation between the Bund and the army leaders. For a while, however, contacts continued to be casual. Lt. Col. Karwiese, the KB secretary, was acquainted with Schleicher and used this to obtain occasional advice and information from official sources. One such letter (October 1928) throws some light on the sincerity with which Horn and his colleagues interpreted KB neutrality: describing the man they were seeking to be groomed as a possible successor to himself, Karwiese writes: "Er darf innerlich nicht mit radikalen Rechtsorganisationen sympathisieren"⁽¹⁴⁾. In this light the new Reichswehrminister's defence of the KVe in the Reichstag (October 1928), is understandable⁽¹⁵⁾: like the Weimar government in general, General Groener was becoming increasingly the target for extremists of Right and Left, and was anxious to consolidate moderate patriotic elements behind him.

(11) *ibid.* 79, Jena to Oskar Hindenburg 9-1-26. "Deutsche Zeitung" 9-10-26// D-O-B1 32, 24-8-27.

(12) NL Schleicher 99, Col. v. Ledebur's report of KB "Hindenburgfeier" in Stadion 3-10-27 (F)//NH 906, 34: "KY" 16-1-27 report of 8 Jan meeting (K).

(13) Nachlass Seeckt 72-17: Gen. Gobbin to S. 12-10-26 (F & FOL).

(14) NL Schleicher 26, 114: PLKV to S. 20-10-28 (F)// NH 917, Karwiese to Schleicher 7-9-28 (K),

(15) NH 906, 56: "Sächsisches Volksblatt" 9-10-28 (K).

Of particular interest is the policy of the Reichswehrministerium with regard to the "Marine Offizierverein" - the only association besides the Regimentsvereine and KVe to keep the right to have serving members (some 380 in 1926, ca. 9% total). In November 1924, Admiral a.D. von Truppel, a member of "Reichsbanner SRG", spoke in a Democratic election meeting in defence of the republican flag, and criticising the Kaiser's flight to Holland. For this he was attacked by DOB, ROB and MOV. Failing to push through his libel actions in 1925 (because of the Prussian Amnesty Law) he turned to Seeckt for redress. Gessler ordered a thorough investigation and reached the conclusion that in this, as in other cases, the MOV had infringed its statutory neutrality. However, receiving assurances of future good behaviour, the minister decided not to ban the MOV to serving officers. Further incidents in 1926 involving the pacifist Kraschutzki and Kapt. a.D. Hinkeldeyn led the "Vossische Zeitung" to resurrect the Truppel case in January 1927, and Gessler to order another enquiry. The result was nevertheless the same: no grounds could be found to ban the MOV to active naval officers. The motives for this lenient attitude may partly be seen in the composition of the fourth (1927-28) Marx cabinet (including Nationalists) and partly in the conscious and consistent policy of Gessler not to penalise the more moderate organisations, and thus force them further into the arms of the radical Right. Additionally, of course, the contribution being made by all the patriotic Verbände towards the remilitarisation efforts, tended to preclude energetic steps against them, as did the benevolent attitude of the new Reichspräsident⁽¹⁶⁾.

It was mainly at the local level that ceremonial co-operation with KVe and technical work with these and other groups took place. Certainly, in the field of Wehrpropaganda, it is likely that the KB Centrale received official encouragement and guidance even in the years before 1929, but the

(16) NL Schleicher 26, 68: Admiral v. Truppel (Dec 1925)/II M 65, 7 (F).

systematic exploitation of this by Reichswehr circles is more evident subsequently. At the local level the activities of the Grenzschutz and the various short-term training courses demanded fairly close co-operation (ecce infra). In some places, where the "Offizier-Regiments-Vereinè" movement was particularly strong, a certain amount of contact was necessary to regulate the relations with the Reichswehr and serving officers. Following the Hitler/Ludendorff "Putsch" in Munich officers of Ludendorff's DVOB refused to return or give the salute to Reichswehr officers/soldiers, and further condemned Lossow's refusal to submit himself to a non-Reichswehr Court of Honour. This situation was clearly not tolerable in the long-term and early in April 1924 the leaders of the Bavarian Officers-regimental-clubs met the local Wehrkreis commander and were told that if Deutsch-Völkisch officers did not moderate their attitude, or leave their regimental clubs, these would be banned to serving officers. A conference of representatives of the regimental associations held shortly afterwards, issued a declaration condemning the attitude of the officers in question, and further agreed that active officers were not subject to the Courts of Honour of the regimental associations. This line was subsequently ratified by agreement with the local DOB and NDO. Thus the main officer associations defined their position vis à vis the DVOB⁽¹⁷⁾.

From 1923 onwards Seeckt and his successors followed a conscious policy of rearmament, made possible by the increased funds placed at the army's disposal by the Weimar government. From 490 million RM in 1924, the Reichswehr estimates rose to 827 million RM in 1928. Part of this went on munitions: thus, while the output of the firm of Zeiss was only 3% armaments in 1923/24, this figure had tripled by 1928/29⁽¹⁸⁾. A

(17) WK VII 4050 (F).

(18) Schützle op.cit. p.42-3.

considerable part also went on clandestine training of the civilian population, especially for the Grenzschutz, and further, in the general encouragement of useful pre- and para-military activities, together with militarist propaganda. This policy of rearmament paradoxically introduced new divisions and rivalries into the ex-servicemen's associations: the Waffeninge.

The attempt to organise a "Bund der Regimentsverbände" had foundered on the opposition of the biggest of the officer associations, the DOB. The KB had also not been entirely happy over the direction such a Bund seemed likely to take, particularly in view of the combined officer/men "Regimentsverbände" that had already seceded from the bigger organisation. Hence the summer of 1923 left the overall pattern of veteran organisations much as it had been - with a whole body of regimental associations, some purely for officers, others for men, and a smaller number in which both groups were fused, or at least connected. In Bavaria and Hesse, these regimental associations had succeeded in setting up general organisations embracing all types of unit, but in view of the practice - still extant in many national armies today - of ordering the various arms in terms of social prestige, it is strongly to be doubted, whether any real cohesion in "Bündische" terms could have been achieved, either in the two southern states in question or in the Reich as a whole. A much more promising idea was that of grouping regimental clubs in terms of arm, for here the common ties between Vereine largely mirror those within them; and here, of course, from a military point of view, was a much more efficient way of keeping up particular weapon-skills, which tended to become lost in the infantry orientated KVe.

The first "arm" organisation was the "Waffenring der schweren Artillerie" which came into being in the last months of 1923, celebrating its foundation on 4th December in the Berlin Kriegervereinshaus⁽¹⁹⁾.

"Der Waffenring will eine Gesamtvertretung aller ehemaligen Angehöriger der nicht mehr bestehenden schweren Artillerie und der aus ihr hervorge-

gangenen Offiziers- und Regimentsvereinigungen schaffen.

"Der WR will die einzelnen Vereine und Verbände einander näherbringen, besonders auch ein enges Zusammenarbeiten von Offiziers- und Kameradenvereinigungen bewirken, will als Mittelpunkt und Zentrale Nachrichtenstelle den Meinungs-austausch zwischen den ehemaligen Kameraden fördern und in organisatorischer Beziehung überall helfend und beratend einwirken".

"Der WR will die Aufrechterhaltung der Tradition der einst so stolzen Waffe fördern und an der Verkündung der Zukunftsaufgabe der schweren Artillerie tätigst Anteil nehmen".

Besides the attendance at the "Gründungs-Feier" of retired generals such as Ziethen, (Gen. Lt. - the WR's president) and von Lauter (the last Inspector General of Heavy Artillery) the presence of Gen. von Behrendt (GOC 1st Group), Gen. Bleidorn (Reichswehr Inspector of Artillery), several regiment-commanders, staff officers and Reichswehrministerium officers, suggests official approval for the WR in the biggest possible way. The report of Ziethen's speech is interesting: "Er forderte dauerndes Training des Körpers und Ertüchtigung der Jugend, damit wir späteren Anstrengungen gewachsen sind; denn es wird kommen der Tag, nicht heute, nicht morgen; aber kommen wird er, und dann müssen wir gestählt auf dem Platze sein": When one considers this in the light of the German government's change of policy subsequent to the invasion of the Ruhr (their decision to abandon rigid fulfilment of the Versailles clauses) and the more or less contemporary establishment, under the official auspices of the Reichswehr's chief aviation expert, Captain Wilberg, of the "Ring der Flieger"⁽²⁰⁾, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this development represents one more facet of the secret military provisions started under Seeckt. Evidence with regard to detailed co-operation between the Heavy Artillery Waffening and Reichswehr is not at hand, but the emphasis on youth training and

(20) Gordon op.cit. p.188.

preparation for the future suggests at least training of a pre- and para-military type.

Other Waffenringe came subsequently into being. Cavalry (growing 1927-1932 to some 65,000 members, concentrating on riding skills - perhaps a little optimistically in view of the German-Russian co-operation over tank training⁽²¹⁾); Field-Artillery (practising manouvering with primitive improvised gun-carriages, and giving technical lectures to the increasing numbers of university associations interested in weapon-skills); Engineers (some 35,000 strong in 1932, with 350 Vereine, many "Bereitschaftstruppe der Technischen Nothilfe" or "Luftschutz"); Signals and Intelligence (some 12 Landesverbände with 94 Vereine in 1932 - founded in 1927, "arbeitet im unmittelbaren Anschluss an die Reichswehr Nachrichtenabteilungen und Truppen-Nachrichtenverbände, wo durch gegenseitige Ergänzung und Befruchtung durch Vorträge, Besichtigungen, z.T. Ausbildungskurse der Jugend im Meldewesen und Wehrsport stattfinden", embraced many post-office, telephone, and telegraph operatives, versed in latest techniques) - in all, 9 Waffenringe including the "Bund Deutscher Marinevereine"⁽²²⁾.

The relation between Waffenringe and Kyffhäuserbund seems to have been very much the same as that between the regimental associations and the KB - the latter hoping to attract as many as possible of the individual Vereine into its ranks. In 1925 the "Deutsches Offizierblatt" was still advocating co-operation between the regimental clubs and the KB⁽²³⁾. In 1928 Horn was able to report (on the subject of Waffenringe and regimental clubs): "die Vorstände der weitaus meisten Bünde ihren Vereinen zunächst den Anschluss an den Preussischen Landeskriegerverband anempfohlen"⁽²⁴⁾. Although, for example, some two-thirds of the Engineer Vereine were in the KB⁽²⁵⁾, these

(21) Carsten op.cit. p.236.

(22) R43 II 824: "Denkschrift" by Gen. Frhr. v. Watter 24-5-33 (K).

(23) AA 12, 25-3-25.

(24) NH 906, 50: KY account of Horn's 20-9-28 speech (K).

(25) R43 II 824: "Denkschrift" by Gen. Frhr. v. Watter 24-5-33 (K).

were mostly the more long-established ones - the newer Vereine, arising out of pure "Waffengeist" had no use for "exorbitant" subscriptions to burial and insurance funds; some WR (Jäger, Cavalry, eg.) ran their own welfare schemes. As the 1933 "Denkschrift" concludes "Alle diese gemeinsamen Arbeiten können vom Kyffhäuserbund nicht übernommen werden und lassen sich nur in einem geschlossenen Waffenringe dieser Spezialtruppe durchführen". The attitude of the KB is best summed up in an official memorandum of 1933⁽²⁶⁾: "Der Kyffhäuserbund nimmt die Waffenringe als notwendiges Übel hin". The close relations between KVe and Waffenringe at the local level gave rise to a "double membership" situation in many places and the resultant competition for subscriptions which by 1933 was causing the KB leadership some concern.

The attempt to organise special "arm" associations partly from existing regimental associations, partly from new Vereine, was more successful than the previous ill-fated attempt to produce some co-operation among the Regimentsverbände. To an important extent the Waffenringe represent an official exploitation of ex-servicemen's associations for militarist ends - and a further division in the German veterans' movement, not this time one of officers v. men, but one of differing military skills. As far as the KB was concerned the unsatisfactory situation of "some in, some out" once again did nothing to enhance its authority.

Although the army had specifically agreed in June 1923 not to undertake weapon training of volunteers and not to co-operate with any of the Verbände in the matter of Grenzschutz, this agreement was clearly violated in Pomerania and Silesia⁽²⁷⁾, and probably also in East Prussia. French occupation authorities in 1924 made some 102 arrests on a single day, and were satisfied that Kyffhäuserbund and Regimentsvereine were involved in illegal

(26) II M 65-7, 119-120; list of Waffenringe 11-9-33 (F).
 (27) Carsten p. 229.

short-service recruiting along with other associations⁽²⁸⁾. Visiting Allied officers from the IAMCC frequently asked army units for information regarding the Verbände. At the end of 1924 a Ministry circular specifically forbade the provision of any such information - since no official connection with the Verbände was allowed⁽²⁹⁾. At the beginning of 1925, Stresemann was trying to persuade Seeckt to accept a statutory ban on co-operation with the various societies: a ministerial conference of 5th February discussed the issue and a few days' later Seeckt sent Stresemann a detailed memorandum which pointed out that such co-operation had been forbidden by an order dating back to February 1923. There had been some instances of officers and soldiers being punished for illegal participation in events staged by DOB, the "Patriotic" Verbände, Jungdeutscher Oden, etc⁽³⁰⁾. In January 1926 Seeckt tried to bring all frontier defence under a closer central control. In March, the Reichswehrministerium was advocating a wider, less exclusively right-orientated recruiting policy. In January 1927 Stresemann managed to persuade the Allies to waive their demand for the dissolution of the Stahlhelm, on the understanding that official army connections with the Bund be dropped. This policy was in fact gradually implemented, except in the case of the Eastern Grenzschutz. However, when the new Army Chief, General Heye, reported in 1927 that most of the Grenzschutz weapons were now under the supervision of the regular army, this was by no means so everywhere⁽³¹⁾. In 1928, the Grenzschutz in Wehrkreis IV (Saxony) was "undermanned" and did not have sufficient weapons to expand further. However, when one considers that the strength of the Saxon Grenzschutz alone was estimated at 88,000 men in 94 "Sperrkommandos" (1928), this is understandable; and a remarkable testimony to what had been achieved over the years - even if the Saxon

(28) FO 371, 9825 C7742 (PRO).

(29) WK VII 2905: circular 13-12-24 (F).

(30) Carsten p.223//NL Schleicher 39: 61; 64a10 (F).

(31) Carsten p.227, 231//Berghahn pp.96, 191-5.

Wehrkreis could provide no artillery backing! (32)

Even the least acceptable, politically speaking, of the officer associations (DVOB) was involved closely in these secret military preparations: a DVOB circular of 1926 (sent to Heinrich Himmler) asked its members to attend a series of four lectures on "Militärische Wissenschaft" held by the Bavarian Reichswehr: "Im Interesse eines weiteren guten Zusammenarbeitens mit der Reichswehr erwartet der Herr Kommandant, dass Sie sich bestimmt zu diesen vier Vorträgen einfinden". Similar courses were held for ex-reserve-officers in East Prussia, Upper Silesia and Brandenburg (33).

In this indiscriminating attitude of the republican army to the ex-servicemen's organisations and the Wehrverbände can be seen the major obstacle hampering the forces of law and order in Weimar Germany.

Apart from the direct involvement of the veteran associations in the secret military work directed or encouraged by the army, the KB in particular fulfilled a wider rôle in the civilian community; the patriotic, militarist propaganda promoted by the Bund in their press and public rallies has already been discussed. Articles of a military-technical nature were included in the "Kriegerzeitung" from time to time, particularly with the aim to stimulate interest in the flying and aircraft (34). More significant, however, was the work of the KB in the field of youth training and competitive shooting.

The pre-war "Wandervögel" had given an immense boost to the "genuine" youth movement in Germany. Besides thousands of independent Gymnastic and Sportverbände, Hiking Clubs, and Pathfinders (scouts), one or two larger groupings had arisen, such as the Jungsturm and the Jungdeutschland-

(32) RH I/V 14 (Geheime Kommandosache) Report 31-1-28 (F).

(33) Reel 98-1 (Himmler Collection): circular 20-2-26 (Hoover Microfilm) Nachlass Stresemann 7138, H149468: Note by Bernhard 6-2-26 (FOL).

(34) KZ 19-4-25 (whole issue) "Luftfahrt und Staat":
KZ 24-5-25 Ballooning and Airships.

bund. The latter was led before the war by Field-Marshal von der Coltz and in the 1920's, under his son Major-General Graf v. der Goltz, became closely associated with the new youth groups of the political parties and Wehrverbände on the Right. Also seen as part of the "rein Jugendbewegung" is Adm. von Trotha's "Grossdeutsche Jugendbund" founded in 1918⁽³⁵⁾. As far as the KB is concerned, the main interest was in the development of its own youth association and its relations with the Jungdeutschlandbund and the religious youth groups.

Already before the war at least one main KB branch, Hamburg, had had its own youth section, with some 400 boys in 1914. This had disappeared during the war and up to 1922 the KB officially recommended its individual local KVe with youth groups to co-operate with the Jungdeutschlandbund (JDB)⁽³⁶⁾. Early in 1922 the "Reichsverband der Deutsche-Nationalen Parteijugendgruppen" was set up, the first of the right-wing party-political youth groups. Shortly afterwards came the Kyffhäuserjugend and then the Bismarckjugend - which virtually replaced the "Reichsverband" as the youth group of the DNVP⁽³⁷⁾. The reasons behind the KB's decision to set up its own youth association may partly be seen in the depressed state of the JDB and partly, perhaps, in the need of the KB to preserve its identity by all available means. Either way, progress initially was slow, and in many places the first youth groups were set up by the political parties and rival Verbände. Part of this may be attributed to the apathy of elderly Vorstand members who quite simply could not be bothered, especially as there was no lack of suitable clubs in most places⁽³⁸⁾. Some energetic Kreisverbände responded to Heeringen's

(35) "DOB" 28-9-27 p.1135 "Jugendfragen"// R43 1 770,51 et seq. (K) NH 1820 (K).
 (36) KZ 23-8-25.
 (37) Schneider, Bernhard: "Daten zur Geschichte der Jugendbewegung", Bad Godesburg, p.79, 201, 206.
 (38) KZ 12-4-25: "Die Überalterung in den Kvnn".

appeal early in 1924 (e.g. Neisse⁽³⁹⁾) and, with the appointment of Rittmeister a.D. Barthels in the same year, things began to improve⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Already in 1925 the Kyffhäuserjugend were working fairly closely with the Bismarckjugend of the DNVP: at Whitsun, a joint Bundestag was held near Gersfeld⁽⁴¹⁾. Nevertheless, the new detailed instructions issued by the KB in November 1925 insisted on the formation of separate branches: joint undertakings with any other organisation at the local level were firmly ruled out. The realism of this approach may be questioned in the case of small villages and probably in many places local "arrangements" were made⁽⁴²⁾.

The Reichsinnenministerium looked upon the Kyffhäuserjugend with some suspicion, seeing it as forsaking the traditional (neutral) path of the KB and moving in a more specifically "political" direction⁽⁴³⁾. But at this time (1926), relations with the von der Goltz organisations (Jungdeutschlandbund and Vereinigung der Vaterländischen Verbände) were by no means cordial, and von der Goltz even publicly remarked, that in view of the KB's lack of youth leaders (younger officers) no long life could be predicted for the Kyffhäuserjugend⁽⁴⁴⁾. Later in 1926, however, it appears that the Kyffhäuserjugend had come to terms with the JDB and Kyffhäuser representatives took part in the big Berlin meeting in October. With some justice, the "Centralverein-Zeitung" (Jewish) expressed fear that the radical Völkisch Vereine in the JDB (such as the Wehrwolf and Junglandbund) would have a bad influence on the more moderate groups⁽⁴⁵⁾. The Kyffhäuserjugend remained part of the JDB at least until 1928 - alongside Stahlhelm, Scharnhorst, Bismarckbund, Landbund, Jungsturm, etc, another example of the

(39) KZ 17-5-25: "KVe und Jugendertüchtigung".

(40) BPD p. 309.

(41) Schneider op.cit. p.201.

(42) KZ/PB 15-11-25.

(43) R58, 1115, Reichskommissar (UOO) 22-2-26 (K).

(44) F193, 341, 1926: "Bodensee Chronik" 15, report of Goltz' remark at August meeting of "Jungdeutschlandbund" (L).

(45) "Centralverein Zeitung" 22-10-26, p.561: quotes "Deutsche Ztg" 18-10-26.

Rightward drift of KB "neutrality" in these years⁽⁴⁶⁾. In this light it is hardly surprising that both principal Church authorities had misgivings over the Kyffhäuserjugend, which have already been discussed⁽⁴⁷⁾. Apart from the contribution made by the 50,000 strong (1929) organisation in the field of pre-military "toughening", fieldcraft and shooting, the Kyffhäuserjugend had a strong moral flavour, placing stress on the authority of family and fatherland - in the Christian sense, and had little in common with the anti-Semitic, Völkisch outpourings of the more radical groups⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Some of the other veterans' organisations had local youth sections, but it was the policy of the DOB to advocate co-operation with the JDB and von der Goltz himself was a regular contributor to the "Deutscher Offizier-Bund" from 1927 on. Moreover, the DOB recommended that their members co-operate with the other Verbände in providing youth leaders - a rôle for which ex-officers were, of course, ideally suited⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Shooting in the KB pre-war, had been widespread, and almost entirely with full-bore rifles. The restrictions of Versailles and the effects of the disarmament of the civilian population severely curtailed the KV stocks of weapons, and their shooting in general⁽⁵⁰⁾. The adoption of small-bore and air-rifles provided a way round the statutory limitations⁽⁵¹⁾, but in many cases this does not seem to have been necessary. As early as 1924 the KB was officially advertising the '71 rifle (on behalf of a Hamburg firm)⁽⁵²⁾. By 1931 only 31% of the 4454 KVe in the Prussian Landesverband engaged in shooting were using small-bore weapons⁽⁵³⁾. Despite the expenses involved (ca. 30 RM for a rifle; cartridges at 85 RM/100) shooting played an increasingly important part in the KB, especially with the youth groups. In Württemberg, for example, over 400

(46) "DOB" 5-7-28 p.814.

(47) See p. 160 *et seq.*

(48) BPD p.309//Flugs.I 191 "Wesen, Zweck und Ziele"(Karwiese 1927)(SH).

(49) "DOB" 1927, p.442, 686, 894: 1928, p.658, 814.

(50) Forell, "Nachschlagewerk des DRKB", 1936 p.45.

(51) e.g. LA Ziegenhain 3167 (Ma).

(52) KZ/PB 15-3-25, refs. PB 10-8-24.

(53) Forell, "Nachschlagewerk des DRKB", 1936 p.45.

kVe (½ of the total) had their own shooting sections in association with the Württemberg "Sportverband". The following year, the big Landesverband set up its own Sportabteilung under the leadership of General von Watter, and by 1929 some 16,000 members (10% of the total) were involved in shooting⁽⁵⁴⁾. Figures for the KB as a whole are not available, but if the Württemberg Landesverband is a guide, some 2-300,000 members would have practised competitive shooting regularly, the majority with full-bore military weapons, not altogether insignificant for a country with an army of 100,000 men.

The DOB had its own "Sportvereinigung" and after 1928, a special shooting section. Shooting was also recommended with the local branches of the "Reichsverband deutscher Kleinkaliber Schützenverbände"⁽⁵⁵⁾.

In general, the years 1923 to 1929 saw a marked increase in the pre- and para-military work of the "patriotic" Verbände, and the more moderate ex-servicemen's organisations made a considerable contribution to this - both in direct connection with local Reichswehr units and independently. The Reichswehrministerium nevertheless still stopped short of according to any one association the privileged position once enjoyed by the KB, although the public co-operation of Reichswehr soldiers and the "protectorship" of President von Hindenburg (shared with the Stahlhelme⁽⁵⁶⁾) gave the biggest genuine "veterans" organisation definite advantages over the rest. Inevitably, however, the tendency of the army to co-operate with more or less any patriotic Verband, regardless of their political outlook, forced the moderate-conservative KB more into the company of the right-radicals, and made the task of General von Horn in maintaining the Bund's identity and political neutrality all that more difficult.

(54) E 130 IV, Staatsministerium: 1479: "Württ. KB" 1927: 1929//KZ 30-12-28// J 45 Flugs. 191: "50 years Jubilee" p.59 (SH).

(55) "DOB" 5-6-28, 25-7-28, 5-8-28.

(56) Hindenburg was "Ehrenpräsident" of the KB, "Ehrenmitglied" of the Stahlhelm and "Schirmherr" of the DOB and Ndo.

6. THE POSITION OF THE KB AND OFFICER ASSOCIATIONS AMONG THE "PATRIOTIC" ASSOCIATIONS

During the middle years of the Weimar Republic the full measure of social and political disunity in post-war Germany became apparent. The "moderates" now had to contend with the 3 million strong socialist Reichsbanner, the smaller, but vociferous "Rote Frontkämpferbund" of the Communists, and the various ex-servicemen's associations and Kampfverbände on the Right. This political polarisation increased, both in terms of number and of bitterness. Nevertheless, if the general "Rechtsbewegung" increased overall numerically, there remained vital, insuperable gulfs between the various elements: between the Nazis and Ludendorff; between Ludendorff and the other "patriotic" Verbände; between some of the patriotic Verbände and others⁽¹⁾. The task confronting the moderate veterans' organisations in these years was formidable: on the one hand to remain "patriotic" and on the other, to avoid compromising political connections with the more extreme anti-republican groups.

The KB, having won its fight for survival, began gradually once more to expand: between 1922 and 1930 the majority (17 out of 24) of the Landesverbände gained considerably in members, particularly Weimar and the big southern Verbände, which continued to expand unchecked even during the crisis years 1930 to 1932⁽²⁾. The DOB held its own against the smaller officer associations and aided by its high subscription and substantial revenue from advertising in its periodical⁽³⁾ found a surer economic footing. The NDO similarly survived, despite occasional troubles like the loss of their important Hamburg branch in 1926⁽⁴⁾. Ludendorff's DVOB never achieved much significance outside Bavaria and began to decline as early as 1926 - with the failure of its head to come to terms with the monarchists and others on

(1) Nachlass Marx 252: Reichskommissar (UOO) 1-4-26: p.37 (KH).

(2) NH 912, NH 931.

(3) "DOB" 1925-28: passim.

(4) BPD p.449.

the Right. Comparative figures available for Württemberg give some indication of the relative strength of the various associations: against the Nazis' and Freiheitsbewegung's 2,000, the Jungdeutsche Orden could muster 2-300, Oberland 210, NDO 180, and the DVOB little more than the 30 found in Stuttgart⁽⁵⁾; the Württemberg Kriegerbund had over 140,000 members⁽⁶⁾ and clearly only an insignificant proportion could also have been members of "right-radical" organisations (1926). Other specifically ex-servicemen's associations included the increasingly important "Reichsbund der Zivildienstberechtigten", who looked after the interests of newly-retired Reichswehr personnel seeking state-employment⁽⁷⁾, and such groups as the "Nationalverband deutscher Unteroffiziere" which, founded in 1924, was little more than a local (Bremen) organisation⁽⁸⁾.

The important fact that should be stressed is that the criminal extremists of the Right formed only a small proportion of the whole "Rechtsbewegung". At this time it was still dominated by ex-officers and aristocrats to whom honour and personal morality were not empty words: men certainly of a staunchly nationalist even militarist outlook, to whom republican government was genuinely distasteful. Their general "patriotic" attitude was shared by many decent men from all walks of life. Whether they liked it or not, the KB was an integral part of the political spectrum, essentially "moderate-conservative" if not always obviously so. Now, if at all, was the time to define its position, both with regard to the right-wing extremists and to those of the Left. The extent to which this was achieved is illustrated by the changing relations between the Bund and the other associations.

The initial challenge to the KB's position represented by the new associations like the Regimentsvereine and the Waffeninge should not in

(5) F 193, 341, 1926: Report on völkisch movement 28-6-26 (L).

(6) WMI 206 (L)//1479 Staatsministerium (SH)//Flugs.I. 191 (SH).

(7) Polizeidirektion Munich, 24a III F.11/202 (MSO).

(8) Nachlass Marx 252: Reichskommissar (UOO) 1-4-26: p.57 (KH).

itself be overestimated. Even by 1936 there were only some 6,000 Vereine in these groups (compared with the 29,000 of the KB as a whole). In the middle years of the Weimar Republic some 40-50% found their way into the bigger organisation⁽⁹⁾. In Berlin especially, success was achieved in this field: in 1927 the "Hauptkriegerverband" was formed from 207 Regimentsvereine, 68 general KVe and 8 Marinevereine⁽¹⁰⁾.

More damaging was the survival of the élitish officer associations and the failure of the younger ex-officers to enter the KVe - at least in significant numbers - whether through indifference, laziness, lack of understanding, financial motives or social sensitivity. All these aspects doubtless played a part, but perhaps more important, despite General von Heeringen's efforts in this direction, the DOB never wholeheartedly recommended additional membership of the KVe⁽¹¹⁾. Nevertheless, relations between the KB and DOB remained fairly cordial - particularly at the local level. Heeringen occasionally attended DOB functions⁽¹²⁾, made large donations to the DOB Nothilfe⁽¹³⁾, and sympathised with the DOB leaders over such matters as the "Uniformverbot"⁽¹⁴⁾. The DOB occasionally postponed committee meetings so as not to clash with KB rallies⁽¹⁵⁾ and allowed notification of forthcoming KV activities in their journal - at least sometimes⁽¹⁶⁾. In the field of patriotic propaganda of course, joint activity was more marked⁽¹⁷⁾. Locally, links with the officer associations were particularly close in Bavaria where joint rallies were sometimes staged. The Bavarian Kriegerbund was a member of the local Vereinigung der Vaterländischen Verbände⁽¹⁸⁾. In East Prussia too,

(9) See p. 187.//NS 10/108 Reinhard's analysis 1936 (K).

(10) "Hindenburg zu Ehren", p.44 et seq.

(11) AA 40, 28-10-25: "Offiziere und KVe"//NH 906, 10: Heeringen at Neu Ruppin 5-7-25 (K) //"Heeringen an den KVnn" p.39-40.

(12) AA 30, 8-9-24: Verbandsnachrichten: VVV Tannenbergsfeier.

(13) "DOB" 33, 25-11-25, p.1117.

(14) KZ 8-3-25, "Zur Frage des Uniformverbots".

(15) "DOB" 28-9-27: refs. KB Stadion rally, 3-10-27.

(16) "DOB" 15-1-25: meeting of Saxon LV.

(17) See p. 141, 146.

(18) MA 104266: letter to Munich DOB (19-9-27) (MGS).

WK VII 4050: report of meeting of "Vereinigung Bayr. ORVe", 11-4-24 (F).

co-operation was generally close⁽¹⁹⁾, similarly in Silesia, Hamburg and some other southern states⁽²⁰⁾.

Of particular interest were the relations between the KB and Generalmajor Graf von der Goltz's "Vereinigte Vaterländische Verbände". Aiming at a coalition of all patriotic associations, the VVV was expressly monarchist, militarist, "Grossdeutsch", anti-marxist and anti-semitic - also professing "Christliche und germanische Weltanschauung"⁽²¹⁾. Although DOB and NDO soon joined the VVV, Heeringen kept the KB outside, while maintaining reasonably close contacts. Thus joint rallies were held in 1924/25, Heeringen officially participated in VVV functions (often also involving Hohenzollern princes) and some KVe established "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" or even closer links with local branches of the VVV⁽²²⁾. Already in 1925, however, the need was felt by the KB leadership to define somewhat the official attitude to the VVV. At the September conference the position was taken that: "Der KB wird mit den Vaterländischen Organisationen für die Erreichung des uns gemeinsam gesteckten Zieles, der Wiedererstehung eines starken deutschen Reiches unter dem Symbol Schwarz-Weiss-Rot fest Schulter an Schulter gehen ... Der organische Zusammenschluss mit einem anderen Verbands oder einer seiner Unterorganisationen würde eine Beeinträchtigung der Selbständigkeit des KBs und seiner Landesverbände bedeuten, die seiner Satzung zuwiderläuft. In der parallel laufenden Arbeit eines jeden der grossen Vaterländischen Verbände für sich sehen wir die beste Gewähr für die weitere Erstarkung des nationalen Gedankens."⁽²³⁾ Early in the following year the Reichskommissar for Public Order reported that the KB had recently drawn nearer to the VVV and seemed in danger of losing its political neutrality. Certainly, as has been seen, the Kyffhäuserjugend joined von der Goltz's "Jungdeutschlandbund"

(19) "DOB" 25-1-27: DOB/Stahlhelm rep. at E. Prussian meeting of KB.

(20) KZ 1925: lists of meetings//FO 371, 9826 C18339//"DOB" 21-12-27.

(21) R 43 I 770, 43: detailed report (K).

(22) Halle(FO 371, 9825 C7885); Hamburg (R43 I 770, 31 (K)); Leipzig Kriegertag (AA 8-9-24); Frankfurt/M (KZ 8-2-25).

(23) KZ 20-9-25.

a few months later, and the Bavarian Kriegerbund had long been a member of the local VVV⁽²⁴⁾. But even in Bavaria the Vereinigung was far from being "Vereinig": In March and April 1926 an attempt was made by the Ludendorff camp (Tannenbergbund, Frontkriegerbund, etc) to set up a "Nationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft": Stahlhelm, Wehrwolf, Jungdo and Oberland initially took part: the Bavarian Kriegerbund was invited, but declined, and Oberland very quickly dropped out⁽²⁵⁾. Right-radical agitation was really beginning to make itself felt in some places. At a meeting in January 1927, General Reutter, the Bavarian Kriegerbund Präsident, "... wies darauf hin, dass erkennbar sich eine Sammlung zur Gesundung der nationalen Bewegung anbahnt, dass die radikalen Strömungen rechts und links allmählich abebben"⁽²⁶⁾. The quest for unity in the nationalist movement continued. It was reported that an "abortive attempt" was made by the Stahlhelm in Summer 1927 to amalgamate a number of the "nationally minded" associations⁽²⁷⁾. The Bavarian KB continued to co-operate with the VVV: in March 1928 a German/Austrian "Frontkämpfertag" was held in Munich under their joint direction, attended by, among others, Prince Alfons (Wittelsbach), Escherich and General von Lossow⁽²⁸⁾. This, however, was one of the last such occasions. Again in October 1928 leaders of the KB are to be found expressing themselves against the "radikalen Rechtsorganisationen"⁽²⁹⁾. The following month, probably in response to pressure from von Horn, who may in turn have been approached by government agents, the Bavarian Kriegerbund withdrew from the VVV⁽³⁰⁾. This raised a storm of protest from the Nazi sympathisers in the Nuremberg and Pfalz branches, but the decision was ratified by a large majority at the general meeting of the Bavarian branch held early in 1929 (which also elected a new president, Generalmajor Ritter von Dänner, who

(24) R58, 1115: report 22-2-26 (K)//p. 123.

(25) NH 1829 (K).

(26) NH 906, 34: KY 16-1-27 (K).

(27) FO 371, 12914 C5947: Howard Smith to Nicholson 4-8-28 (PRO).

(28) R 43 I 770, 166: Haniel's report 10-4-28 (K).

(29) NL Schleicher 26, 114: Karwiese to S. 20-10-28 (F).

(30) R 43 I 770, 167: report 28-11-28 (K).

as Munich commandant in 1923 had been instrumental in defeating the Hitler/Ludendorff Putsch⁽³¹⁾). Thus, under the leadership of von Horn, the KB to a certain extent even before 1929 took steps to mark out more clearly the boundaries separating them from the "Right-radicals" in the Vereinigte Vaterländische Verbände. This had not, however, been made particularly clear in the general propaganda of the Bund, nor in its relations with individual associations.

Under Heeringen the KB had taken an important part alongside all the other veterans' organisations (excluding DVOB, but including Stahlhelm and other Kampfblünde like Wehrwolf and Wiking) in the nationalist negotiations under von Gayl, preparatory to the presidential elections of 1925. Locally, ties were reasonably strong with the Stahlhelm in East Prussia, Silesia and Bavaria, and in one or two other places in North Germany. Some Vereine had links with the Jungdeutsche Orden and in at least two instances in 1925, joint functions were staged with the extremist "Wehrwolf"⁽³²⁾. Partly perhaps for this reason, partly also because of the nationalist/militarist common ground publicised in the "Kriegerzeitung" and at the joint rallies (e.g. Leipzig Kriegertag 1925), a long article in the Jewish "Centralverein Zeitung" (December 1926) included the KB with the NDO, ROB and DVOB as "anti-Semitic" Verbände. The article credited the Stahlhelm and Jungdo. as theoretically neutral and the DOB and Reichsbanner as actually so. The "Centralverein Zeitung" was not always very reliably informed, (the Stahlhelm had adopted the "Aryan paragraph" in 1924) but it is highly likely that the stand of the KB in the question of anti-Semitism was by no means widely understood, even by non-Jewish circles such as the KB members themselves. They were, of course, by statute "religious-neutral", and subsequent articles in the "Kyffhäuser" and "Centralverein Zeitung" made

(31) "Centralverein Zeitung" 8-3-29, p.119-20.

(32) NL Gayl 23 (K)//KZ 1925: lists of Verein functions.

it clear that this was in fact practised⁽³³⁾. Public co-operation with the Stahlhelm nevertheless continued and in 1927 the KB conference was informed: "Der ganze geistige Inhalt der Stahlhelmbewegung ist konform mit dem unserer Organisation"⁽³⁴⁾. However, the more active anti-republican activity of the Stahlhelm after 1927, together with their attempts to attract members of the Kyffhäuserbund into the Jungstahlhelm, led to friction between the two. In a public speech at Hagen (June 1928) Horn stressed the differences between them: (as the "Berliner Tagelblatt" reported) that: "ein himmelweiter Unterschied zwischen Reichskriegerbund und Stahlhelm bestehe Der Stahlhelm wolle politisch kämpfen und politische Macht im Staat erringen, der KB dagegen verzichte auf jeden politischen Kampf, weil er ganz andere Aufgaben zu erfüllen strebe."⁽³⁵⁾ But in view of the double membership of KVe and Stahlhelm which existed in some places - especially in frontier areas, where all patriotic elements co-operated in the officially sponsored "Grenzschutz" - the problem was not so easily solved. Ideally the KB should have abandoned its political neutrality and expelled all elements not prepared to follow a (defined) moderate-conservative line. In the long run it did neither and endeavoured both to remain "all things to all men" and yet to exercise a moderate-conservative influence on events.

The initial difficulties between "Deutscher Offizier-Bund" and "Nationalverband deutscher Offiziere" had been settled by 1923. Subsequently, co-operation between the two was frequent and their activities complementary: the one forming the political, monarchist spearhead, the other concentrating more on economic and "Stand" interests. Much joint effort was expended on reaching agreement with the student "Corps", the Adelsgenossenschaft and the

(33) "Centralverein Zeitung" 10-12-26, 21-1-27, 8-4-27.

(34) e.g. "DOB" 5-7-27: Joint declaration by KKV and Stahlhelm in Rosenberg (West Prussia)//BPD 308: KB 1927 Business Report p.25.

(35) Berghahn op.cit. p.163-4//NH 906, 41, "Berliner Tageblatt" 1-7-28 (K).

Johanniterorden over questions of "honour". The Ehrenschutzverordnung of 1922 was modified between 1925 and 1928 to suit all requirements⁽³⁶⁾. More widely, the four associations (DOB - NDO - ROB - MOV) co-operated increasingly and frequently in monarchist rallies, like that celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Kaiser's entry into the army (1927)⁽³⁷⁾. Only the DVOB stood outside this "officer network": according to its own circulars, it had been founded in political opposition to the NDO and with its involvement in the Munich Putsch (1923) and the increasing personal hostility between Ludendorff and Crown Prince Rupert of Bavaria, the association (mainly of course Bavarian) found itself more and more isolated, attacked by the Nazis on the one hand and shunned by the other officer groups on the other⁽³⁸⁾. Smaller officer associations such as the General Staff Club (Graf Schlieffen Vereinigung) whose president General von Cramon had formerly been 3rd President of the NDO, and the MOV led by Captains Krah and Stosch, generally followed the lead of the others⁽³⁹⁾.

Just as the DOB and NDO were both members of the Vereinigte Vaterländische Verbände of von der Goltz, so many of their members were prominent in the leadership of the individual associations, especially Stahlhelm, Wehrwolf and Wiking. The relationship of the officer associations to the right-radicals was consequently much closer than that of the KB. This was manifested for example in the co-operation of officer associations in Ehrhardt's "Nationale Nothilfe EV", aimed at combating the "Feme" trials and assisting those sentenced in them. Similarly, rallies such as the Stahlhelm Sporttag in Halle (October 1928) which was attended by Field-Marshal von Mackensen, Admiral von Schröder (NDO), General von der Goltz (VVV), General von Watter (DOB and Waffeninge) and four princes, were

(36) "DOB" 25-11-28, p.1316: report of conference.

(37) II M 65, 7: MOV participation in 8-2-27 Rally (F).

"DOB" 15-8-27: Hindenburg's attendance at joint rally.

(38) Reel 98-1: Himmler Collection: DVOB circulars 1926 etc. (Hoover).

"DOB" 25-7-25, 5-11-25, 25-3-28.

(39) BPD p.449.

frequent and widely publicised⁽⁴⁰⁾. The attempt to establish closer contacts between the VVV and the Ludendorff group was certainly made (1925-26) and even in 1926 many DVOB members were active in the Nazi SA. But Ludendorff's sun was setting⁽⁴¹⁾.

Also of interest is the attitude of the officer associations to the Jungdeutsche Orden. Founded in 1919 by Arthur Mahraun, it initially pursued a radical policy which resulted in its being banned in 1922. Subsequently, the Jungdo rejected the "putschism" of the right-radicals and favoured a Franco-German understanding. Ultimately this more moderate policy was to permit its amalgamation with the German Democratic Party. In 1925 the Jungdo set about forming a "Nationalausschuss" aimed at revitalising the "national movement"; Mahraun pursued a somewhat independent line in the matter of the presidential elections and was already tending to diverge from the other associations on the Right. At the very beginning of 1927 a meeting took place between the leaders of the Jungdo and those of the moderate DOB, with the aim of establishing closer, even organisational ties. But the DOB remained adamant that although their aims were the same in the long run, the methods adopted by the Jungdo could only lead to disaster. Relations with the NDO were even less cordial: Mahraun actually brought and won a libel action against General Wächter and Major von Jena, who were fined 50 marks each and ordered to pay two-thirds costs. (May 1927). Whether or not Mahraun ever approached the KB leadership is not known: certainly the anti-French policy of the latter, and the personal ties between some KB leaders and the NDO would have been serious obstacles to an understanding. Nevertheless, after 1930 the advantages of such an arrangement would have been more apparent⁽⁴²⁾. In

(40) F 193 Ravensburg OA 1930/343: 3-9-30 (founded 1927) (L)//BPD p.448. "DOB" 25-10-28, p.1231.

(41) Reel 98-1: Himmler Collection: DVOB circulars 1926 etc (Hoover). "DOB" 25-7-25, 5-11-25, 25-3-28.//F 205 Tübingen OA 1925/316: report of 18-11-25 VVV meeting (L). and : NH 1829.

(42) Centralverein Zeitung 10-12-26 p.650// "DOB" 17, 1925 p.480// "DOB" 3, 1927 p.105//NL Stresemann 7145, H150487 (FO).

common with the Nazis and the Ludendorff group, the NDO were openly anti-Semitic⁽⁴³⁾. ROB were less openly so, and the DOB seems to have kept to its statutory neutrality in religious matters, although one or two local incidents occurred after 1928⁽⁴⁴⁾.

In conclusion, it may be said that whereas the officer associations, especially the NDO, maintained the closest relations with right-radical Verbände like Stahlhelm, Wehrwolf, etc, the KB - or at least some of its leaders - were beginning in 1928 to see "the red light", and steps were being initiated to distinguish between the KB and the radical ambitions of other sections in the patriotic movement. The common ground that still existed between them from the point of view of ideology and membership, as well as the closer ties established with the VVW by Horn's predecessor between 1923 and 1926, was to make the years after 1928 extremely difficult for the KB.

7. MONARCHISM: RIGHT WING PARTIES

From the outset the ex-servicemen's associations had formed the main reservoir of sympathy for the former rulers of Germany. This found vigorous and continuous public expression by the NDO and the Vereinigten Vaterländischen Verbände and slightly more restrained support from the DOB and KB. In the case of the bigger, general association; whether or not the mass of the rank and file would have welcomed a restoration in the early stages, is uncertain. Clearly, however, they were at no time so imbued with republican enthusiasm as to protest in significant numbers against the obvious sympathy for the Kaiser expressed in the "Kriegerzeitung" and in KB meetings. At worst, they were apathetic. Even with the Crown

(43) Centralverein Zeitung 3-4-24, 12-6-25, 19-2-26, 10-12-26. AA 1-11-24: NdO Aufruf.

(44) CVZ 10-12-26 p.650; 20-1-28 p.26.

Prince and his brothers back in Germany, however, the prospects of the Hohenzollerns were never really rosy. Many ex-officers seriously considered, for example a "Wittelsbach-Kaisertum", although as Seeckt warned the Bavarian Crown Prince in 1924/25, this would probably have met insuperable opposition in Prussia⁽¹⁾. The election of Hindenburg to the Presidency in 1925 was probably more an expression on the part of the German people in favour of the MAN, rather than for any return to the Imperial system. Hindenburg had of course been virtually responsible for sending the Kaiser into exile in 1918, and more than most other people appreciated the shortcomings of that unhappy man. Moreover, the new President was bound by the narrow Prussian officer's concept of honour to observe the letter of the Weimar Constitution. One might add too, that the conscious resignation of power would not come easily to such a man. On the other hand, many people saw Hindenburg's presidency as a safeguard for the restoration of the Hohenzollerns at some propitious time in the future - perhaps when the Kaiser died? In this light the more active monarchists had a very good excuse for leaving things in the hands of the old Field-Marshal - with catastrophic results.

It is against this background that the monarchist propaganda of the veterans' organisations must be seen. Despite the temporary unanimity introduced by the VVW, this was already falling apart by 1926⁽²⁾, and by 1928 official government circles considered that the monarchist movement had come to a standstill, because of the disagreements between Verbände and political parties⁽³⁾. This was over-optimistic: during the years 1923-28 the two big officer associations, followed by the others (except the DVOB) were consistently at the centre of an increasingly vociferous monarchist activity. Scarcely an important meeting was held by either

(1) NL Stresemann 7135, H149029: Seeckt's conversation with S. (FOL).

(2) "Centralverein Zeitung" 10-12-26.

(3) R58, 1115: Koreferat 28-4-28, p.4 (esp. Bavaria) (K).

group, that was not attended by some Hohenzollern prince or representative of the other "princely" houses. The NDO annual general meeting in 1927 declared publicly for "ein völkisches deutsches Kaiserreich"⁽⁴⁾. The joint DOB/NDO celebration to mark the 50th anniversary of the Kaiser's entry to the army (February 1927) was typical of many such: banquet, speeches, officers in imperial uniform (and some in that of the Reichswehr) - demonstrations of monarchist sentiment that attracted the hostility of the socialist press⁽⁵⁾. The DOB conference in 1928 talked of "unverrückbaren Festhalten an den geheiligten Traditionen der alten Wehrmacht, insbesondere am monarchischen Gedanken"⁽⁶⁾. But probably the most effective demonstrations were those held in conjunction with other Verbände, such as the Stahlhelm, where vast parades and patriotic displays often involved a blatant advocacy of the Imperial past and the singing of "Heil Dir _____".⁽⁷⁾ The burden of the DOB/NDO printed propaganda tended to favour the Hohenzollern Crown Prince, although, of course, the Bavarian officers were primarily concerned with the Wittelsbachs and the admittedly more popular Prince Rupert⁽⁸⁾.

The monarchist enthusiasm of the officers is wholly understandable: much more interesting is the extent to which the KB leaders were able to go in the same direction without provoking uproar from the rank and file. The monarchist activity of the KB under von Heeringen probably reached a peak in 1925 with the election of Hindenburg and the 1st Reichskriegertag later in the year. Already in the previous year the KVe had taken official part in the big demonstration at Halle⁽⁹⁾. In December 1924 Col. Karwiese,

(4) D-O-B1 12, 23-3-27.

(5) II M 65, 7 (F) //"DOB" (esp): 5-2-27, 25-2-27.

(6) "DOB" 25-11-28, p.1316.

(7) FO 371, 9825 C7885: Halle demonstration 11-5-24 (PRO).
"DOB" 25-10-28, p.1231: Halle.

(8) R 43 I 766,78: Reich, representative Munich to Chancellor 2-12-24 (K).

(9) See p. 140.

secretary of the KB, had a conversation with Geheimrat Nitz, the Kaiser's financial agent in Berlin, as a result of which it was agreed to send two copies of the "Kriegerzeitung" regularly to Doorn⁽¹⁰⁾. The announcement in the "Kriegerzeitung" marking the Kaiser's birthday in the following month certainly did not amount to an advocacy of a restoration, but the language employed was a marked departure from the more formal notices of previous years: "The thoughts of many loyal Germans turns to Holland where the German Kaiser lives all on his own" (einsam haust) "und erleben mit ihm bessere Zeiten für unser Vaterland". KB policy notices were to display an increasing liking for innuendo and "double entendre"⁽¹¹⁾. In June 1925 the KB's 3rd president, von Finckenstein, was actually in Doorn⁽¹²⁾. At the July conference Heeringen so far forgot his political neutrality that he asked the assembled representatives (a large part of whom were ex-officers) to stand in silence and think of the Kaiser⁽¹³⁾. In the same month the laying of a foundation stone by General Kahns (head of the East Prussian Landeskriegerverband, as well as of the East Prussian DOB) was attended by 32 KVe, Stahlhelm and "Ostland" contingents. As one of the local dignitaries struck the stone three times and recited the usual improvised rhyme his words were met with special approval:

"Und drittens wir zum Herrgott flehen, Lass unser Kaiserreich erneut erstehen!"⁽¹⁴⁾ Again at the Kriegertag in October, a message from the Crown Prince was read. Individual Vereine were in correspondence with the Kaiser seeking, and often receiving, "Fahnenhägel" and donations towards new colours⁽¹⁵⁾.

This increase in monarchist sentiment did not pass unnoticed in the socialist press - especially when "the Kaiser" was publicly toasted⁽¹⁶⁾.

(10) NH 909, 213: PLKV to Hofmarschallsamt 31-12-24 (K).

(11) KZ 25-1-25.

(12) NH 909, 223: PLKV to KKV Duisburg 19-8-26 (K).

(13) NH 906, Neu Ruppin 5-7-25 (K).

(14) KZ 13-9-25.

(15) NH 909, 215, 224 (K)//KZ 25-10-25.

(16) NH 909, 217 (K).

In 1926 a new expressly monarchist group arose alongside the older "Bund der Aufrechten", "Adelsgenossenschaft", etc. The "Gärtnerei", it was alleged, were canvassing the Hohenzollern cause above all in the Kriegervereine. Noteworthy, is the alleged involvement of Nitz and the monarchist complaints against the DNVP, on the grounds of lack of real enthusiasm⁽¹⁷⁾. The activities of General Finck von Finckenstein, the Prussian Landesverband's 2nd President (3rd President of the KB) attracted a little criticism from the rank and file, although part of this may be due to confusion between the General and his brother who was for a time actually part of the Kaiser's entourage at Doorn. In August 1926, a letter from the Prussian association runs: "Unser 2. Präsident ist seit Juni 1925 nicht in Doorn gewesen - hat vielmehr mehrere Einladungen dorthin abgelehnt"⁽¹⁸⁾. Be this as it may, there were dangers attached to excessively blatant monarchist expressions. General Gobbin on occasion specifically warned KVe to omit "Kaiserhoch"⁽¹⁹⁾. In general the KV press avoided direct advocacy of a restoration, even during 1925. The usual tone of articles on the Kaiser was nevertheless laden with nostalgia and tear-jerking sentiment⁽²⁰⁾.

With the February 1927 celebration of the Kaiser's military jubilee at least some observers considered that the "Deutsche Kaiserpartei" had come out into the open - in opposition to the Deutsch-Nationale, who had made their peace with the Republic⁽²¹⁾. The KB, however, took no official part in this. In fact von Finckenstein was soon replaced by Generalmajor Gerd von Enkevort who nevertheless himself had strong ties with the monarchist NDO. Finckenstein continued with his active monarchist work outside the KB, and in March 1928 was trying hard to create renewed enthusiasm for the

(17) *ibid.* 218: "Neues Wiener Journal" 13-4-26; 219: "Berliner Tageblatt" 13-4-26

(18) NH 909, 223: PLKV to KKV Duisburg 19-8-26 (K).

(19) *ibid.* 224.

(20) e.g. *ibid.* 264.

(21) *ibid.* 227: "Berliner Tageblatt" 9-2-27.

Kaiser within the DNVP, particularly with regard to broadcasting the true circumstances surrounding his departure from Germany⁽²²⁾.

Hindenburg himself finally avowed the truth of this in November 1928⁽²³⁾.

The new leader of the KB initially kept the growing monarchist sentiment within bounds. However, the Kaiser's forthcoming 70th birthday (January 1929), and the way it was to be celebrated brought matters to a head. A meeting of the Praesidium in September 1928 decided: "Keine Einwirkung des Vorstandes auf Abhaltung von Feiern auszuüben" - not to restrain the KVe from marking the occasion as they wished. This was embodied in a circular of 10th October - but opinions still differed as to whether the KB itself should mark the occasion. By 21st December it had been decided that Horn himself - with other leaders from the patriotic Verbände - should visit Doorn and convey the wishes of the whole organisation. In the same month Karwiese wrote in reply to Major Müldner von Mülnheim (Generalverwaltung des Preussischen Königshauses) that the attendance of Hohenzollern princes, such as Eitel-Frederick and Oskar, at KVe functions was "sehr erwünscht". As early as January 12th the "Kyffhäuser" was carrying articles and pictures whose message was unmistakable⁽²⁴⁾. A few months later a Bavarian Kriegerbund representative attended the 10th anniversary celebration of the VVV in Munich, despite the fact that the Bund had recently withdrawn from the VVV. But Prince Alfons (Wittelsbach), was also present⁽²⁵⁾.

Thus the "monarchism" which had always been entrenched in the KB and its Landesverbände⁽²⁶⁾ was by 1928/29 again firmly avowed by the KB leadership. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this at least did not clash with the real wishes of the majority of its members. Logically it was

(22) *ibid.*, 243: "Berlin Mittag" 29-3-28.

(23) *ibid.* 256: "Der Tag" 11-11-28.

(24) *ibid.* 246-61: 265-6.

(25) R 43 I 770, 170: Munich to Reichskanzlei 14-5-29 (K).

(26) BMI/PS: "Bad.KB" (Ka)//Flugs. I 191 (SH).

impossible for such an organisation to be at once nationalist-monarchist on the one hand, and politically neutral on the other. Firmly rejecting as he had the violent "right-radical" fringe, Horn could not help following a path parallel to that of the less extreme Verbände and the political parties of the Right. But the growth of the NSDAP as a political party and the varying courses of even the less extreme parties and Verbände, who were finally sucked into the Nazi vortex, made even this parallel path incompatible with either "political neutrality", or "moderate conservatism" - even allied to some form of monarchist restoration. Even as late as 1929 it is possible that a formal abandoning of KB neutrality in the interests of advocating a constitutional monarchy need not have torn the Bund apart, nor brought down the wrath of the "republican" gods. Such a coalition as KB plus DVP with the moderates from the DNVP might yet have given moderate conservatism the lead it so badly needed.

Either way the main effect of the KB attitude to the Hohenzollerns had been to label the big ex-servicemen's organisation once and for all as "monarchist" and increase the suspicion felt towards it by elements of all the parties left of the DVP. Like the local activities of many KVe, it can hardly be doubted that the public rallies and celebrations in which the officer associations and also sometimes the KB took part, contributed sensibly to the deepening of social and political hatreds in Germany. In addition, the impact of the propaganda of the veterans' associations, in all its forms, can only at this stage have really benefited the DNVP and to a lesser extent the DVP. Indeed in the Gayl-circle-negotiations which led to the selection of Jarres as the candidate of the patriotic associations in 1925, Heeringen's public support of the nationalist choice led to dissension from the southern Verbände - and the KB itself had to refrain in the end from signing the circular advocating the election of Jarres⁽²⁷⁾. Politically speaking organisations like DOB and NDO were more homogeneous in composition

(27) NL Gayl 23 (K).

There were some 65 ex-officers in the Reichstag (1928) and some 35 (about a third) of the DNVP representatives (1924/28) came into this category⁽²⁸⁾. In October 1928 the more moderate Count Westarp was replaced by Alfred Hugenberg as leader of the DNVP. The more radical direction taken by the "Conservatives" under his leadership made the need for redefinition of the KB's position all the more pressing.

8. COMMUNISM

The KPD had displayed its revolutionary potential in 1918-1919, 1921 and 1923. During the middle years of the Weimar Republic these activities took second place to work within the parliamentary context - although, locally, clashes between Communists and right-wing Verbände, including KVe, continued throughout the period, as did the secret efforts towards cell-building⁽¹⁾. Both the civil and the military security forces maintained a close watch on all aspects of KPD work. The "Reichskommissar für die Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung" brought out regular reports on the "Linksradikale" - such as the 48 page "Denkschrift über die Bürgerkriegsvorbereitungen der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands auf militärpolitischem und militärtechnischem Gebiet" (1925)⁽²⁾. The Navy kept a close watch on the activities of the "Rote Marine" and the general trends of Communist propaganda; the Reichswehrministerium brought out a 44 page secret report (August 1928) which was circulated to battalion level⁽³⁾.

The veterans' organisations were naturally anti-Communist and in 1924, the head of the press office of the "Liga zum Schutze der deutschen Kultur gegen den Bolschewismus" (Rogge), became editor of the "Kriegerzeitung"

(28) BPD p.445// "DOB" 1928 p.957.

(1) Flechtheim/Weber op.cit. p.42-3.

(2) R58, 1114 (K).

(3) II M 65, 5: 9, 10, 11 (F).

under the general direction of Otto Riebicke ⁽⁴⁾. As yet, however, there was nothing even suggestive of a propaganda campaign against Communism. Only occasional articles on the subject appeared in 1925 ⁽⁵⁾. However, towards the end of the period (1927/28) it seems that the fight against "the Reds" became one of the fields of the official co-operation between KB and Reichswehrministerium. In correspondence of September/October 1928, Colonel von Schleicher showed himself quite prepared to answer KB enquiries on the subject, obviously drawing on confidential, even secret, intelligence material ⁽⁶⁾. The full blossoming of this relationship only took place in the years 1929 to 1933. At this stage the KB leaders were still not fully prepared to co-operate with associations such as the "Internationale" or even "Antira", led by a former member of the Prussian Association's praesidium. They nevertheless expressed their readiness to participate in a general conference including groups such as the DOB, and officers from the Reichswehrministerium ⁽⁷⁾. In terms of propaganda, the most expressly anti-Communist of the organisations at this time was the monarchist NDO ⁽⁸⁾.

Events were soon to take a more radical course: the Comintern decision (August 1928) to view democratic Socialism as their prime enemy was to have fateful results; the new economic crisis was to create a climate of dissatisfaction in which the propaganda of the anti-republicans of the Left (and Right) could flourish as never before.

SUMMARY

Probably the most significant aspect of the activities of the ex-

(4) Forell op.cit. p.25.

(5) e.g. "Rote Armee und Rote Flotte" (11-1-25).

"Kommunismus und Landwirtschaft" (6-9-25).

(6) NH 917: Karwiese to Schleicher 7-9-28 (K).

(7) ibid. KB to Pustau 20-2-28.

(8) AA 24-5-24; 1-11-24.

servicemen's organisations between 1923 and 1928 was that of propaganda. The mass rallies, the veteran-press and the everyday activities of the thousands of Kriegervereine and officer clubs gave a considerable impetus to the popularising of the officer-concept of national honour with its corollary of aggressive militarism. After reaching a peak in the years 1925/26, the activity of the KB was ultimately, under von Horn, to approximate more closely to the policy of General Groener: "Like most of those who served in the World War, I am a firm believer in a sound and intelligent pacifism - though not in one that leads to servile submission⁽¹⁾: in one word - "Gleichberechtigung". But this change in emphasis had only been partly achieved by late 1928 and in fact never finally superceded "revanchism". In the hardening of its attitude towards Social Democracy, in its initial co-operation with the "patriotic Verbände" and its more or less open monarchist preferences, even the KB, the most moderate of the veteran groups barely preserved its official neutrality, and certainly contributed much to the cause of the Conservatives - notably the DNVP.

There was, nevertheless, another side to the coin. Although active support from Hindenburg and the Reichswehr was somewhat offset by the suspicions of men such as Severing, the KB at least earned for itself a position of "official toleration" as did, less justifiedly, the DOB. This enabled fruitful co-operation to develop with the Reichswehr, publicly and secretly, officially and unofficially, propaganda-wise and also technically, in matters of pre- and para-military training. Unfortunately, the general nationalist/militarist/monarchist "image" of the KB precluded a continuation of the KB "monopoly" position after 1918: the toleration of rival organisations with a definite party-political bias was one of the main factors deepening social and political disharmony, as

(1) Eyck: p.153.

was the official failure satisfactorily to regulate the activities of the KVe at the local level. Official shortcomings had much to account for, especially the complete failure of the Reichswehr leaders to differentiate between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" right-wing Verbände - other than at a superficial level.

Despite the social and physical divisions within the veteran movement, and the mistakes of earlier leaders, General von Horn appreciated-however imperfectly to start with - the need to redefine the ethical standpoint of the KB vis à vis the increasingly radical excesses of the Right. He had already initiated steps in this direction before 1929 and was ultimately to go a great deal further. With more support from the "establishment" and more initiative from the party politicians it is at least possible that "moderate conservatism" could have made more of "showing". But the impact of a new economic crisis and the not unconnected successes of the Nazis at the elections meant that time was all too short.

SECTION FOUR

1929 - 1933

1. From the end of 1928 to the Elections of September 1930
2. September 1930 to the Financial Crisis of August 1931
3. August 1931 to the Re-election of Hindenburg in April 1932
4. To Hitler's Chancellorship (January 1933)

1. FROM THE END OF 1928 TO THE REICHSTAG ELECTIONS OF SEPTEMBER 1930

The last months of 1928 saw several events which were to have serious effects on the cause of republican government in Germany. In October Hugenberg became leader of the DNVP and his extreme policies and willingness to co-operate with Hitler tended to cut his party off from the moderate conservatives. On October 6th the DVP Reichstag deputies withdrew from the Stahlhelm, which was now virtually a DNVP Kampfbund, firmly wedded to a policy of public "anti-system" activity. The political campaigns of the Stahlhelm were centred on modifying the constitution legally, by utilising Article 73 which made provision for initiating referenda. In September the Stahlhelm had commenced a "Volksbegehren" aimed at changing the constitution by strengthening the powers of the President. Soon was to come the bitter struggle over the Young Plan. This direct political involvement of one of the most important veterans' organisations (and unlike the Reichsbanner, the Stahlhelm was still predominantly composed of ex-servicemen) raised considerable problems for the others, especially, of course, the KB. Besides the renewed and rechannelled agitation of the political right, there were other equally ominous signs. A particularly severe winter caused the unemployment figures to rise to some 2.6 million⁽¹⁾.

The propaganda activity of the KB must be seen against this background. The militarist aspects expressed in the Leitsätze (September 1928), whether interpreted as "Revanchism" or demands for "Gleichberechtigung", continued to play an important part, especially in the weekly articles by Colonel Groos in amplification of the Leitsätze (from March 1929). These articles concentrated on a projection of the German officer concept of honour and general virtue into the political field: "Das Ziel deutscher Zukunft ist: Freiheit für deutsches Land, für deutsches Volkstum, deutsche Art, Glauben,

(1) Berghahn op.cit. p.166 et seq//Eyck op.cit. p.166, 195-6 (II).

Kultur, Arbeit. Freiheit von fremder Fron!.... Lebensraum wir können nicht leben ohne Ehre"⁽²⁾. At the same time class-hatred and religious intolerance were criticised, although there was a strong undertone hostile to "internationalism" - especially that based on money⁽³⁾. In January 1929 the old struggle against the "war-guilt-lie" (which formed in the eyes of most Germans the basis for the Versailles Treaty, in particular the clauses on reparations: and the new Allied provisions were shortly to be embodied in the Young Plan) was renewed and assumed considerable significance once the Stahlhelm campaign against the Young Plan got underway⁽⁴⁾.

The third major propaganda campaign initiated by the KB was that against Communism and "cultural Bolshevism" launched on 15th May 1929. The KB under Horn had already been increasingly concerned with combating Communism on moral grounds (the "decadence" of the theatre, etc.) and, of course, from a political standpoint, - particularly the attempts by "the Reds" to infiltrate the Reichswehr⁽⁵⁾. The KB praesidium meeting of 14th May discussed the issue, dwelling particularly on Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front". The particular forms of "cultural Bolshevism" that concerned the ex-officers were those embodying pacifism and attacks on the officer corps. The campaign announced the following day was put into effect in the now customary manner: releases to the national press, public speeches by von Horn and the other leaders, space in the "Kyffhäuser", film slides, lectures, etc. In November 1929, the two "campaigns" were officially combined to form a joint attack on the "war-guilt-lie" and "Bolshevism". In view of the KB's official neutrality considerable caution was displayed over working with other associations and individuals.

(2) NH 906, 75; KY 17-3-29: "Gedanken .." iii, Col. Groos (K).

(3) *ibid.* and KY 7-4-29: "Gedanken ..." vi.

(4) NH 906, 66-7.

(5) See p. 211. //NH 917, correspondence with "Frauenkampfbund" (Jan 1929).

Thus in the case of one Walther Boehmer, extensive enquiries were first made, notably with the editorial board of the moderate conservative "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung". This caution effectively prevented the KB building up a network of contacts with genuine non-political societies with similar aims. In other matters the KB threw caution to the winds: on 22nd October 1929 they sent an open letter to the Prussian Kultusminister protesting at the use of Remarque's book in state schools, an act hardly calculated to produce official goodwill. Locally too, as in Frankfurt/M, the KVe actively campaigned against "objectionable" plays. In February 1930, the leader of the important Saxon Landesverband wrote to Horn expressing his concern over Communist attempts to infiltrate the army and navy. Horn in turn approached Schleicher during the course of March with a view to discussing how the KB could further help in combating Communism. In the same month the "Kyffhäuser" published a long article dealing with "Kommunistische Zersetzungsmanöver" and another refuting the contention of Arnold Rechberg, the industrialist, who claimed that Mussolini and "certain German nationalists" were seeking to co-operate with Russian propagandists in attacking France. The Reichswehrminister, General Groener, was also genuinely concerned. In a letter of 24th March he expressed the view that a modified "school and church policy" would be useful in combating "Bolshevism" in Germany. In this light it seems highly probable that the propaganda line followed by the KB was materially influenced by Horn's contacts with the Reichswehrministerium. The campaign against Bolshevism also led directly to the later co-operation between the KB and the Churches. In March 1930 an article ("Der Antichrist") appeared in the "Kyffhäuser": "Alle Zeichen deuten darauf, das die Stunde nahe ist, wo die Völker sich entscheiden müssen, ob der Unglaube oder der christliche Glaube ihnen die massgebende Antwort geben soll"⁽⁶⁾.

(6) NH 917//iNL Schleicher 34-68: Groener to Gleich 24-3-30 (F).

Unfortunately, the KB leaders at this critical juncture were by no means united. The moderate-conservative, moral line followed by von Horn and Lt. Col. Karwiese, reflected the policy being pursued by the Reichswehr itself under Groener and his "cardinal in politics". General von Enckevort, virtually Horn's deputy, and General von Fabeck of the associated "Wohlfahrtsgemeinschaft" both had strong NDO connections and favoured a much more definite involvement with the DNVP, the Stahlhelm and the other "nationalists". Enckevort did not agree, for example, with the "Anregungen" drafted to appear as a supplement to the 1929 New Year's notice. This draft advocated a campaign of "staatsbürgerliche Unterweisung" among the KVe, to overcome the "allgemeine politische Gleichgültigkeit des Bürgertums". This as opposed to a more specifically political/patriotic form of indoctrination: "Niemals wird der Vorstand des Kyffhäuserbunds zu grössten vaterländischen Fragen eine Stellung einnehmen, die nicht von der überwältigenden Mehrheit der Organisation gebilligt wird". This aspect, specially disapproved of by von Enckevort, was the Achilles' Heel of Horn's strategy. Any association, especially one of old soldiers, that wishes to make an impact in a particular way, must be led from above, by inspired men who are able to impose their views on their members and not vice versa. Another draft from mid-1929 ("Richtlinien für Presseaufbau und Taktik") expressed the ethical moderate-conservative position favoured by Horn: while the way of the Social Democrats was criticised so was that of the all-too-narrow and extreme "national movement". A genuinely patriotic front on a moral basis, aiming to preserve the best of German tradition together with the strength of family and comradely ties, was the only answer. In the same breath the statement of policy continued: "the KB is ideally designed to achieve this, but must appear neither as reactionary nor as a prop to the present state". Of course, in reality the KB had long been a prop, of sorts, to the Weimar State - and at the same time had also pursued "reactionary" policies in

public. The only logical answer was the compromise of "limited monarchy" - pursued politically, but this as far as is known, was never stated by Horn explicitly; the General remained a member of the DNVP, while not hesitating to express his divergent views to Hugenberg personally⁽⁷⁾. In effect, despite the moral reservations, the militarist aspects of KB propaganda, the concern with the war-guilt issue and the attention given to the Communist preparations for taking over Germany, all served to further the DNVP/Stahlhelm/Nazi cause; particularly when Horn could speak in public of thirty-three political parties waiting for "den Starcken Mann!"⁽⁸⁾ This was even more the case with the officer associations, whose policies at this time were closely identified with those of the Stahlhelm, and whose propaganda thus displayed a more definite hostility to the republic⁽⁹⁾.

The extent to which local KVe adhered to the official "Horn" line varied. While it remained the official policy that membership of the SPD in itself constituted no ground for expulsion from the KV⁽¹⁰⁾, an influential local squire could ensure that socialist members did not find their way into responsible positions such as that of Youth Leader, even securing their removal where necessary⁽¹¹⁾. Moreover, even at higher levels the most bitter criticism of the socialist "Wehrprogramm" was expressed. The 10th February 1929 edition of the "Sächsisches Militärvereinsblatt" prompted a rapid enquiry from the Reichswehrministerium

(7) NH 906, 67, 81. (K)//Nachlass Enckevort 26: speech by Horn (1-5-32) (DZA).

(8) *ibid.* 78: "Berlin-Friedenauer Tageblatt" 13-4-29: Horn's local speech.

(9) See esp: "DOB" 15-10-28 p.1165: first Volksbegehren.

5-6-29 front p. : Socialism.

15-3-29 p.289: "war-guilt-lie".

25-6-29 front p.: "10 years Versailles".

5-7-29 front p.: France.

15-7-29 p.781: "Femeverurteilten".

(10) NH 913: PLKV to RB Magdeburg 6-5-30//NH 915: same to Merseburg Dec 1929.

(11) NH 915: Silesian Prov. to PLKV 3-1-30.

(25th February)⁽¹²⁾. The KB itself certainly endeavoured to restrain such open hostility to the SPD, while at the same time continuing its feud with the Reichsbanner and the Reichsbund ("Reichsbund der Kriegsbeschädigten"). In September 1928 the Kyffhäuser conference had passed a resolution against KV members also belonging to the rival socialist welfare organisation. Continued hostility from the Reichsbund led to the KB and its Landesverbände taking steps to enforce this (1930)⁽¹³⁾. Clearly, the outward neutrality towards socialists was only maintained with difficulty, and in a few places not at all. The common ground between socialism and the German Churches, namely pacifism, led to increasing tension between KVe and local clergy of both denominations. Several incidents occurred in 1929/30: clergymen avoided all mention of "the Fallen" at remembrance services; claimed tactlessly that 2 million Germans "died for nothing"; suggested that memorials to the dead of the World War were nothing more than the perpetuation of memories of murder; adopted hostile attitudes to the KV colours at funerals - and in general caused much ill-feeling among ordinary members, which, of course, also involved the higher associations in acrimonious exchanges. In Minden (July 1929) the local Evangelical pastor accused a KV male voice choir of indulging in drunkenness and lechery. Three of his parishioners addressed an open and strongly worded letter of protest to him - and were promptly charged with libel. This case came up in April 1930 and attracted considerable local attention. The two-day trial in which 23 witnesses were heard, ended with the KV members being acquitted. In Bavaria, the writings of one Dr. Moenius, who raked up sixteen-year old accusations that German soldiers had shot Belgian civilians, created much local ill-feeling. In

(12) NH 910, 25: Schleicher to Karwiese 25-2-29.

(13) *ibid.* 65: draft for PB 22-2-30/74: KB to Rhenish KV 26-5-30.
Plugs.I 191: III "Württ.KZ" 22/1-6-30 (SH).

special circumstances, (where for example the degree of overlap between KV and right-radical associations was considerable - and only a small minority of KVe could come into this category⁽¹⁴⁾), the hostility of the clergy was understandable. More often, however, their attitude to the KVe was not justifiable and certainly did nothing to promote "Volks-gemeinschaft". This is also true with regard to the other incidents in which KVe were involved (e.g. with Communists⁽¹⁵⁾): earlier in the period, certainly before 1925, the public activities of the KVe could be regarded as provocative. With the increasing participation of republican officials (from the President downwards) in public rallies of all kinds, and with the considerable multiplication of "nationalist" functions of a much more radical kind, the local KVe can be viewed in 1930 as much more "sinned against than sinning"⁽¹⁶⁾. In general they observed the letter of the law, and, with important exceptions, the spirit of their own statutes.

In January 1929 the Kaiser celebrated his 70th birthday. General von Horn, along with leaders from the officer associations and other "patriotic" groups, visited Doorn on January 20th and by so doing squarely aligned the KB with the German monarchists. Certainly, the official circular to the KVe stated that "whether and in what form" they marked the occasion was left to the individual Vereine. Certainly, also, the Berlin rallies on the 27th and 28th were organised by the DOB. Nevertheless, Horn's visit and the unambiguous treatment of the Kaiser's birthday in the "Kyffhäuser" was a clear statement of policy. Some local associations went even further: in Giessen the local regimental KV held a celebration in the Reichswehr canteen; the Saxon Landesverband issued an address that was tantamount to advocating a restoration. This provoked an official response

(14) See p. 114, 196, 281.

(15) NH 917: Berlin (1-5-29); Hettstadt (May 1929); Hamburg (20-7-29).

(16) NH 918: 10-18.

(from the Reichswehrministerium) as did the use made by the "Bund deutscher Marinevereine" (which was a kind of unofficial Landesverband of the KB) of the KB's December circular. At the end of May 1929 Severing (the Reichsinnenminister) wrote a stiff note to the KB. The BdM circular (6th December 1928) viewed the celebration of the Kaiser's birthday as a duty and went on to say that, "in agreement with the KB" the form was left to the individual Vereine. But Severing had other motives and the matter of infringed neutrality was not pursued⁽¹⁷⁾. From the 30,000 KVe themselves there was virtually no protest, and those that did not actually support the KB line were clearly, at worst, indifferent. There is no evidence to suggest that either Horn or the other leaders ever contemplated more active steps on behalf of the ex-Kaiser. The KB contented itself with expressing the hope - "dass Deutschland die Kräfte wiedergewinnt, die einst das deutsche Kaiserreich zu seiner Macht und Grösse emporgehoben - Disziplin, Ehrfurcht und Heldischen Geist" (January 1930: 71st Birthday), and with defending the Kaiser from attacks by socialists⁽¹⁸⁾.

Whatever effect the agitation of the "patriotic associations" was having on German popular sentiment, it moved Stresemann by March 1929 to consider resigning from the DVP: "Da Hugenberg nicht ausserordentlich populär ist, ist es sogar möglich, dass ein Teil der Leute, die heute deutsch-national sind, wieder zur Volkspartei kommen, und vielleicht ist die Zahl der Mandate, die wir erringen, grösser, wenn mein Name nicht diejenigen erschreckt, die im Nationalverband Deutscher Offiziere, im Stahlhelm, vaterländischen Verbänden und anderen nützlichen Organisationen die Trommel der angeblichen nationalen Begeisterung rühren"⁽¹⁹⁾. The

(17) See p.224.

(18) NH910 esp. 61: KY 26-1-30; 65: draft for PB.

(19) NL Stresemann 7411: S to Kahl 13-3-29 (FO).

attitude of the German Foreign Office to the agitation of the Verbände had not changed since the officially sponsored "Arbeitsausschuss deutscher Verbände" had been set up eight years previously. The dangers inherent in such an attitude were to become strikingly obvious within a very few weeks.

Even before the committee of experts meeting in Paris published the full text of the new scheme for the payment by Germany of her reparation obligations, the "Young Plan", the Stahlhelm launched a "Reichsausschuss" to attack it on principle (23rd May 1929⁽²⁰⁾). The following day, Severing wrote to the KB, caustically enquiring about an arrangement made a month previously at Halle, suggesting that such was a breach of their "statutory neutrality". Exactly a week later (31st) another letter was sent with a similar complaint over the use made by the "Marinevereine" of the KB circular concerning the Kaiser's birthday, five months previously. The motive underlying these letters was quite clear: the KB must avoid contact with the Stahlhelm Reichsausschuss, or else!⁽²¹⁾ The effect was achieved: the Parolebuch of the 26th May stated quite clearly that the praesidium was unable to participate in the Reichsausschuss as the proposed "Volksbegehren" was a matter of party politics, and hence concerned only the individual member in his private capacity. The alternative was to be declared "political" by the state authorities and hence forfeit the KB's special privileges⁽²²⁾. The KB was one of the few patriotic organisations of importance to refuse co-operation with the Stahlhelm/DNVP/NSDAP agitation, and naturally enough, came in for considerable criticism as a result. In fact, however, the attitude of the KB in the

(20) NH 924: "KB and Young Plan" 1929.

(21) NH 910, 49, 51.

(22) NH 924, 8: PLKV to Spandau KKV 10-8-29.

following months was much more ambiguous than the first declaration of policy would suggest. On the other hand, the other officially recognised veteran association, the DOB, while participating in the Reichsausschuss, carefully avoided in its newspaper any specific prescription by the DOB leaders - although this was clearly implied⁽²³⁾.

On 28th June 1929 the KB held a big demonstration in the Berlin Stadion against the "war-guilt-lie". This was widely advertised and recommended in the "patriotic" press, especially the "Deutscher Offizier-Bund" and was attended by men from all sections of the Right⁽²⁴⁾. Again on 9th July at the Kiel conference Horn dwelt at length on the "war-guilt" question, but at the same time emphasised that the Bund itself must draw the line between "patriotic" and "party-political" activity. Attempts by the Stahlhelm to form groups within the KB must be resisted, and Stahlhelm/KV members must behave as loyal KV members, inside their KVe⁽²⁵⁾. A few days later (19th/21st July) came the 3rd KB "Deutsche Reichskrieger-tag" in Munich, attended by members of the Bavarian royal family, Minister-President Held (who delivered an official address) and many other officials. In the course of the various events, which included a torchlight procession, a remembrance service, a tattoo by the Reichswehr, a 2½ hour marchpast of the Verbände and historical tableaux, Horn re-emphasised KB policy over the "war-guilt-lie" and categorically denied that he was opposed to the activities of the Stahlhelm, with whom he wished, as always, to maintain the closest comradely ties. Men who were simultaneously members of both organisations "müssen aber in Kriegervereinen sich als Kriegervereiner fühlen und betätigen". The attitude of the Reich authorities to the Krieger-tag was unfortunate. After keeping Berlin well informed of the preparations, the Reich representative in

(23) "DOB" 14-12-29, Nachrichten.

(24) "DOB" 25-6-29, Nachrichten//Deutsche Wehr 26-6-29.

(25) NH 906, 88-91.

Munich (Haniel) received no clear instructions from Berlin whether or not to accept the invitation to attend. This appears to have been due to the late agreement of the Bavarians to enforce the "Flaggenerlass" and Severing's absence from Berlin. Either way, Haniel did not attend, on the unofficial advice of the Reichskanzlei, and as a result found himself carpeted by no less an authority than President Hindenburg himself. Clearly, however, such mass demonstrations could only further the cause of the Stahlhelm and its campaign. Seldte, the Stahlhelm leader, could well afford to endorse Horn's attitude at Munich in the face of such helpful and gratis publicity⁽²⁶⁾. At the end of July further policy statements were issued by the KB and DOB, reinforcing the line already established.

Partly due to misrepresentation in the press and on the radio, partly to genuine differences of outlook, a number of local branches joined the local committees for the Volksbegehren, in unconscious or conscious defiance of the KB line; others expressed their dissatisfaction ~~with this~~. Resistance was most serious in the Prussian province of Saxony where all three Regierungsbezirk Kriegerverbände (Magdeburg, Merseburg and Erfurt) were involved - as well as the Gotha Landesverband: this was the home of the Stahlhelm, and in the case of Merseburg, an agreement had recently been concluded with the central Stahlhelm. In Pomerania too, several Kreisverbände opposed the KB line, even after Horn himself had paid a special visit to Köslin in October. Elsewhere, Silesia and Potsdam were affected⁽²⁷⁾. Certainly, only a small minority of Kreisverbände were involved and these would have been no loss to the KB - indeed their expulsion would have brought real advantages in terms of discipline and definition. However, matters were left to find their own solution. Only on 12th November 1929 did a KB circular actually threaten to expel

(26) *ibid.* 92//NH 926, 130: letter to Franke//MA 104266 (MGS)// R43 I 766, 102 etc (K).

(27) NH 924 *passim*.

members continuing in their defiance, and the following day initiated expulsion proceedings against at least one particularly active "rebel"⁽²⁸⁾.

Meanwhile the KB adhered to the policy of attacking the "war-guilt-lie" and of leaving the Volksbegehren to the individual. The KB conference (14th September) endorsed this policy⁽²⁹⁾. In his speech to the conference, Horn dwelt at length on the political situation. While confessing: "we are all deeply shaken by what the Hague Conference is forcing on to the German people" he pointed out (in line with the Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst circulars⁽³⁰⁾), the ultimate aim of securing the evacuation of the Rhineland. The "war-guilt" issue was given a thorough airing once more and the point stressed, that this, of course, "ist doch schliesslich auch die Grundlage für den Young-Plan"; again, the appeal for a broad "national front" was made. Other matters discussed included "cultural Bolshevism", the campaign to have §133 of the Reichswehr Law abandoned (this denied any political rights to members of the army, and Horn, like Groener opposed the demands by nationalists to remove the clause), and the question of the Stahlhelm/KV members. The situation in this respect had deteriorated since the Munich Kriegertag, and Horn stressed the different paths of the two organisations and strongly hinted that those members who continued to cause trouble should leave the KB⁽³¹⁾.

The situation changed somewhat in October. A few days after the death of Stresemann, the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Grzesinski, condemned the Stahlhelm Volksbegehren as an attack on the basis of the State and banned the branches in the Rhineland and Westfalia⁽³²⁾. Only five days after the ban, Horn spoke to the heads of the Kreisverbände

(28) *ibid.* 209, 241.

(29) *ibid.* 54: PB 8-9-29//NH 906: 100: Press release 19-9-29.

(30) NH 924, 62.

(31) NH 917: special offprint from "KY" 22-9-29.

(32) NH 924, 136.

at Köslin, in an attempt to bring the Pomeranian "rebels" to heel. He accused the Stahlhelm of preparing a struggle against the whole present system and stressed again the impossibility of the KB joining a political campaign⁽³³⁾. The readiness of the KB leaders to take their lead from the government is here especially noticeable. Horn was, of course, quite justified in his stronger line against the Volksbegehren. Only 5.8 million people were prepared to vote for this in the December referendum: "The basis of the Stahlhelm and Vaterländische Verbände (mostly former Wehrverbände) is far too narrow for the great Kyffhäuser organisation." Verbal clashes with the Stahlhelm had been particularly evident in^{the} Rhineland, Westfalia and South Germany (especially Bavaria) "where a not inconsiderable section of our membership belongs to parties not in the government"⁽³⁴⁾. The attitude of other ex-servicemen's associations was also by no means unanimously in favour of the Volksbegehren. Some DOB groups certainly opposed the KB line, especially in Pomerania; other individual members, especially in the DVP, supported it and some even left the DOB. In Dresden, the officer association of the Saxon Heavy Artillery declined to co-operate with the Reichsausschuss. The president of the small, but influential, Kriegsministerium Verein (General Schellch) actually signed a public declaration against the Volksbegehren, thus causing the Stahlhelm leader Dürsterberg to resign his membership. It is likely, however, that the majority of the DOB and NDO members voted for the Volksbegehren, particularly following the appeal by twenty-two former generals and admirals in October 1929, asking Hindenburg to lead the opposition to the Young Plan. Prominent among these were Schröder (NDO), Francois (DOB), Cramon and Field-Marshal von Mackensen⁽³⁵⁾.

The authorities of the Reich continued to hit back at the radical nationalists. The Ministry of the Interior (19th December) ordered the

(33) *ibid.* 167.

(34) *ibid.* 197: PLKV to Gen. Franke 8-11-29.

(35) *ibid.* 198.//NL Stresemann 7413: Mirath to Party-Committee 12-9-29// NL Schwertfeger 431: meeting 5-10-29 (K)//Büro des Reichspräs.: club membership (K)// Götitz *op.cit.* p.310.

dissolution of all military Verbände - in line with earlier decrees (1921 and 1926)⁽³⁶⁾. The Reichswehrminister (19th November, 22nd January) issued notes critical of the Nazis⁽³⁷⁾. After a temporary pause at the end of 1929, the KB continued (18th January) with the more acceptable opposition to the "war-guilt-lie" and "cultural Bolshevism"⁽³⁸⁾, fully conscious that by so doing they were furthering the campaign against the Young Plan - "unseres Erachtens sind Young Plan und Dawes Plan auf die Dauer nicht tragbar. Wir bekämpfen aber beide am wirksamsten dadurch, dass wir in erster Linie gegen die Kriegsschuldflüge und den Artikel 231 des Versailler Vertrages zu Felde ziehen"⁽³⁹⁾. The wisdom of this policy of running with the hares and hunting with the hounds, let alone its honesty, may seriously be questioned. Despite the difficulties created by the nationalist campaign for the German delegation at the second Hague Conference in January 1930, the Hague Protocol was duly signed, and subsequently approved by Reichsrat and Reichstag and on 13th March signed by President Hindenburg⁽⁴⁰⁾. Before this, however, came one more example of the ambiguous policy of the KB leadership. In February Horn refused a request that he should intervene with the President and ask him not to sign the Young Plan Law. Shortly afterwards a statement (23rd February 1930) in the "Parolebuch" expressed the clearest misgivings over the "New Plan" (Hague Protocol etc.), while stopping short at demanding that public opposition to it should be joined by "the organisation as such"⁽⁴¹⁾. This fluctuating course can only be accounted for by differences of opinion that existed within the Berlin Centrale, and the common desire to parry the attacks of their nationalist critics. But the agreement produced among the parties and Verbände of the Right by the

(36) LA Gelnhausen (1929) 6290. (Ma).

(37) cit. Carsten p.317-8.

(38) NH 906, 114: New Year's Message; 127: report of Horn's Sept. 1930 speech. NH 924, 148: January 18th rally.

(39) NH 925: "KB and Young Plan" 1930: note by Karwiese on Pauer's letter (Jan-)

(40) Eyck p.234 et seq.

(41) NH 925, 16, 18, 39.

campaign against the Young Plan was shortlived. Ludendorff's attack on Hindenburg (16th March) produced rapid statements in his defence from both KB and DOB⁽⁴²⁾. At the end of the month the Socialist-led government fell and the candidate of the Reichswehrministerium, Brüning, became Chancellor. On 3rd April Hitler left the DNVP/Stahlhelm "Reichsausschuss"⁽⁴³⁾. Horn once more reasserted the patriotic militarist outlook of the KB in his strongly worded attack on "cowardly pacifism", "internationalism" and "materialism" at Koblenz (13th April)⁽⁴⁴⁾.

The obvious immediate results of the Young Plan campaign seemed meagre. Only a modest 5.8 million had approved the Volksbegehren. The temporary cohesion induced in the nationalist camp had already dissolved. The DNVP lost Treviranus and the moderate-conservatives - a fact of considerable importance: there was no longer any tangible check from within on the ill-considered line taken by Hugenberg. As far as the Stahlhelm and KB were concerned, relations were probably worse than they had even been. However, as the events of the next months were to show, the Young Plan agitation in fact planted the seeds for the final destruction of the Weimar Republic. The question of war-guilt and national honour had been given its widest propaganda coverage yet, in the history of post-war Germany. Assisted by increasing unemployment figures this propaganda at last really began to make an imprint on public opinion. Equally important, the powerful Hugenberg propaganda machine had also brought to the public notice, in Germany as a whole, Adolf Hitler "the party leader", as opposed to the earlier "crank/Putschist". The combination of the two factors, with a certain amount of help from the Nazis' own party machine, was to produce the staggering NSDAP election gains in the Reichstag elections of September 1930⁽⁴⁵⁾.

(42) "Centralverein Zeitung" 4-4-30, 11-4-30 (pp.171, 186).

(43) Casten op.cit. p.307-8//Berghahn op.cit. p.214.

(44) NH 906, 123: "Dortmund Generalanzeiger" 14-4-30.

(45) Bullock op.cit. p.148-50.

The activities of the Stahlhelm in the question of the "Volksbegehren", together with the bitter personal attacks made on him by such organisations as the NDO and the Frontkriegerbund, must have brought home to Stresemann in the last months of his life, the dangers attached to tolerating such "patriotic" groups⁽⁴⁶⁾. Already in the summer of 1929 active steps were being taken to bring about more cohesion among the moderate nationalists. Ostensibly, at this stage, the initiative was being taken by the Jungdeutsche Orden (Jungdo) under Artur Mahraun; almost certainly, however, the hand of the Reichswehrministerium - and in particular, of Kurt von Schleicher - is to be detected behind the scenes. In June 1929, approaches were made by the Jungdo to the Deutsche Beamtenbund, the Reichslandbund and the Kyffhäuserbund; not, as far as is known, to the officer associations⁽⁴⁷⁾. In view of the statutory neutrality of his organisation, Horn had to proceed with the utmost caution. In September 1929 he wrote to Schleicher about "a matter" that Schleicher himself had "originally suggested a year previously", and at the same time sought advice over the choice of a new third President for the Bund⁽⁴⁸⁾. Late in 1929, Schleicher was very busy, attempting to create the foundations for a new administration to be led by Gentrist Brüning, or, failing him, the leader of the DVP, Scholz⁽⁴⁹⁾. The intention, like that of the Jungdo, was to create a broad "bürgerlich" coalition excluding the SPD. It seems likely that this was linked with a much more ambitious scheme to form a new moderate-conservative party, a "Hindenburgbund", embracing the "nationale und christliche Recht" from the Landvolk to the Democrats⁽⁵⁰⁾. Negotiations aimed at this end dragged on

(46) NL Stresemann 7413, H175157; 7393, H171200 (FO).

(47) NL Stresemann 7388, H170107: Jungdo to S.4-6-29.

(48) NL Schleicher 26, 121: Horn to S. 3-9-29 and reply (F).

(49) Carsten p.307-8.

(50) G8rlitz op.cit. p.329.

into 1930, without showing any conspicuous signs of success. The "Volksnationale Reichsausschuss" formed under the aegis of the Jungdo, was due to meet in Berlin on 5th April. Two weeks earlier Horn wrote again to Schleicher: "... Auch unsere Privatangelegenheit drängt zur Entscheidung, da bei uns eine Notlage vorliegt, die sofortiges Eingreifen notwendig macht"⁽⁵¹⁾. This is probably a reference to disagreement among the leaders of the Bund. Either way, the KB soon afterwards came out publicly in favour of Hindenburg and the new (Brüning) government as did the Jungdo and the new "Konservative Volkspartei"⁽⁵²⁾. In spite of all the efforts made by Schleicher and the Jungdo, and the establishment in April of the "Volksnationale Reichsvereinigung",⁽⁵³⁾ the only tangible political result was the amalgamation of the Jungdo with the DDP to form the "Staatspartei"⁽⁵⁴⁾. The 20 seats won in the September elections were of little significance when compared with the sweeping gains made by the Nazis. Nevertheless, the involvement of the biggest veterans' organisation in these manoeuvres, however peripherally, is evidence of the real difference in outlook between General von Horn and the more extreme nationalists.

More formal correspondence continued as usual - such as a "Reichswehrministerium" letter calling attention to the speech made by the Weimar Association leader, General von Kessinger, on the impossibility of fulfilling the demands of the Young Plan⁽⁵⁵⁾. In this, as in similar letters, it is possible to see the influence of Minister Severing: In view of Schleicher's plans for the Brüning administration, "directed above all against the Social Democrats and the Prussian government"⁽⁵⁶⁾, these "warnings" were of no real significance. When the KB publicly

(51) NL Schleicher 77, 75: Horn to S. 16-3-30 (F).

(52) Görlitz op.cit. p.319.

(53) "Centralverein Zeitung" 11-4-30 p.186.

(54) FO 371, 14362 C6649 Aug. 1930//Eyck p274-5, 279.

(55) NH 924, 115: Reichswehrministerium to KB 13-9-29.

(56) Carsten p.308.

protested (October 1929) against the Prussian Kultusminister's toleration of the use of Remarque's pacifist book in the schools, this was in complete accord with the Reichswehrministerium's policy⁽⁵⁷⁾. In December 1929, after considerable negotiations and soul-searching, the Kyffhäuserjugend joined the 4 million strong "Reichsausschuss der deutschen Jugendverbände", thus aligning itself more with the "volksbürgerliche Verbände" than the "right-radicals" - one more indication of the real difference between the two - despite the concessions made to the nationalists in the field of propaganda⁽⁵⁸⁾. Already 50,000 strong in 1929, this number had increased to 65,000 by the following year⁽⁵⁹⁾. The Kyffhäuserjugend in these years was based ostensibly on non-military physical education, with strong emphasis on national honour and racial unity - together with Christian ethics⁽⁶⁰⁾.

In March 1930 the Müller government resigned. The new Chancellor, Brüning, had an unenviable task from the outset. His attempts to deal with the economic crisis by means of cuts in government expenditure hit the middle classes severely. Already in July the "Reichsbund der Zivildienstberechtigten" was protesting at the wage and pension situation of the officials they represented - and drawing nearer to the NSDAP⁽⁶¹⁾. In June the Rhineland was finally evacuated as planned, despite the strongest reservations of the French over the 2,500 "riding clubs" in the area⁽⁶²⁾, many of them doubtless associated with the Cavalry "Waffenring". With regard to the right radicals, Brüning failed to obtain the lifting of the ban on the Stahlhelm by the Prussian administration and according to the Crown Prince, who wrote to Schleicher on the subject in June, lost much credit "in den nationalen und gut

(57) "DOB" 24-5-30, p.539.

(58) "Das Junge Deutschland" 1930://BPD p.481.

(59) BPD p.309//Schneider op.cit.

(60) Jahrbuch (KB) 1930 p.79.

(61) "Völkischer Beobachter" 30-7-30: report of conference.

(62) FO 371, 14372 C1882/1882 etc. March 1930 (PRO).

bürgerlichen Kreisen"⁽⁶³⁾. The ban was in fact lifted the following month following an irresponsible declaration of opinion on the part of President Hindenburg⁽⁶⁴⁾. On 14th July Horn wrote to the Chancellor what was really a remarkable letter in view of the KB's "neutrality". After suggesting that a KB representative (not Horn) be received by Brüning for confidential discussions over possible future changes of policy, he continued: "Um die Vor-und Mitarbeit des Bundes in zweckmässige Bahnen leiten zu können, würde die Einweihung in die jetzigen oder späteren Pläne der entscheidenden Stellen von grossem Wert sein. Meine Bitte scheint umso berechtigter, als sich schon jetzt Organisationen mit der Frage der Wehrverstärkung beschäftigen". Horn was clearly offering his services in the fields of military propaganda and training, aiming at an official re-involvement of the KB, as had been the case in Imperial Germany. As has been seen, local contacts with the Reichswehr, and unofficial, personal relations with the Ministry at the highest level, had long exercised a strong influence on KB policy, but the Bund in 1930 was one among several similar organisations. While the Staatssekretär wrote: "der Kyffhäuserbund ist nicht als verfassungsfeindlich anzusehen", he advised against the suggestion, since it would appear as if "sich die Reichsregierung der besonderen Mithilfe einer Organisation bedient". Gröner on the other hand was in favour of Brüning receiving Horn himself: "Der KB habe in letzter Zeit stets im Sinne der Regierung auf seiner Mitglieder Einfluss genommen". A meeting of the three over breakfast, after the election, was suggested. Brüning was clearly not happy with the idea, and a note of 13th October indicates that Schleicher no longer thought such a meeting necessary⁽⁶⁵⁾. While it is possible to see the hand of Schleicher behind Horn's letter, it is also possible that Horn had learnt of Brüning's meeting in June⁽⁶⁶⁾ with the Stahlhelm leaders, from that source; clearly

(63) NL Schleicher 21, 3: 16-6-30 (F).

(64) Eyck p.263.

(65) R 43 I 766, 13: 139-142. (K).

(66) Berghahn p.218.

this knowledge was the immediate occasion for the suggestion. The attitude of the Reichskanzlei itself is interesting, particularly in view of the thinly veiled agitation of the KB against the Young Plan. But then, of course, the "war-guilt" issue itself had long been an official Foreign Office ploy. To such a pitch had centralised direction of a coherent internal policy decayed. The absurdities of the republican system that Seeckt had condemned in 1919 had, if anything, increased over the years⁽⁶⁷⁾.

In the course of 1930 the leaders of the KB were given an object lesson on the aims and methods of the NSDAP - the so-called "Föry Skandal". It all started from a local incident of a familiar type - an outspoken attack by a priest on "militarism". In March a Roman Catholic Father Föry had attended a Nazi meeting in his parish, Honau. He had expressed himself passionately against the policies of the NSDAP and in addition, against the spirit and system of Prusso-German militarism - "the unteachable military caste". This episode was given wide publicity in the "Völkischer Beobachter" and exploited as a means of attacking Brüning and the Zentrum, besides the RC Church in general. Mistaken information concerning an alleged verbatim shorthand report was furnished by the Badischer Kriegerbund, and this led the KB to attack Föry in the "Kyffhäuser" of 15th June 1930. Questions in the Reichstag led to an investigation by the Ministry of Interior; according to the Reichswehrministerium (approached by Col. Karwiese) some doubt still existed as to the priest's actual remarks - which had, of course, been exaggerated and twisted by the Nazi press. Investigation of the affair by the Church authorities produced no "acceptable" settlement and this moved the Nazis to further attacks. In the course of August an SA gang of over 100 marched into Honau and failing to intimidate the priest with words resorted to violence. The Föry affair was, of course, by now part of

(67) See p. 53.

the Nazi election propaganda and although such organisations as the NDO continued to support the Nazi attack, the KB wisely withdrew from the affair, after strenuous efforts to arrive at the truth, and after being obliged to publish Föry's "Berichtigung"⁽⁶⁸⁾.

Another local incident in 1930 tended to cast an unfavourable light on the KB, once more involving the association with a demonstration against the republican flag. The Saxon Landrat who had condemned the KB as "anti-republican" in the flag-question (in a circular to his police officials) had, after many months, been prevailed upon to retract⁽⁶⁹⁾. In June 1930 a certain Lt. Col. von Buch was asked by a KB to speak at their "Kriegertag". He arrived with a contingent of Stahlhelmers, being the local Gau-Führer. Unknown to the KV chairman someone had placed a republican flag (black-red-gold) on the dance-marquee. Buch noticed this as he was about to deliver his speech and asked that it be taken down. Although it was afterwards replaced the matter had been duly reported to the Prussian Innenminister who sent a stiff note of complaint to the Berlin Centrale. Their chief reaction was to enquire why the offending flag had not been noticed long before the crowds had started to gather, and removed then. In general neither black-white-red nor black-red-gold was necessary, unless the latter was actually requested by visiting officials. (black-white-red alone had been forbidden by the Bund's flag instruction on the grounds of Groener's official order). The local (Kurhessen und Waldeck) Kriegerbund agreed that Stahlhelm/KV members should not wear their Stahlhelm badges at KV meetings, and that Stahlhelm contingents should not be invited to KV functions. The Severing policy of keeping the KB "up to the mark" - constantly reminding them of their political neutrality and the dangers of associating with organisations like the Stahlhelm - was having its effect (even if Severing himself was

(68) NH 918.

(69) See p. 173. //NH 906, 106: Magdeburg RB to PLKV 15-6-29.

temporarily not a member of either the Reich or the Prussian government)⁽⁷⁰⁾.

However, by the time the Reichstag was dissolved on 18th July 1930, the combination of economic depression and nationalist/militarist agitation had caused a noticeable hardening of national sentiment in favour of the extremists. Although less than 2% of the Army and Navy were sympathisers of the NSDAP according to one estimate⁽⁷¹⁾, close connections between the Reichswehr and SA existed in many places. Many ex-officers, especially those from the Freikorps, actually led local SA detachments; while a majority of the old officer corps was still staunchly monarchist and conservative, a growing proportion was going over to the Nazis; "Der NDO, dem die reaktionärsten, vorwiegend adligen und sehr einflussreichen Offiziere der Kaiserlichen Armee angehörten, sprach sich offen für die Nazi Partei aus"⁽⁷²⁾; this, of course, was only in specific matters - such as revanchist-militarism and nationalism which all political groups to the right of the Social Democrats tended to view in similar terms. Some of the younger Reichswehr officers were Nazi sympathisers in 1930, but by and large, from Hindenburg downwards the German officer corps still viewed Hitler with suspicion⁽⁷³⁾. He was, after all, not identified with the old ruling classes and his election campaign in 1930 was much more directed towards the financially depressed middle classes⁽⁷⁴⁾.

The election policy of the KB was centred around the twin aims of persuading members to use their vote, and use it moreover for "the German Front" or those parties advocating the familiar national-militarist aims. On 10th May the KB praesidium listed these aims and at the same time

(70) NH 907, 2-18.

(71) R58, 1150, 406: list 16-4-30 (K).

(72) Schützle p.69-70, 100.

(73) Carsten p.319-20.

(74) Bullock p.159.

launched their "German Front" movement. With the failure of the scheme for a "Hindenburgbund" this "German Front" meant little more than "vote for any of the nationalist parties". There was no organisational connection with any particular party, and, so far as is known, none with the new "Staatsbürgerlich" coalition of the Jungdo and DDP. The second election appeal of the KB was issued on 12th August and circulated in 500,000 copies. It restated the patriotic aims of the nationalists and warned the KV members not to vote for little splinter groups.: ("Splitterparteien"). KV e were urged to canvas this policy in their meetings and make sure everyone voted. The "Parolebuch" of 19th August strongly recommended checking the voters' lists before this was too late. In terms of newspaper clippings, the leaders of the Bund followed closely the statements of DNVP, DVP and Zentrum. The DVP candidature of Seeckt was particularly noted as were the several common aspects of DVP and KB policy, war-guilt, Wehrgedanken, Christian culture v. Bolshevism, etc. The NSDAP was also considered and the candidature of General von Lettow-Vorbeck noted. A passage in the "Berliner Tageblatt" of 25th August is marked with obvious approval - "It is better for irritated votes to choose Hugenbergers or Nazis rather than not vote at all" (but better, the implication runs, vote DDP or similar). There was no particular differentiation between the "national" parties. The DNVP certainly exploited the KB circular as election propaganda in some places and some DNVP meetings were held in KV halls. Dr. Quarck, head of the associated "Wohlfahrtsgemeinschaft", considered the position to be too neutral and an objection also came from the head of the important Saxon Landesverband⁽⁷⁵⁾. But there is no other evidence to suggest that the KB or the DOB⁽⁷⁶⁾ had failed to please the bulk of their members, and in prescribing in only a general right-wing sense, kept to what was understood as "Überparteilichkeit". Certainly, any of the KB

(75) NH 912: "KB and Reichstagswahl".

(76) "DOB" 5-8-30.

members persuaded to use their vote for the first time did so in a way basically inimical to the broad, moderate conservatism of Horn. The result of the election was a weakening of the moderates and the DNVP and an immense boost to the extremists, particularly the Nazis. The 1.7 million new "young voters", and those voting who had not done so in 1928 (the "poll" rose from 74½% to 82%) in general turned to the Communists or, more especially, the Nazis. With 6.4 million votes as opposed to 0.8 million in 1928 they had suddenly become the second largest party in the Reichstag, supplanting the DNVP as the chief nationalist party. The importance of this breakthrough cannot be overestimated. For the Weimar Republic, "the writing" was "on the wall".

A more detailed look at the composition of the new Reichstag, reveals some interesting facts regarding the political activities of ex-officers, and ex-servicemen generally. In all, of the 577 new members, 14% were ex-officers, and 27% other war veterans. The percentages of the major parties that came into these categories is given in the following table:-

	% Ex-Officers	% Other Ex-Servicemen	% Total
NSDAP	24	47	71
DNVP	32	24	56
DVP	37	27	64
Zentrum	13	21	34
SPD	-	24	24
KPD	-	10	10

A much higher proportion of ex-servicemen in general were active in the higher echelons of the NSDAP than in the other parties, although the proportions of ex-officers in the DNVP and DVP fractions were higher still. On the other hand, the highest number of ex-officers (24) is found in the NSDAP and half of these were ex-regulars, no other party having more than 4 in this category. A distribution of the 79 ex-officers and 158 other ex-servicemen by party groups is given in the

following table:-

	% Officers	% Men	% Total
NSDAP (107)	33	32	32
DNVP + D. Landvolk (63)	25	11	16
DVP + KVP + Staatspartei (92)	28	16.5	20
Zentrum (87)	14	11	12
SPD + VR (149)	-	23.5	16
KPD + DBP (83)	-	6	4
	(100)	(100)	(100)

Again, the biggest single overall percentage is to be found in the NSDAP, as are the biggest single percentages in each sub-category - approximately one third, in each case. Approaching from another angle, that of occupation, one of the most significant occupation groups is that of officials and the professions:-

	% Higher Officials and Professions	% Lower Officials and Professions	% Total
NSDAP	23	22	45
DNVP	39	12	51
DVP	40	7	47
Z	15	27	42
SPD	5	48	53
KPD	1	16	17

Roughly one half of each of the main parties except the KPD was made up from the professional and official classes. In the DNVP and DVP the higher class predominated; in the Zentrum, SPD and KPD the lower one; in the NSDAP, higher and lower balanced. In general terms, the prominence of middle-class elements in the NSDAP Reichstag fraction, reflected the social composition of the officer associations and the local KB leadership. This affinity was strengthened by the high percentage (71) of the fraction that was composed of servicemen. It is likely, therefore, that by

1930 an important, influential sector of the Kreis/Regierungsbezirk/
Provinzial leaders of the KB, particularly in Prussia and Saxony, had
become sympathetic to the NSDAP, as had many members of the officer
associations. It is from this that most of Horn's present and
subsequent difficulties sprang ⁽⁷⁷⁾.

2. FROM THE REICHSTAG ELECTIONS TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS (AUGUST 1931)

"Nothing succeeds like success": the breakthrough of the NSDAP as a
popular national party meant that the Weimar Republic had failed to
preserve its healthy condition by means of its machinery of law and order.
From September 1930 onwards it is probable that the only power capable of
successfully stopping the Nazis was the Reichswehr, and then only in
conjunction with the aging Hindenburg. The real questions over the last
two and a half years before the power of the state was placed in the hands
of Hitler, concern the existence of viable alternatives, particularly the
chances of survival for some form of parliamentary government. Whether
or not the KPD, involved as it was in the Comintern fight against Social
Democracy, really constituted a threat to the existence of Weimar Germany,
is highly doubtful. In view of the widespread dissatisfaction with the
Republic there was only one logical alternative - the restoration of some
form of limited monarchy. - and the activities of the moderate veterans'
organisations in the years 1930/34 cannot be considered apart from this.

At the KB conference held a few days later after the elections, Horn
spoke at length on the "great tasks of the KB". His first concern was to
defend his own policy in connection with the "unfulfillable" Young Plan:
The Reichsausschuss without, for example, the DVP, was obviously too narrow
for the Bund to be able to join. Turning to the moral issue: "Geistige

(77) Raw figures in "DOB" 15-1-31, 25-1-31.

Führung ist heute notwendiger als je, denn das Fühlen wir wohl alle, dass wir in einer ungeheuren Gärung leben, aus der wir uns nur durch Zusammenhalten und Disziplin retten können". Insight, strength-of-character, tact and idealism are qualities needed for leadership. In another passage he clearly hinted at his own conviction that the KB must follow different paths to the Nazis and Stahlhelm: "Viele sind zwar bei uns tätig, ihre Sympathie gehört aber den Nationalsozialisten, oder dem Stahlhelm, und sie zeigen dies öffentlich durch Tragen anderer Abzeichen in unseren Versammlungen. Persönlich, kann man darüber denken, wie man will. Aber unser Kyffhäuser-Abzeichen wollen wir mit Stolz tragen, bei möglichst vielen Gelegenheiten, und dafür sorgen, dass bei unseren Veranstaltungen wenigstens auch unser Abzeichen in die Erscheinung tritt".

Again, with regard to the recent elections: "Die verhängnisvolle Eigenart und die Bindungen unseres parlamentarischen Systems sind vielen noch nicht genügend ins Bewusstsein getreten": It is difficult not to see this as a reference to the "Listenwahlssystem" that had just brought 107 Nazi rowdies and criminals into the Reichstag. He continued by praising Hindenburg, and to some extent also the DNVP leader Hugenberg - for his sporting admission of defeat - in marked contrast to the disgraceful remarks of Ludendorff. Once the Social Democrats had left the cabinet, there had been, Horn said, a much better chance of settling internal and external problems. From this build-up he proceeded once more to appeal for a "German Front", on a broad, moderate, ethical basis ⁽¹⁾.

The familiar lines of KB propaganda of course continued - Wehrgedanke - especially problems associated with comparative armaments, the war-guilt-lie, Bolschewismus, etc. One important change, however, was the introduction of a special "Führerblatt" in December 1930. This periodical was specially designed to indoctrinate all leaders in the Kyffhäuser movement; specially noteworthy were sections such as "Politische Betrachtungen" and "What one must know about the Reichstag and the Reichspräsident"; the aim clearly was

(1) NH 906, 127: KY report 28-9-30 of 21-9-30 speech (K).

to educate in a "staatsbürgerlich" sense, in the hope that this would militate against extremism⁽²⁾.

In the question of Wehrpropaganda, the Reichswehrministerium at this time was actively encouraging the Wehrkreise to co-operate with local groups. On 8th November 1930 the ministry wrote to the 1st Wehrkreis in East Prussia, approving the local plan for "Vorträge vor geschlossenen Kreisen müssen sich in innen- und aussenpolitischer Beziehung auf rein sachliche Erörterungen der betr. Fragen beschränken". The Wehrkreis (12th January 1931) replied that they were getting in touch with the president of the Provincial Kriegerbund⁽³⁾. Again in the following April a Heeresleitung circular referred to the Regimentsvereine "of the Reichswehr and the Kyffhäuserbund": "Ich halte einen korporativen Anschluss dieser Vereine an den Kyffhäuserbund für durchaus erwünscht. Er fördert die Verbindung zwischen alter Armee und Reichsheer, führt einer gut geleiteten für den Wehrgedanken eintretenden grossen Organisation, frische Kräfte zu, und bietet den Reichswehr-Regimentsvereinen den Vorteil umfangreicher Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen"⁽⁴⁾. Whether or not Horn had finally achieved his wish to contact Brüning is not known. Clearly, however, his contacts with Schleicher had persuaded the army to look favourably on a closer connection with the KB. At the same time, courses were being organised for students. The first "Studentenschulungstagung" was held in Potsdam between 26th and 29th June. The lecturers included Colonel Haselmayr, the Nazi, later head of the "Wehrpolitisches Amt", Hjalmar Schacht and General von Metzsch. It seems likely that the secret (13th January) meeting of 150 ex-officers at the Reichswehr Ministry, reported by French Intelligence sources, was designed to brief the leaders of the ex-servicemen's organisations on the success of the pilot course and discuss an expansion of activity in this field. (The "Deutscher Offizierbund" carried a report of the "Studentenschulung" two days later⁽⁵⁾). The

(2) *ibid.* 130.

(3) RH I/V 71 (F).

(4) WK VII, 4147, 15: 23-4-31.

(5) "DOB" 15-7-31 p.683//FO 371, 15215 C5694/11 (PRO).

amount of Wehrpropaganda in the veteran press certainly tended to increase, as did the tendency to seek attention from the national press. The KB particularly favoured lectures illustrated by slides, although these, of course, had their limitations⁽⁶⁾.

KB policy in more specifically party-political connections kept ostensibly to the "überparteilich" line. With regard to Social Democracy, this had been rigorously defined over the years and although KV members were still not denied membership of the SPD, they could not belong to the "Reichsbanner" or "Reichsbund der Kriegsbeschädigten", and Horn increasingly permitted himself remarks hostile to the SPD. The nationalist campaign against Remarque's pacifist novel in the preceding year (October 1929) had met with no success. When, however, in December 1930 the American film of the book was shown in Berlin, the Nazis organised a campaign against it and a joint petition of the ex-servicemen's associations resulted in the film being banned⁽⁷⁾. It cannot be doubted that this decision was welcomed by everyone in the patriotic camp, however moderate. Years of propaganda against the war-guilt-lie had brought together the most dissimilar groups in the "Arbeitsausschuss deutscher Verbände": veteran organisations, employers' associations and trade unions, the Catholic "Caritasverband" and the Evangelical Association⁽⁸⁾. The attitude produced by this question contributed materially to the dissemination of the more insidious "Dolchstoß" myth, which, although vast numbers of responsible men, not least of all army officers, knew to be a myth, they nevertheless wanted to believe from genuine patriotic motives. As long as meetings of Social

(6) NH 906, 131-4 etc//NH 907, 42: Jahresrundschriften 1931//.

NH 906, 126: PLKV to Westphalia Prov. 26-9-30//.

"DOB" 25-10-30: "Wehrverstärkung".

"DOB" 5-4-31: "Mehr Raum in der Welt für Deutschland".

(7) "DOB" 14-12-30 p.1285: "Nachrichten"//Eyck p.295-6.

(8) "DOB" 25-4-31 p.337: 10th Anniversary of "Arbeitsausschuss".

Democrats continued to criticise not only the Kaiser, but President Hindenburg - in the most unrestrained terms, the KB could adopt no other attitude to the SPD⁽⁹⁾, particularly when the Reichswehrministerium supported officers involved in anti-socialist occurrences, and canvassed openly against pacifism and internationalism, virtually synonyms for Socialism and Communism in Germany at this time⁽¹⁰⁾. In December, writing to the Meiningen branch, Horn suggested that KV members active in Reichsbanner or SPD, "in scharf pazifistischem und wehrmachtfeindlichem ja sogar religionsfeindlichem Sinne", could justifiably be expelled on the grounds that this conflicted with the statutory aims of the Bund⁽¹¹⁾. "Überparteilichkeit", at least as far as the SPD was concerned, was now transparently thin.

In the case of the KPD, now a Reichstag party with some 77 seats, "Überparteilichkeit" had of course never been applied. But everyone outside the Communist Party was agreed that "the Reds" represented an increasing menace to the state. The Reichsinnenministerium sent out frequent circulars dealing with this threat, as did the Reichswehrministerium. In civilian circles too, an increasing number of societies were being formed to combat, particularly the cultural menace of Bolshevism. Important among these was the "Deutscher Bund zum Schutz der Abendländischen Kultur" founded in June 1930 with a strong Zentrum and Jewish flavour, under the patronage of many leading aristocrats. Werner von Alvensleben, one of the leading organisers, approached the KB with the aim of securing its aid in the financial and propaganda field. Meetings took place between Alvensleben and Dr. Wollbing from the Berlin Centrale, but Horn himself was not prepared to get entangled with what the "Völkischer Beobachter" was describing as a "secret ploy of the Zentrum". On the other hand, the KB co-operated quite happily with the Russian Orthodox Bishop Seraphim who spoke at the "Deutscher

(9) NH 915: Saxon LV to KB 25-9-30.

(10) *ibid.* Silesian Prov. to PLKV 7-10-30:

(11) *ibid.* Horn to Meiningen LV 20-12-30.

Bund's" November Sportpalast meeting. Von Enckevort, von Amann and Wollbing attended Seraphim's meetings - in company with von der Goltz, Stahlhelm and NDO leaders. Locally, efforts against "pacifism, internationalism and Judaism - and other related movements" were especially successful in Saxony, where agitation in the press and Landtag was initiated by the "Sächsischer Militärvereinsbund" (Saxon Landesverband) and led to the banning of offensive plays.

The KB Präsidium meeting of 17th January 1931 and the Prussian Präsidium of 28th February paid considerable attention to the Bund's propaganda activities: a much stronger interest was apparent in disarmament (very hostile), German minorities under foreign rule and the atheist aspect of Communism. This interest was reflected in the pages of the "Kyffhäuser" in ensuing months. Many articles like "Die Internationale der Gottlosen" emphasised the view that belief in God is the best bulwark against Bolshevism ("Kyffhäuser" 22nd February 1931). Considerable attention was given to Reichsinnenminister Wirth's warnings in the Reichstag over the flood of Communist pamphlets, "heralding the coming atheist offensive" ("Kyffhäuser" 28th February 1931). The extent to which Atheism and Communism could in fact be identified is highly questionable. According to figures quoted by the Zentrist RC paper "Germania" (5th April 1931) - between 1918 and 1928 the Evangelical Church lost overall some 1.6 million members and the RC Church lost 0.3 million, a total of 1.9 million. In the same period the KPD built up an electorate of 3.2 million (May 1928 elections), the NSDAP^{***} of only 0.8 million. Certainly, if it is possible to trace a connection between lack of religion and rejection of ethical standards then it would seem that the chief gainers by the "Kirchenaustritt" were the Communists first, and then the Nazis. But sheer apathy played an important part in German society after the war, and support for political extremes has never been the monopoly of the irreligious. In its propoganda against Bolshevism the KB always kept the

religious and cultural aspects to the forefront, but it can hardly be doubted that, in effect, such constant harping on the "Red Peril" was doing the work of the NSDAP, among those "bürgerlich" strata of society that were feeling the weight of the economic crisis⁽¹²⁾.

The officer associations continued with the type of monarchist propaganda that had long been in vogue: expressions of loyalty on the Kaiser's birthday, notices marking the birthdays of other members of the Imperial and Princely families, rallies attended by Hohenzollern princes and so on. The more expressly monarchist association, the NDO, if anything increased its propaganda activity. In 1931 Prince Eitel Frederick was actually elected "Ehrevorsitzender" of the organisation. At the same time, a good deal of support for the Nazis became apparent, and an increasing number of ex-officers began to see in the Hitler movement an instrument for effecting a restoration. The KB followed a similar line to the DOB, but those ties between the KB and Doorn that did exist, were chiefly on a personal level: the organisation as such was little involved, although rumours were afoot that a large sum of money had been presented to the Kaiser in 1929. The same rumour had existed in 1919 and no evidence has come to light to support it. Potentially, the monarchist cause was the best way of uniting the moderate-conservatives⁽¹³⁾. As long, however, as the ostensible political champions of this cause, the DNVP and the Stahlhelm, remained bent on out-doing Hitler in extravagant anti-republicanism, there was little hope of agreement in a more constructive policy. Indeed, despite the remarkable success of the NSDAP in the September elections, the "national opposition" was in full cry after another hare - the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag⁽¹⁴⁾.

(12) NH 917, Sept/Nov 1930//NH 927, 1 et seq.

(13) "DOB" 25-1-31 (Kaiser's birthday), 23-5-31 (Pr. Eitel Frederik); 5-7-31 (Pr. Wilhelm); //BPD p.447//NH 910, 82-93//NH 911, 267.

(14) The following account is based on KB file NH 926: also Eyck p.288 etc., Berghahn p.231 etc.

Already on 5th October 1930 at Koblenz, the Stahlhelm leaders had announced their intention of campaigning against the socialist-controlled Prussian Landtag, not due for dissolution until the spring of 1932. The now familiar method of Volksbegehren and referendum was again employed, and the affair was officially set in motion at the beginning of February 1931. On the 15th of the month, the DOB came out strongly in favour of the Volksbegehren, a long time before Hugenberg (4th March) and Hitler (8th April) did so⁽¹⁵⁾. The pace of national propaganda was now being set by what was officially just an ex-servicemen's organisation. Initially, Severing, the Prussian Minister of Interior, saw no cause to be alarmed at the activities of the Stahlhelm, although he considered it necessary to watch the Nazis closely (19th February). Local rumours that the KB was supporting the Volksbegehren made the discussion of the matter by the Prussian praesidium inevitable (28th February). Predictably, no participation of "the organisation as such" could be approved, but the sentiments of the Präsidium members were unmistakable: "Es muss immer wieder betont werden, dass unser Standpunkt nicht etwa durch die Satzung, oder die Furcht von Massnahmen der Regierung gegen uns begründet wird, sondern aus reiflicher Überlegung heraus bestimmt ist". And in the "Parolebuch" of 8th March, direction: "Although the aims of the Stahlhelm will meet with the approval from the majority of our Prussian comrades etc"⁽¹⁶⁾. Other topics discussed by the meeting included socialism ("now strongly entrenched in the fabric of the state", "can only be successfully combatted by a "bürgerlich" union"); the Deutsche Front; Wehrhaftmachung (the KB was now in "cautious contact with a Munich organisation," the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Wehrverstärkung", the Nazi forerunner of the "Wehrpolitisches Amt"); the Grossdeutsche Gedanke; Kultur-Bolschewismus and Atheismus; the Stahlhelm;

(15) "DOB" 15-2-31, Nachrichten.

(16) NH 926, 8-19; NH 925, 57.

the Reichsbanner (said to be forming protection groups in conjunction with the Prussian police); regulation of funerals; Reichswehrüberlieferungsvereine (negotiations with authorities in progress). Each one of these subjects had political or social implications and the list shows how far the KB was from being a purely "kameradschaftlich" organisation. An open letter to Reichskanzler Brüning in the "Parolebuch" of 8th March referred to the need for taking more positive steps in the matter of 'war-guilt', keeping up the strength of the armed forces and for forming an air-force. The Preparatory Disarmament Commission set up by the League of Nations in 1926 had submitted a draft convention to the League Council in January 1931 and the matter was very much a "hot potato" for German politicians in the ensuing months. The increasing involvement of the KB in this question was a direct result of Horn's contacts with the Reichswehrministerium.

As in the Young Plan agitation, voices were soon raised protesting at the official policy. One of the earliest was that of the influential Stahlhelm and KV member, General der Art. Franke. In his letter of 5th March he referred to the "unimportant little parties" and "handful of Zentrum voters" holding back the mainly "nationalist" KB. The Bund's reply correctly pointed out that some of the important southern Landesverbände had a high proportion of Zentrum voters and, by now tired of Franke's frequent approaches, suggested he should choose one or other of the organisations. Either way, Stahlhelm members should not agitate for the Volksbegehren within the KVe. Severing's announcement in the Landtag (11th March) forbidding the participation of state officials in the agitation led the KB to send out a strongly worded circular (16th March) to its Landesverbände: "the results of official KB participation would be that the organisation would be declared "political", state officials would, therefore, have to resign, the disabled and dependants would suffer and the connection with the Reichswehr would have to be severed". While, of course, these risks were not worth running for a Stahlhelm Volksbegehren, it is debatable whether the same would have been true in the case of a redefinition

of the Bund's position in a more moderate conservative sense, even though this might additionally have meant the secession of many Zentrum members, possibly whole KVe. This circular prompted an immediate visit to Horn from the Stahlhelm, and it was agreed to add, telegraphically, that every member, of course, had the right to take part in the Volksbegehren (17th March). Von Enckevort writing a few days earlier certainly anticipated a much stronger involvement of KV members than had been the case in the previous year⁽¹⁷⁾.

Local opposition to the KB policy in 1929/30 had come mainly from Saxony and Pomerania, and a few Kreisverbände in Silesia and Potsdam. In 1931 it came mostly from Schleswig-Holstein and besides the Lübeck branch only odd Kreisverbände in Saxony, Pomerania, and Silesia raised objections. At least one Rhenish Kreisverband protested, however, because the March circular "was aimed at creating support for the Volksbegehren"⁽¹⁸⁾. In general, the opposition considered the KB should leave the local organisations complete freedom of action and issue no statements⁽¹⁹⁾. At least one Kreisverband drew attention to the lack of positive leadership from the Bund⁽²⁰⁾. Probably fairly typical of the reception of the KB policy statement was that of the influential Dr. Voss, head of the Hauptkriegerverband Berlin: "There exists scarcely any doubt that each individual member will support the Volksbegehren and vote for the referendum"⁽²¹⁾. Thus the KB's influence, even more than in the previous campaign, was in effect exercised for the Stahlhelm.

During February the DOB, VVV, Reichslandbund and Prussian NSDAP came out in favour of the agitation. Hutier (president of the DOB) took part in the national rallies (e.g. 9th April). NDO, ROB, DVP and Hugenberg

(17) NH 926, 44: Correspondence with Stahlhelm (Jüterborg) March.
 (18) *ibid.* 182: Bergheim.
 (19) *ibid.* 219: Belgard.
 (20) *ibid.* 193: Stolp.
 (21) *ibid.* 161.

joined in during March, and Hitler and the main NSDAP in April⁽²²⁾.
 Ultimately, the KPD also supported the Volksbegehren. Horn certainly kept the KB "as such" out of this unholy alliance, and retained his personal distaste for extremism. In March 1931 he was in contact with one Dr. Hartmann over an article the latter was preparing for the "Kyffhäuser"; this included a number of very generous observations on the conduct of some Social Democrats during the war⁽²³⁾. In April, the KB was approached once more by the Reichswehrministerium, over unguarded remarks in favour of the Stahlhelm campaign, made by an ex-officer at a local conference. On 21st April the counting of initial lists revealed that the 6 million signatures were more than enough to secure a referendum. Thus the campaign took new life and moved into its second and more extreme phase.

Speaking at Wuppertal on 11th May Horn once more took pains to dissociate the KB from "Radikalismus": "Er grenzte namentlich gegen National Sozialisten und Stahlhelm ab. Der KB verzichte bewusst auf Eingreifen in Innenpolitik. Er tadelte diejenigen Unterführer, die beim Stahlhelm-Volksbegehren von dieser Linie aus Mangel an Charakterstärke abwichen. Die Führer müssten begreifen, dass man hohen vaterländischen Zielen nachgehen könne, auch ohne radikalen politischen Bestrebungen anzuhängen"⁽²⁴⁾. This speech was widely reported in the national press and evoked considerable resentment from local Kriegerverbände: at Wiesbaden, where relations with Stahlhelm and NSDAP were "durchaus freundschaftlich"; at Köln (Oberberg) where the local Stahlhelm Gauführer, one Major Koethe, went out of his way to stir up trouble, and ultimately in Pomerania⁽²⁵⁾. Stahlhelm leaders also caused friction in

(22) NH 925, 58//NH 926: 21: "Berlin Lokalanzeiger" 15-2-31; Stahlhelm circular 4-4-31//"DOB" 25-3-31, 15-4-31.

(23) NH 926, 80.

(24) *ibid.* 199: "Vossische Zeitung" 12-5-31.

(25) NH 906, 145-6 (Wiesbaden); 147-56 (Oberberg)//NH 926, 213 (Pommern);

Erfurt and Reuss. As always Horn gave in to really determined opposition, and in correspondence with Major Koethe he repeatedly denied that he had described the Volksbegehren as a "right-radical movement". On the other hand, he refused to publish an amplifying statement in the "Kyffhäuser" and the lasting impression of the Wuppertal speech was one of anti-radical moderation.

The big KB rally in Königsberg on 5th July was a militarist demonstration of the first order. Talk of the "geraubten Provinzen", "Wehrwillen" and "Grossdeutsche Gedanken", added up to a good deal more than a demand for "equal rights". Although the ethical basis for the fight against "Bolshevism" was stressed and the political situation at home and abroad reviewed in moderate tones, the overall flavour is unmistakably one of "revanchism". With regard to the Volksbegehren, Horn avoided any provocative utterances⁽²⁶⁾. Other leaders inside the Bund nevertheless continued to interpret the official policy as favourable to the Volksbegehren. Gen. von Kessinger, leader of the Weimar Landesverband, was alleged (by Gen. Franke (DOB Hesse/Thuringia)) to have said that: "hinter der bei dem Frontsoldatentag zu Breslau (May) gekennzeichneten Front des Stahlhelms die 3 millionen Kameraden des KB in treuer Kameradschaft bereit stehen". Kessinger himself wrote to the KB (15th July) a few days after Franke, demanding a sharper declaration in favour of the plebiscite. On the 17th the official line had weakened so far, that in reply to the "Magdeburger Tageszeitung" it was stated that: "every good comrade must wish to see the old Prussian spirit re-established in the Landtag". This formula was used as the basis for future replies and was locally much exploited as a prescription for the referendum.

The overall result of the Volksbegehren was a vote of 9.7 million in favour of dissolving the Prussian Landtag, a long way short of the number

(26) NH 927, 5-7-31//NH 906, 158.

required to effect it, but nevertheless eloquent testimony of the interest that could be aroused by such an intensive propaganda campaign. Despite the ill-feeling between Stahlhelm and KB locally (by no means general), the Stahlhelm leaders, having temporarily made their peace with Chancellor Brüning, met Horn and Enckevort on 15th August and reviewed the political situation. After some discussion agreement seems to have been reached on the basis that the Stahlhelm expressed "understanding" for the "Überparteilich" course of the Bund⁽²⁷⁾.

As was to be expected during a period of such political excitement, KVe tended to come into increasing conflict with local authorities over the flag question. As far as the Reichswehr was concerned, Groener kept rigidly to the line that where possible both the republican flag and the black-white-red "war flag" should be flown together. Certainly, at all functions attended by the Reichswehr, the republican flag was mandatory. The minister even had to insist on this with some state governments (e.g. Bavaria)⁽²⁸⁾. The Prussian Innenministerium had excepted traditional flags from their general ban of plain black-white-red in public places, as long as they were not objectionable on specific grounds, such, for example, as a copy of a traditional flag in the old colours, with the old inscription ("With God for Kaiser and Reich" etc) bearing a date subsequent to 1918 (May 1928)⁽²⁹⁾. This ruling had been embodied in the order of 29th June 1929, and the sense at any rate must have been familiar to most branches of the KB. Nevertheless at Liegnitz (August 1930) preparations for the Lower Silesian Kriegertag included the decoration of certain public places with the ordinary striped black-white-red colours. Complaints from the local magistrate necessitated the replacement of all these at the last minute by the

(27) NH 926, 268.

(28) MA 104266, Groener to Held 6-10-30 (MGS).

(29) NH 907, 42: Jahresrundschriften 1931: therein, Prussian Innenmin. instruction 15-5-28.

Kyffhäuser black-white-red. On the actual day of the festivities, officials demanded that these too should be removed as they were not in the same class as individual traditional colours belonging to an individual KV. Certainly this was in accordance with the spirit of the order in question, even if the wording lacked something in precision. The action of the Liegnitz authorities was upheld by the Prussian Innenminister⁽³⁰⁾.

The KB leaders naturally wanted to avoid publicising this rigid interpretation of the order and in their instructions published in December 1930, confined themselves to quoting the wording and stressing that where officials attended KV functions, the republican flag would have to be flown alongside the Kyffhäuser black-white-red if this was specifically requested. In other words a bare legal minimum of co-operation with the government ruling was advocated. If local officials chose to ignore its provisions (and many did) so much the better. This was not merely anti-republican sentiment: the veterans had after all striven for five years "in the greatest war in history" under these same colours: "Our colours are our holiest possession: they are the symbol of our Bund, of comradeship, of our old regiment and army: they are soldiers' colours - soldiers carry them and soldiers follow them"⁽³¹⁾.

In Pomerania, an incident of a different kind was taken up with the Prussian minister (now, once again, Severing). At the end of November Communists in Barth had dragged the black-white-red colours through the streets in a most provocative fashion. The police had stood by without intervening. The local Bürgermeister later apologised, but the Kreis Kriegerverband was not satisfied and took the matter further. The Berlin Centrale wrote to Severing at the end of December and were still waiting for a reply six months later⁽³²⁾. Opinions in the Berlin leadership differed on this question as in similar matters. Horn himself followed the

(30) *ibid.* 1, 23-39.

(31) *ibid.* 40, KY 14-12-30.

(32) *ibid.* 41.

Groener line fairly closely, but others, such as von Enckevort, were of a less compromising outlook. When a KV in the Potsdam Bezirk decided to add a knot in the republican colours to their banner the Prussian Association wrote: "Die Anwendung der Farben Schwarz-Rot-Gold empfiehlt sich, abgesehen von ihrer Umstrittenheit, deshalb nicht, weil sie die Farben einer politischen Kampforganisation, nämlich des Reichsbanners sind"⁽³³⁾.

The Liegnitz interpretation gradually became more general and in February, all the KB could suggest was to abandon the use of flags altogether, or hold ceremonies in private⁽³⁴⁾. Some local authorities even exceeded the provisions of the order, and tried to ban the flying of the Kyffhäuser flag when privately owned KV convalescent homes were opened⁽³⁵⁾. As in many other matters, attitudes differed very considerably from place to place. Sometimes the old black-white-red flags were permitted, in others the KB black-white-red had to be substituted, and sometimes these too were banned for public display⁽³⁶⁾. Usually, however, where officials attended, the republican flag had also to be flown.

Silesia was also the scene of conflict between KVe and the RC Church. At the end of 1930 some local clergy suspended the long established custom of allowing KV colours to be placed before the altar on Church Festivals. They were nevertheless only removed a short way to the middle aisle. An instruction by the Bishop of Breslau (22nd June 1930) in fact limited the presence of colours in church and the blessing of colours to those of "church-approved" Vereine. These were ultimately defined as those Church associations whose statutes had been officially approved by the Bishop. In fact a good deal of discretion was still allowed to local clergy, and the third official ruling from the Bishop (3rd July 1931) in response to

(33) *ibid.* 43.

(34) *ibid.* 49.

(35) *ibid.* 77.

(36) *ibid.* e.g. 100.

enquiries from the Silesian Provincial Kriegerverband specifically permitted the attendance at services of organisations whose banners had been blessed. The point to the very reasonable attitude adopted by the Church was that a local priest was empowered to exclude banners of associations hostile to the Church (Nazis, Wehrwolf, etc.). Where the demeanour of the KV was unexceptionable, established customs were allowed to continue⁽³⁷⁾.

The same was not true with regard to the Kyffhäuser youth groups. Despite the fact that the KB had kept officially clear of the radical agitation of the Nazis and Stahlhelm the points of contact and outward similarities led in the course of 1931 to a much more general stand against the KB and Kyffhäuserjugend (as opposed to specific local associations). Friction had been occurring for several years. In February 1931 several conferences of RC youth leaders concerned themselves with the paramilitary youth associations: "sowohl der Nationalsozialismus wie auch der Stahlhelm und der Kyffhäuserbund werden abgelehnt, und zwar nicht nur aus volks- und gesellschaftspolitischen, sondern auch aus pädagogischen, kulturellen und religiösen Gründen" ("Essener Kirchenblatt")⁽³⁸⁾. At the same time several cases were reported from Silesia where priests refused admission to uniformed KB youth groups⁽³⁹⁾. The situation was already delicate when Seldte, the Stahlhelm leader, made a public attack on the RC Church at the Kreuznach rally (15th March). Protests by local clergy moved the Bishop of Mainz (17th March) to ban all Stahlhelm groups with banners from the churches, and uniformed individuals were only allowed to attend if they were away from home at conferences. A few days later Bishop Schreiber, in agreement with several other bishops, issued a declaration against the

(37) *ibid.* 63-87 (inc. Breslau Generalvkariat letters: Jan, April & July).

(38) NH 918: "Essener Kirchenblatt" 15-3-31 et seq.

(39) NH 907, 81-4.

NSDAP. Some clergy rapidly interpreted the Mainz ban to include the KB and its youth groups. One priest was actually alleged to have stated that "the KB is also working against the Church". At the request of the KB, Generalleutnant von Dittmann, head of the Hesse Landesverband, took up the matter with the Bishop of Mainz. Although it soon became clear that the Bishop had not meant to include the Kyffhäuserbund under the heading "Stahlhelm and other Wehrverbände", there is no evidence that any immediate clarification was issued to the local clergy. The dangers of not defining the position of the Bund sufficiently clearly, and not enforcing a sufficiently homogenous outlook on lower Verbände were becoming increasingly evident⁽⁴⁰⁾. Horn's concern with the ethical basis of the KB's activity was a perfectly sincere one. In view of the difficulties experienced with the Church authorities in the first half of 1931 he came to the conclusion that something should be done to improve relations - initially with the Evangelical Church - under the excuse of furthering the campaign against Bolshevism. In the course of June General von Fabock acting on Horn's behalf, contacted both the president of the Evangelische Kirchenausschuss (Kapler) and the RC Bishop Schreiber. The first approach was more productive and between August and October, Dr. Wollbing from the Berlin Centrale was carrying on negotiations aimed at establishing a basis for mutual co-operation⁽⁴¹⁾. The fact that the Evangelical Church was even willing to consider such co-operation is evidence of the real differences that still existed between KB and the Nazi/Stahlhelm camp, as, of course, was the ability of local KVe to compound most of their difficulties with even the Catholic clergy. The extent of RC opposition to the KB should not be exaggerated; it was by no means general and where it did occur mainly centred round the Kyffhäuserjugend. In Bavaria, for example, Cardinal Faulhaber was still an honorary member of the Kriegerbund⁽⁴²⁾.

(40) NH 918, March/April 1931.

(41) NH 927, 32-44.

(42) NH 918.

The RC suspicions of the Kyffhäuserjugend were understandable - not just on the grounds of superficial appearances - but also in view of the increasing association between the various Bünde, such as the Hitler Jugend, the Jungstahlhelm etc, and the Reichswehr. Since Autumn 1930 the Ministry had been actively trying to expand the "Wehrsport" movement and bring it more closely under their influence⁽⁴³⁾. The Kyffhäuserjugend was ideally suited to this, lacking the objectionable political tendencies of the other two main groups. If Schleicher had ultimately succeeded in creating a strong "Reichswehrjugend" whose first loyalties were to the army and the state, this would have significantly weakened the party-political Wehrverbände. The idea was both imaginative and constructive, but alas proved to be no match for the dynamic content of Nazism. The KB was only slowly to overcome internal apathy over the "Jugend". Even in 1931, about half of the Kreisverbände in the Westfalian Provincial Kriegerverband had not yet set up youth sections⁽⁴⁴⁾. Shooting was more popular and of the 16,000 KVe in the Prussian Landesverband, over a quarter had their own rifle clubs (still mainly with "war weapons")⁽⁴⁵⁾. While then, the KB's activities in the field of pre-military training continued and slowly expanded, the lack of precise party-political involvement obviously placed the Kyffhäuserjugend at a disadvantage, in the face of the greater dynamism and attraction of the more radical Verbände.

Contacts between KB and Reichswehrministerium continued over a variety of subjects. In April 1931 the East Prussian Provincial Association was requesting the intervention of the Ministry with the local Wehrkreis, which had refused to lend the colours of the old Imperial Army for a festival in July. In May 1931 the Bund complained officially about the Prussian

(43) Schültzle p.102.

(44) NH 926, 188-1: Report of Praesidium meeting 18-4-31.

(45) Forell, op.cit. p.45.

Minister-President Braun who had attended an SPD meeting in the Berlin Sportpalast, at which only red flags had been displayed. Schleicher and the KB were at one in this question and the official Reichswehr attitude to "red flags" was staunchly "patriotic". On a more personal level, Karwiese and Schleicher exchanged occasional letters regarding such matters as the political attitudes of individual KV leaders⁽⁴⁶⁾. Another important aspect of the co-operation between veteran organisations and the army was in the field of Wehrpropaganda, whether in articles dealing with such matters as "Luftschutz und Deutschland" or in big public rallies such as the "Waffentag" (Dresden 11th/13th July 1931) of the Cavalry Waffening. With the attendance of high-ranking Reichswehr officers such as Lt. Gen. von Stülpnagel, the attitude of the German Army to the question of "disarmament" was publicly underlined⁽⁴⁷⁾.

The deepening of the economic crisis had produced the "Notverordnung" of July 1930, which severely curtailed the amount of government expenditure on such matters as welfare. In April 1931 the KB protested against this aspect in a well-publicised circular. Again in June 1931, the new "Notverordnung" introduced sweeping cuts in pensions. The DOB raised a lively protest against this at their conference (10th June) and the KB, so as not to seem neglectful of the interests of its state-pensioned members, followed suit (19th June)⁽⁴⁸⁾. But this was by no means the whole story. Already in the course of May, negotiations had taken place with Treviranus (Minister in Brüning's cabinet) over the participation of the KB in the "voluntary work-service" scheme, designed to employ men drawing unemployment relief in useful activities, rather than have them drawn into the expanding SA. The "Freiwillige Arbeitsdienst" was inaugurated by the Notverordnung of 5th June 1931 and quickly expanded to include some 100,000

(46) NH 907, 62: East Prussian Prov. 22-4-31; 88, 95: KB to Reichswehrmin. 12-5-31
NL Schleicher 26, 170: Karwiese to S. 23-12-30.

(47) "DOB" 5-4-31: "Luftschutz und Deutschland":/25-7-31.

(48) MA 104266: circular 18-4-31 (MGS)//R43 I 709, 118: KY 19-6-31.

men. Once again, the KB was co-operating in a plan which, if successful, would have materially weakened the radical opposition to the state. The formation of work camps went ahead and local KB branches in some places played a significant part in establishing both general and purely KB camps. Besides the actual work involved - improving roads, drainage and irrigation systems etc - importance was also placed on "staatsbürgerlich" indoctrination and "sporting activities" to occupy spare time⁽⁴⁹⁾.

The implications of the increasingly close ties between the KB and the government in these months of financial crisis, were not lost on the NSDAP. Already at the end of 1930 the decision had been taken to set up a rival welfare organisation and thus challenge the KB in this important social field⁽⁵⁰⁾. Opportunities to criticise the KB were increasingly taken up⁽⁵¹⁾. Ambiguous though the KB policy in the field of patriotic propaganda was, this was much more the fault of the Stahlhelm than of the KB leaders. In fact, by the middle of 1931, Horn's aim to support the state authorities and the Reichswehr as closely as possible was being put into practice, and the attempt to redefine the Bund's position with regard to the Church, on the one hand, and the Nazis on the other, was also taking shape. Unfortunately however, increasing numbers of the leaders in the KB at all levels were of a much more reactionary mould, and by now it was only a matter of time before this was to produce an open rift with Horn's leadership, effectively destroying the public authority of the Bund itself.

3. FROM THE FINANCIAL CRISIS TO THE RE-ELECTION OF HINDENBURG
(AUGUST 1931 - APRIL 1932)

The summer of 1931 with the closure of banks and the Stock Exchange and

(49) Berghahn p.335-6.// "DOB" 25-8-32 p.722.

(50) See p.35.

(51) "Völkischer Beobachter" 30-9-30: "Separatisten.Ehrenmitglieder
Kriegervereine".

the suspension of Reichstag sessions, demonstrated clearly that Brüning had been unable to deal with the economic crisis. The rise in the tide of Nazism, materially assisted by the high level of unemployment, meant that henceforth Hitler had to be seriously taken into account. September 1931, when the Nazi leader had discussions with the Weimar establishment for the first time (e.g. Gen. von Hammerstein⁽¹⁾) marked the beginning of those tortuous and protracted political manouvres that finally brought him to the Reichskanzlei in January 1933.

In spite of the apparent unanimity displayed among the chiefs of the "National Opposition" at the "Harzburg" meeting of 11th October, these were in fact each following their own interests. Hitler and Hugenberg both sought the Chancellery, while the Stahlhelm leaders wavered uncertainly between them and the ruling camarilla of Hindenburg, Brüning, Groener and Schleicher. In this light, the other nationalist leaders such as General von der Goltz, Gen. von Horn and Gen. von Hutier had a clear choice, either to remain completely neutral or to involve their respective associations in what was obviously a party-political contest of the first magnitude, one in which the subject for dispute was not merely a particular aspect of state policy, but the very State itself.

With the "Prussian Landtag" plebiscite out of the way (August 9th) the question of patriotic propaganda was considerably simplified. The main issue of foreign policy confronting government and nationalists alike was the forthcoming disarmament conference in Geneva, and the KB threw itself heart and soul into a struggle aimed at making government and popular sentiment hostile to any arrangement not based on "Gleichberechtigung". The main vehicles for this campaign were the pages of the "Kyffhäuser" and several large-scale rallies: "Millions of German men and women demand justice and freedom" ("Parolebuch", 7th February 1932: Frt. Page); "Wir fordern im Namen von 15 Millionen Deutschen das unbedingte Festhalten am deutschen Recht auf Sicherheit und Gleichberechtigung" (Open telegram

(1) Carsten p.333.

to German delegation at Geneva, 8th February 1932⁽²⁾). But in essence this agitation went far beyond demands for "equal rights". The same telegram included specifically anti-French sentiments, alleging that "Durch Vorschlag der Völkerbundsarmee sucht Frankreich Wehrabrüstung zu sabotieren, deutsches Recht mit Füßen zu treten". Several numbers of the "Kyffhäuser" carried detailed instructions for the activity of the KVe in promoting "Wehrgedanken". The articles entitled "Unser Propaganda Feldzug" listed relevant pamphlet material, referred explicitly to the spirit of 1813, 1870 and 1914, and even: "Nie wieder Krieg ist nie wider Sieg", instead: "Nie wieder Unterwerfung, nie wieder mattes Verzichten!"⁽³⁾ One of the biggest rallies pursuing this theme was that of 2nd October 1931, ostensibly marking Hindenburg's birthday. Widely publicised at home, it even drew considerable attention from foreign observers. A gathering of some 10,000 including Reichswehr officers and men was addressed by von Horn and General von Metzsch, ("the time has come to demand equality - it is Germany's duty to claim and create security at the Disarmament Conference"). Gröener himself was present and the whole affair, particularly the radio coverage, stimulated lively complaints from the left-wing press, which likened it to Nazi and Stahlhelm rallies. British Ambassador Sir Horace Rumbold spoke of "an undesirable manifestation of German mentality"⁽⁴⁾. Similar rallies took place on 12th December and 17th January (the latter complete with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and a 600 strong choir: the public appearances of the KB were always in the grand manner⁽⁵⁾). This type of agitation was carried on all over Germany by local groups⁽⁶⁾. All the "patriotic" Verbände took part in these activities: the 8th February telegram for example, was sponsored by Stahlhelm, NDO, DOB and KB⁽⁷⁾. Yet again, of course, as in the question of war-guilt, this was a case of the German

(2) KY/PB 14-2-32.

(3) PB 27-3, 3-4, 24-4-32.

(4) "DOB" 25-9-31: Nachrichten//FO371, 15221 C7659/136 7-10-31 (PRO).

(5) NL Schleicher 34, 205: KB invitation Nov 1931 (F)/ NH 907, 105.

(6) e.g. Bavaria: MA 104266: Bav.KB to Held 19-12-31 (MGS).

(7) "DOB" 25-2-32: Nachrichten.

government exploiting national sentiment to strengthen the hand of their negotiators vis à vis the Allies. Horn had the full backing of the Reichswehrministerium and its various departments, and when Schleicher himself was too busy to deal directly with the KB, Major Ott (Wehrmacht Abteilung) or Major-General von Schönheinz (L.N. Department) were available⁽⁸⁾.

Similarly with the KB campaign against Communism, the officially produced "Kommunistische Zersetzungsversuche in der Wehrmacht und ihre Abwehr" was obtained from the Reichswehrministerium, and their information resources were always at the Bund's disposal in this connection⁽⁹⁾. The policy of expelling Communists from the KB moved on a pace, although some subordinate Verbände (Hannover, e.g.) appear to have been less active than others⁽¹⁰⁾. More important was the progress made in the field of co-operation with the Evangelical Church. General von Fabeck's first approaches in June 1931 led to a meeting between himself and Kapler, the head of the Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchenausschuss on 13th October 1931. Official contacts were in principle approved, particularly with regard to the structural similarity of the KB and Evangelical Church organisation. The next step was for experts from both sides to draw up a joint draft of "Richtlinien" for detailed co-operation. While this was under way, contacts were also taken up with the Action Committee for "Laienschulung" and the Evangelical Press Association. A meeting of the Evangelical Church Committee on 22nd October ratified the agreement so far reached, and the heads of the Landeskirche were duly informed. The broad policy of the KB in this question is well illustrated by Fabeck's internal memorandum to Horn at the beginning of November: "Beifolgend übersende

(8) NL Schleicher 34, 69-70//NH 929, Karwiese to Ott 6-2-32 (K).
 (9) NH 929, Jan/Feb 1932.
 (10) ibid. KB to Espol KV 21-1-32.

ich Vorschläge, die sowohl in der Gottlosen Bekämpfung, wie in der Schaffung einer innerlich geschäftigen nationalen und geistlichen Front begründet sind. Es wäre mir eine grosse Freude in einem etwaigen Ausschuss mitarbeiten zu dürfen. Die Geistlichen, die ich sprach waren bereit, wenn man an sie herantritt. Von sich aus können sie es nicht tun, was ja begreiflich ist, obwohl es mancher bedauert, dass die Kirche der grossen Volksbewegung unseres Tages abseits zusieht. Wie könnte sie einigen und stärkend wirken!" This measured view of the NSDAP was probably typical of the majority of retired officers: there is implied disapproval of the lack of ethical content in the Nazi movement, but the fact that it is a genuine "Volksbewegung" is the main criterion. While the tendency to blame the Church itself for not joining the "movement" lacked something in realism, the very fact that they were willing to deal with the more moderate nationalists of the KB indicated their willingness to explore ways of bridging the gap. Moreover, since the initiative came mainly from the nationalist side, this illustrates how far the "old officers" were from unanimously viewing Hitler as the ideal answer to Germany's problems.

While consideration of draft proposals was underway, the "Kyffhäuser" of 8th November 1931 printed a long article, "Der Kampf gegen Gott", which combined remarks on Communism with specifically pro-Church sentiments. Thus it welcomed the appeal of a local Kreisverband to support the Church in every possible way - not least by attendance on Sundays - and recommended various Evangelical publications. At the meeting of the Action Committee for Laienschulung a few days later (13th) every attempt was made by the Church authorities to make things easy for the KB representatives, General von Fabeck and Dr. Wollbing. Thus discussion of section-three of the agenda ("Our policy towards the various völkisch groups") was postponed. Besides co-operation in the general propaganda sphere, serious consideration was given to the possibility of the KVe holding evening prayer-meetings. Von Enckevort at least was not enamoured of this suggestion and the official KB letter of 21st November, following a meeting of the Praesidium, treated the

matter with caution: "Dagegen würde es über der Rahmen unserer Aufgabe gehen, der Geistlichkeit Anregungen über den Gang und die Ausgestaltung kirchlicher Feiern zu geben". Negotiations nevertheless continued and at a meeting at the Kirchenbundesamt (4th December) it was agreed that this body should prepare instructions for the Landeskirche, to which the observations of the KB could be added. These instructions were sent to the KB on 13th December, with the suggestion that they be embodied in an official letter from the Bund. This, however, was not immediately forthcoming and the affair was not settled until after the crisis provoked by the presidential election. Certainly, pressure of other business was considerable during the first months of 1932. Equally, there was clearly a good deal of opposition to some aspects of the proposed joint activity of the KB and the Evangelical Church⁽¹¹⁾. Much of this was probably from purely religious motives: the KB had also to consider its many RC members.

With regard to the Catholic Church little more had been achieved. As Horn wrote to Col. Schwert in Breslau (6th January 1932): "Der Vorstand hat schon mehrfach versucht, die massgebenden Stellen der Katholischen Kirche zu einer klaren und freundlichen Stellung gegenüber unserer Organisation, insbesondere der Jugend zu bewegen. Im allgemeinen ist die Stellung zu den Kriegervereinen als solche eine, wenn auch zurückhaltende, so doch befriedigende". The same alas is not so, he continued, with regard to the Kyffhäuserjugend; the official church attitude remained inflexible. Perhaps something might be achieved at the Fulda conference of bishops, but otherwise the need was for intensive work at all levels to clarify the aims of the Bund⁽¹²⁾. Horn was certainly right in this. Unfortunately, however, he himself had signally failed to impose his own admittedly clear and cohesive policy, other than partially either on the leaders of the movement, or its

(11) *ibid.* 52-9, 76-8.

(12) NH 918, PLKV to Schwert 6-1-32.

press or the local associations. Hindered as he was by statutory neutrality, and the strong ties with the government, any attempt to purge the leadership of the local groups and enforce a definite political (in the party sense) line, would have been extremely difficult, especially after 1930. The logic of his policy demanded nevertheless that this attempt be made, preferably with the backing of the Reichswehrministerium, so that a public stand against the unethical aspects of Nazism could be taken. However, Schleicher and his colleagues were to continue for a long time to come in the understandable, but fatal policy of trying to coax the NSDAP into supporting Brüning and his successor, thinking that they had the power to "call the tune". This was the main reason why the moderate KB leaders were left to fight their battles, as best they could, by fits and by starts and without even an open avowal of their opposition to the objectionable aspects of the "national movement".

It was at the local level that the Nazi propaganda machine was now striding forward. In October 1931 alone they held some 550 rallies as opposed to their opponents' 151: 10,000 public meetings where those of their opponents numbered less than 4,000⁽¹³⁾. The Government was not blind to these dangers and on 31st October open-air assemblies and processions were banned. Horn's enquiry to the Reichsinnenminister on 30th January produced the response that the privileged KVe were exempt from the ban⁽¹⁴⁾. Similarly, the order of 18th December prohibiting the wearing of badges and uniforms was not held to apply to the Kyffhäuserjugend although processions were nevertheless "nach Möglichkeit nicht zugelassen"⁽¹⁵⁾. The readiness of the authorities to distinguish between the KB and the more radical groups of the Right was, by and large, justified. This was not

(13) NH 284, NSDAP monthly report on opponents: Nr. 5; Nov.

(14) LA Gelnhausen 4969 (1932): Minister of Interior to Horn 12-2-32. (Ma).

(15) Sammlung Schumacher 220, Hess police circular 4-2-32 (K).

invariably the case: the Mecklenburg branch, already strongly pro-Nazi, busied itself at the end of 1931 with the forming of a "Selbstschutz", (or para-military section,) aimed specifically at combatting "the Reds". The presence of socialist members in the KVe raised certain difficulties. The branch contemplated active steps against SPD party-members - even if they had not allowed their politics to influence their participation in KV affairs; more to the point, even non-party-members suspected of "Marxist" activities were to be expelled if possible. The Mecklenburg Landesverband was behind the attempt at the KB Praesidium meeting (16th January 1932) to have the official statutes modified to exclude SPD members⁽¹⁶⁾.

Similarly, the steps now being taken by the Reichswehr to set up a single state "Wehrsportverband" brought the Kyffhäuserjugend into close co-operation with the Nazis and Stahlhelmers. Already the various "Sportvereine" had strengthened their ties with the Reichswehr via the Vogt-Ausschuss (Lt. Gen. a.D. Vogt, who was now head of the long established Jungdeutschlandbund)⁽¹⁷⁾. Late in 1931 the foundations were laid of the later "Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung" (under Gen. von Stülpnagel). This organisation was to embrace youth groups of all political colours, but the chief constituents were nevertheless to be SA, Stahlhelm and KB - in that order⁽¹⁸⁾. If these elements had shed their political characteristics as a result one cannot doubt that this would have been a valuable contribution towards lowering the political temperature. When this did not in fact occur, the only appreciable result was to increase the difficulties already created for the forces of law and order by the army's indiscriminate use of all types of Verbände.

Thus by the beginning of 1932, for a combination of reasons, - their own political dynamism, the economic crisis, the militarist propaganda of

(16) NH 915, Mecklenburg LV to KB 8-1-32.

(17) Schützle p.128.

(18) *ibid.* p.131//See below p.293.

the nationalists of every shade, and not least the mistakes and miscalculations of the ruling camarilla round Hindenburg, - the Nazis seemed little short of their goal. It could only now be a matter of time before new Reichstag elections would bring them sweeping gains and thus an unanswerable claim to the Chancellery. With Hindenburg in his 85th year and approaching the end of his term of office it was becoming increasingly clear that he did not intend to restore the Hohenzollerns. Certainly the Kaiser himself does not appear to have shown much eagerness for a return to Germany, and some of his sons had even thrown in their lot with Hitler. Despite the enthusiasm surrounding the Kaiser's 70th birthday a few years previously even the more explicitly monarchist Verbände, like NDO, DOB and KB, were not prepared to take the initiative in a "Bring back the Empire" campaign. The officer associations certainly continued their customary activities in this field. It was even suggested now and again that the KB set up an agitation aimed at securing permission for the Kaiser to return to live in Germany as an ordinary citizen⁽¹⁹⁾ - but whether such a step was seriously considered is doubtful. It is likely that Horn was still taking a lead in this question from Schleicher who was, after all, in frequent contact with the Crown Prince. And Schleicher, at the beginning of 1932 "had other fish to fry".

At the beginning of January 1932 Horn had a personal meeting with the old Field-Marshal, ostensibly with regard to the possibility of the latter attending the KB rally on 17th January⁽²⁰⁾. Hindenburg, however, was feeling the strain of the past weeks and when the conversation turned to the presidency, he made it quite clear that he would only stand for re-election if

(19) NH 910, Rathenaubund to KB 21-4-32/DOB"15-11-31, 5-3-32.

(20) The following account is based on: KB files: NH 926 (news cuttings) NH 930, 931 (letters and memoranda etc); "Auszug aus den Erinnerungen Dr. Heinrich Sahms" (IN: Vogelsang, "Reichswehr, Staat und NSDAP."); Berghahn op.cit., except where otherwise indicated.

the whole "Volk" requested it. This was evidently a hint to the head of the KB that he expected events to follow a similar pattern to 1925, when von Gayl had organised the patriotic Verbände and the Lübel committee the parliamentary fractions, with the intention of elevating first Jarres and then Hindenburg. . Brüning, aided by Groener and Schleicher, was still at this stage hoping to induce the Nazis and Deutsch-Nationale to support him in seeking a parliamentary extension of Hindenburg's term of office, without exposing the old man to the stresses of a new election campaign. Negotiations to this end took place with Hitler (6th, 7th 10th January) and Hugenberg (10th), but these two were not prepared to work with the Centrist Chancellor - ostensibly because of his ties with the Social Democrats. The DNVP leader refused his help on the 12th and Hitler published a long tirade against Brüning on the 15th. This marked the end of the opening round and the inception by the ruling camarilla of a two-level policy: while the group around the President (Oskar Hindenburg, Meissner and Doehle) were mainly concerned with whipping up sufficient support for Hindenburg, to persuade him to stand again, Schleicher continued to negotiate with the "national opposition", mainly over the possibility of a right-wing government, if necessary without Brüning. The latter was by no means unwilling to give up his onerous office, and offered to do so on 27th January and 6th February. The rivalry between Hitler, Hugenberg and the Stahlhelm leaders, however, proved to be irreconcilable.

On the same day that Hitler published his statement attacking Brüning, Staatssekretär Meissner (head of the presidential chancellery) had a meeting with Oberbürgermeister Sahn. During their discussion of the formation of a non-party committee aimed at canvassing support for Hindenburg, Meissner stressed the importance of securing the backing of the KB and the Stahlhelm. He suggested that Sahn approach General von Horn and inform Brüning of the outcome. Horn had already discussed the matter with Major Wagner from the Stahlhelm and this conversation, as well as the statement printed in the "Stahlhelm" on 17th January, gave him no reason to suppose that they would

not support Hindenburg's candidature. When Sahn and Horn had their first discussion on the 19th, the General nevertheless displayed considerable caution, particularly as the "Berliner Tageblatt" (15th) had already suggested that he was to organise a "Hindenburg Committee" and that this would be a breach of the Bund's neutrality. Other newspapers too were making speculations on the subject. The "Königsberger Allgemeine" (14th) wrote: "Who leads the Hindenburg Front?" naming Gessler, Cuno and von Horn. "Es wird behauptet dass gerade der Kyffhäuserbund in der letzten Zeit eine Politik getrieben hat, die nirgends Anstoss erregte, und General von Horn sei es gelungen, etwa 3 Millionen seiner Mitglieder bei der Stange zu halten trotz der verstärkten parteipolitischen Agitation mancher Kreise, die oft versuchten, den Reichskriegerbund politisch zu verwerten". Horn's efforts had clearly not gone without notice in more moderate circles - although it is open to doubt how many KV members he had really managed to keep "bei der Stange". In reply to Sahn, he stressed the importance he placed on keeping in step with the army in this matter and before committing himself to what was increasingly threatening to be a party-political affair, he would have to talk things over with Groener.

Sahn duly reported this to Pünder, the Staatssekretär in the Reichskanzlei, on the following day. Pünder again emphasised the necessity of co-operation between the KB and Stahlhelm, but when Sahn met the Stahlhelm leader Seldte in the evening, the latter was reserved on the subject. The Oberbürgermeister continued his activity on behalf of Hindenburg and the "Sahn Ausschuss" duly constituted itself a few days later, not before, however, Sahn had received a strong warning from Admiral von Trotha, not to place too much reliance on Horn's influence over the KB, which he described as "nur eine Rahmenorganisation". On 25th January Sahn had a conversation with Schleicher who informed him, presumably following discussions with Horn, that the two chief veterans' organisations were still unable to come to a decision. A few days later Schleicher informed Horn that the negotiations he was carrying on with the "national opposition"

were not making much progress. The leader of the KB had obviously decided it would be wise to await their outcome, and a definite directive from the Reichswehr. Meanwhile, both Brüning and Hugenberg were courting the Stahlhelm, although despite Dösterberg's recent speech at Halle, the Chancellor had little prospect of success.

On 30th January Hindenburg himself began to express his dissatisfaction at the lack of enthusiasm from nationalist circles. Ministerialrat Doehle telephoned from the President's chancellery during the morning and asked point-blank why no initiative had been forthcoming from the KB. Karwiese replied that no such suggestion had actually been made and that the KB was waiting until the President's own condition (a call from the whole Volk) had been met. Doehle brushed aside these evasions and left no doubt as to what was expected from the Bund. On the same morning, Major Wagner arrived from the Stahlhelm and gave Horn and Karwiese to understand that they were now agreed on support for Hindenburg. The wording of the circular sent out to the local KB associations on the same day was nevertheless still extremely cautious - although some leaders obviously favoured a more unconditional declaration of policy.

The following day Horn and Karwiese visited Meissner and explained the position: the KB could not co-operate officially with the Sahn Ausschuss in view of the political parties with which it was associated. (Sahn had written to the Bund on the 29th). Efforts should be made to bring in more support from the Right. On 2nd February Doehle met Karwiese by chance and, repeating his earlier remarks, was informed more plainly that the Bund was not prepared to make a "lone stand" in the matter. This prompted another phone call, this time from the President's son, Col. Oskar von Hindenburg, who was evidently feeling the edge of his father's growing annoyance with his "old comrades". He was even, alleged the son, contemplating laying down his honorary presidency. A meeting between Oskar Hindenburg and the KB leaders took place on 3rd February, at which the former made it clear that the President would be satisfied with the backing of KB

and Stahlhelm.

Meanwhile negotiations were taking place between Hugenberg and Hitler, who, according to Goebbel's diary, had already made up his mind to stand against Hindenburg (2nd February). (This doubtless in tacit acceptance of the fact that Hindenburg was as yet unwilling to consider Hitler as a possible Chancellor; the latter had no intention of playing second fiddle to Hugenberg, who after all had a much smaller Reichstag party. What had Hitler to lose by "going to the country" once more?) On 6th February, Schleicher tried to bait Hugenberg with the offer of the Vice-Chancellorship under Lüninck, not Brüning. The DNVP leader refused to be drawn and, as Schleicher informed Horn two days later, broke off negotiations. Shortly after the failure with Hugenberg, Schleicher and Brüning had a meeting with the Crown Prince, "ein unpolitisches Frühstück"⁽²¹⁾. The topic of conversation must remain a matter for conjecture, although obviously Brüning and Schleicher must at some time have considered steps to be taken in the event of Hindenburg refusing to stand again. Apart from obvious substitutes like Groener or von Seeckt, a Hohenzollern candidate (in the tradition of Napoleon III of France) might well have appealed to the popular imagination and paved the way for a restoration of the monarchy⁽²²⁾. It is likely, however, that all present agreed that it would be safer to have Hindenburg re-elected in the first instance. Horn's meeting with Schleicher immediately afterwards on the 8th was doubtless used to emphasise the importance, firstly of saving something from the wrecked negotiations with Hugenberg and the Stahlhelm, if at all possible, and secondly of persuading Hindenburg to stand once more. Horn's personal approach to the leader of the DNVP on 9th February is only really understandable as a product of a new and genuine sense of urgency on his part, and a desire to carry out the wishes of the Reichswehrministerium. Either

(21) NL Schleicher 91, 5: "Abend" 8-2-32 (F).

(22) Wheeler-Bennet, "Hindenburg", p.367.

way, the KB leader did his utmost to persuade Hugenberg to accept Schleicher's offer, but to little purpose. Hugenberg was still being "strung along" by the Nazis and asked Horn to wait for a few days, while these contacts resolved themselves one way or the other. Horn reported immediately to Schleicher, returning once more to the DNVP leader in the afternoon. At the same time Karwiese reported to Oskar Hindenburg.

The Stahlhelm leaders were still in ignorance of Schleicher's offers to Hugenberg when on 10th February they arrived at the presidential palace for a pre-arranged interview with the President. Ahead of them, however, they found Horn and Karwiese who had intercepted them, acting on information from the Stahlhelm official Ausfeld. On being informed of the proposals both Seldte and Dusterberg expressed their satisfaction and willingness to back Hindenburg. During their audience, however, things did not go smoothly and when the Stahlhelm leaders persisted in talking in terms of party-political bargaining, the old man evidently lost his temper and the meeting ended without the Stahlhelm giving any firm undertaking. The KB leaders waited outside during the audience, and when it had ended accompanied Seldte and Dusterberg back to the Stahlhelm HQ for a conference. While Seldte and Dusterberg kept to their original standpoint, the other Stahlhelm leader Wagner, and the DNVP deputy Schmidt, who had arrived during the conference, succeeded in preventing any definite steps from being taken without first consulting Hugenberg. Accordingly, everyone present including Horn and Karwiese drove round to the DNVP headquarters. Here, although Seldte and Dusterberg supported by Horn pursued much the same line as had the latter on the previous day, Hugenberg was not to be moved, still placing confidence in his contacts with the Nazis. Wagner's standpoint too - that greater concessions could perhaps be wrung from the government - carried some weight. Again, nothing concrete was concluded. Horn's tactics in informing the Stahlhelm leaders of the offers made, immediately before their interview with Hindenburg, in the hope that this would, with the force of the old Field-Marshal's presence, prompt them to

a positive undertaking to support him, had alas, misfired.

Oskar Hindenburg and Staatssekretär Meissner were reasonably optimistic following the audience, despite the absence of a positive undertaking by the Stahlhelm. Meeting Horn on the following morning (11th) they were informed that neither Stahlhelm nor KB were yet willing to issue a public statement. This led to a very angry scene in which Col. Hindenburg stormed that his father would resign immediately and then announce to the world why he had done so - to the obvious discomfiture of the two veteran organisations. The lack of unity was underlined by the arrival of Dusterberg's letter proposing to Hindenburg that he postpone his candidature to the second ballot.

On the 12th, Horn tried unsuccessfully to discover whether the Stahlhelm leaders remained disposed to support Hindenburg, and had a further conversation with Schleicher. Present also was the Crown Prince. Beyond the fact of the meetings, there is no indication of what, if any, influence the Hohenzollern had on matters. Later the same day, Seldte and Dusterberg were again in conference with Schleicher, and during this meeting which lasted into the early hours of 13th February "it seems that ... Schleicher offered Brüning's post to Seldte" (Berghahn).

Horn called on Schleicher early on 13th February and was informed, at least partially, of what had transpired: the Stahlhelm leaders had at last agreed. In fact, Schleicher was due to meet the Stahlhelmers with Hugenberg later that morning, and in the course of this second discussion was to make his ultimate offer - to postpone the presidential election until after the Prussian elections. Moreover, Seldte, Dusterberg and Hugenberg were due to meet representatives of the Nazis later in the day. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when Horn and Karwiese arrived at the Stahlhelm offices hoping to see the two leaders, these carefully avoided them. The negotiations between Stahlhelm, Hugenberg and the Nazis were finally broken off when the latter announced, what had been obvious to many people for a long time, that Hitler would stand independently. The meeting of regional Stahlhelm leaders on 14th February refused any unqualified

support for Hindenburg and finally selected Düstlerberg as their candidate. The meeting of regional KB leaders held on the same day, while unanimous in its personal loyalty to the Field-Marshal, was less united on the question of political support for his re-election. Even the influential Graf von der Goltz called to advise Horn not to support Hindenburg because the Nazis would "ihn mit Schmutz bewerfen".

What was Horn to do? Everything indicated that in the event of both Stahlhelm and Kyffhäuserbund "deserting" him, Hindenburg would decline to stand. He himself said as much in his letter to Field-Marshal von Mackensen the following day (15th February). The result of this would very probably have been the election of Hitler: "Hindenburg ist der einzigste Kandidat, der in der Lage ist, Hitler zu schlagen," wrote Schleicher a few days later. Horn almost certainly realised this, although some week later he was to claim that he had been concerned at the prospect of a left-wing candidate becoming president⁽²³⁾. The whole course of Horn's leadership of the KB - the official avoidance of participation in political agitation, the strong connections forged with the Weimar establishment, the ethical emphasis and approaches to the Church, Horn's personal disapproval of the radical strivings of the Nazis - all this pointed to one answer. When one takes into account his recent personal experience of the immoderation of Hugenberg as well as Hitler, not to mention the change of course by the Stahlhelm, Horn's vision of a broad patriotic front from Zentrum to NSDAP had clearly been shattered. What was left besides Hindenburg? How could Horn retreat now into a position of sterile strict neutrality, such as the DOB had adopted⁽²⁴⁾? He was in full possession of the facts and fully aware of the opposition he was likely to incur from some sections of his membership. Nevertheless, he alone of the leaders of the veteran

(23) NL Schleicher 30, 7: 3. to Baroness Rigal 25-2-32 (F)//NL Enckevort 30, Horn's speech on 1st May (DZA).

(24) "DOB" 25-2-32.

organisations remained loyal to Hindenburg. Although he was all too soon to qualify his support, the fact that he initially gave it, when the other so-called "nationalists" were hell-bent on their own party interests was very much to his credit.

On 15th February Horn gave Hindenburg the required assurance while at the same time pointing out that all his members would probably not vote in the way desired. Shortly afterwards, the Salm Committee was at long last received and Hindenburg expressed his willingness to stand again. The national press together with foreign journalists had been following the development of the situation for several weeks. Already on 11th February the "Berliner Tageblatt" announced in its front-page headline: "KB für Hindenburg". The evening editions of 15th February (e.g. "Vossische Zeitung") carried the news on their front pages emphasising the rôle played by Horn and the KB. By the 16th all Germany knew that Horn had been instrumental in moving Hindenburg to stand again, and most of the national and local dailies printed the KB declaration "Verlassen wir unseren Hindenburg nicht!" Of the other associations, the DOB combined an expression of respect for the Field-Marshal with a specific statement leaving freedom of decision to the individual member. Certainly, the KB appeal also included a similar "escape" clause, but this was ignored by the vast majority of newspapers, moderate and extreme-right alike. The NDO were more critical and openly doubted that Hindenburg had been correctly advised - his re-election, they alleged, would not lead to the desired change of course: hatred of Brüning and the "Weimar System" thus blinded the monarchists and they turned from the only man even remotely likely to effect a restoration. Wiser counsels obviously prevailed in the ensuing weeks: The NDO proclamation on the second ballot ran: "wird den Mitgliedern freigestellt, nach eigener innerer Gewissensprüfung demjenigen dieser beiden Kandidaten, ihre Stimme zu geben, von dem sie gewiss sind, dass es ihm heilige Pflicht ist, sich für das Hochziel der NDO - "Widerherstellung der monarchistischen Staatsform mit allen gesetzlichen und verfassungsmässigen Mitteln" - einzusetzen"⁽²⁵⁾.

(25) "Steglitzer Anzeiger" 17-2-32//F193 Ravensburg OA (L).

The policy pursued by Horn after 16th February seems to have been influenced a good deal by criticism emanating from various sources - incoming correspondence, the national press and the statements of local KB associations. In the light of previous experience this was only to be expected, and although the dissatisfaction on this occasion seems to have been more extensive than previously, it should not be exaggerated. Thus the KB Centrale was at no time "inundated" by hostile correspondence. An examination of the file reference numbers suggests that the total incoming mail for the week 15th-20th February (some 400 items) was little more than usual, although a very small increase was seen at the end of the week. The following week (22nd-27th) the volume of incoming mail increased by 20%, hardly a flood. Certainly, some of the letters received were critical, even hostile, but there was clearly no general wave of indignation prompting the majority, or even a significant proportion of members, to take the ultimate step of "writing to the top". Similarly with the press. On the 16th, the bulk of national dailies carried the KB declaration "Verlassen wir unseren Hindenburg nicht" without comment, certainly without hostile comment. The first definite attack came in the Nazi "Völkischer Beobachter" on the 18th, claiming that many protests had been raised within the KB against its policy ("unerhörtes Vorgehen").

In this light the steps taken by Horn before the 18th were mainly moved by a desire to prepare for all eventualities. Thus the declaration itself was sent out in some 40,000 copies, in association with an explanatory circular (to Kreis level), which stressed the freedom of choice left to the individual and alluded to "der gewünschte und erhoffte Systemswechsel". All available employees were to be held in readiness from the 18th for possible despatch to "trouble-spots". These were not long in arising. On the 18th Colonel Schwerk, the head of the Silesian Provincial Kriegerverband, sent out a circular to his Kreisverband chairmen appealing to them not to resign - this in response to 'phone calls and letters of a hostile nature. In Pomerania too, there was already considerable opposition from the Kreisverbände and this

was to increase as a result of misleading and damaging reports in the local press. Much play was made with the events at the Praesidium meeting of 14th February, where, it was alleged, Horn had misused confidential letters from men like Field-Marshal von Mackensen in order to gain support for his point of view. The presence of the Bund's 3rd President (Major-General von Amann) at the Wangerin meeting of the Pomeranian Kreisverbände (21st) evidently served to restrain some of the more extreme elements, although the dissatisfaction was by no means completely allayed.

On the 18th Horn issued a statement to the press (printed also in "Kyffhäuser" 21st February) condemning the exploitation of the KB's stand by party-political agitators: Horn's answer to the President on 15th February "steht für die Organisation unverrückbar fest"; on the other hand each individual member retained the right to vote "nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen". This is essentially the position Horn had originally adopted - while making his own preference clear, and thereby tacitly recommending a course of action to his members, he had avoided making a flat, unequivocal demand that the individual member support Hindenburg. From the 18th February there was a growing clamour in the "patriotic" press, especially of course that controlled by the NSDAP, although the Hugenberg papers and the Stahlhelm also joined in. The "Völkischer Beobachter" carried daily reports of the statements made by the opposition inside the Bund: "Horn must resign" (22nd), "Horn's laughable position" (24th), "200,000 Silesian Front-soldiers against Hindenburg" (25th), "1,400 Baden KVe against Horn" (27th). Not only in their newspapers did the Nazis seek to emphasise the disunity of the KB, but also in speeches made at rallies: on the 28th Rosenberg devoted a large part of his Tennishalle remarks to the subject. And so the campaign went on, reaching its logical zenith (but not conclusion) with "Kyffhäuserbund im Zusammenbruch" (8th March). Hugenberg's "Lokalanzeiger" devoted less attention to the KB and printed more factual articles such as "Gegen Horn", the 3" of column space given to the protests of the Berlin KVe (20th February). Their allies in the

Stahlhelm, however, devoted several long articles to the opposition to Horn in the KB ("Auf dem falschen Fuss, Hurra", 21st February, etc).

There was, of course, another side to the picture. Although the monarchist NDO, for example, had many Nazi sympathisers among ~~its~~ members, the leaders of the organisation were by no means so hostile to Horn and the KB. Many requests had been made by NDO members for an official NDO demand for Horn's resignation, or for an official threat that the NDO would recommend to ~~its~~ members withdrawal from the KB. Maj. von Jena nevertheless informed the Berlin Centrale that the official NDO line was that the affair was an internal one, to be settled within the KB itself (23rd February). Similarly the press of the Centre and Left defended the Bund: one paper ("Volkswille", Hannover, 24th February) even accused Hugenberg of sending money and telegram forms to smaller KVe so that they could dispatch their protest to the KB Centrale. Support from moderate papers like the "Vossische Zeitung" was also evident, and when, on 24th February, the KB issued an anonymous statement to the effect that the majority of the Bund's 30,000 KVe were in agreement with Horn, their contact was able to have it printed in several papers the following day.

Nevertheless, continued criticism from within the organisation especially from such influential men as Freiherr von Lüninck, was beginning to sap Horn's morale⁽²⁶⁾. On the 28th the "Parolebuch" included a specific statement denying that political inferences should necessarily be drawn from the promise of loyalty; this, when combined with "Der Herr Erster Präsident des Bundes musste sprechen, weil der Herr Reichspräsident und Zuschriften aus der Organisation es verlangten", goes a long way towards an admission of error. The "Parolebuch" statement was also embodied in a circular. The general reception given to this "missglückter Rechtfertigungsversuch" ("Stahlhelm", 28th February) by the Right, was that of the "Grossdeutscher Pressedienst" - "KB verlässt die Hindenburg-Front". A further circular (5th March) indicated that Horn was by now seriously

(26) Nachlass Enckevort, 116 etc. (DZA).

contemplating resignation, and this was on the agenda for the praesidium meeting to be held directly after the election. Horn had clearly come to the conclusion that the opposition within the KB had reached serious proportions: 15 of the 24 Landesverbände had expressed some form of disapproval, although only one had actually demanded his resignation (not a major association). Opposition was strongest within the Prussian Association - itself accounting for virtually half the total membership of the KB. (It should be remembered that Horn was simultaneously president of both organisations which shared the same central direction in the Berlin Centrale.) Out of the 26 provincial and Regierungsbezirk Associations in the Prussian Landesverband, 15 had expressed dissatisfaction, although only 2 of these had demanded Horn's resignation. Similarly, a third of the 469 Kreisverbände were dissatisfied and a significant number (66 in all) had come out in favour of Horn's resignation. Opposition was strongest in Schleswig-Holstein (82% of the Kreisverbände), Pomerania (48%), Brandenburg (47%), Hannover (36%) and Saxony (29%). The areas most hostile to Horn personally were Schleswig-Holstein, Hannover, Pomerania and Silesia. Only the west, the south, and East Prussia seem to have been reasonably unaffected. There is no doubt that the heart of the trouble lay in the Kreisverbände of North and Central Germany. Here, the influence of middle and low ranking ex-officers was strongest, together with important numbers of former senior NCOs. Here evidently the NSDAP had made its biggest impact to date, both geographically and socially. According to the "Tagespost" (Pomerania, Stettin, 23rd February) the Wangerin meeting already mentioned was clearly and explicitly in favour of the KB confining itself to national and social tasks⁽²⁷⁾. Elsewhere it is alleged that some Kreisverbände (e.g. Lower Silesia) embarked upon agitation without first consulting their member Vereine⁽²⁸⁾.

(27) "Pommersche Tagespost", 23-2-32: "Pommerns Krieg". (NH 930).
 (28) "Der Bote" aus dem Riesengebirge, 12-3-32. (NH 926).

This is borne out by the low number of individual KVe that expressed their personal dissatisfaction - 373 out of some 29,000, only 1.3%. It seems, to say the least, highly probable that those social groups so strongly represented in the NSDAP Reichstag fraction and the Kreis Kriegerverbände had seized the initiative in a vigorous campaign directed against the KB leadership, and thus, Hindenburg and the "System" itself. While still a minority, these Kreis leaders had the backing of the Nazi press and to a lesser extent that of the DNVP and Stahlhelm. In this way they were able to embarrass seriously the moderate conservative image of the Horn leadership and create the impression of disunity in the Bund at large.

In some places considerable sympathy existed for the NSDAP among the ordinary KV members themselves⁽²⁹⁾, but this was by no means generally the case. In Bavaria and the southern states *in general*, the Nazis had made a much smaller impact. In the presidential election of April 1932 support for Hindenburg in the areas Lower Bavaria, Upper Bavaria and Franken, was 72%, 69% and 55% respectively. At this point it is perhaps appropriate to include details of the NSDAP survey, made albeit in 1935, of the 160 Kreiskriegerverband leaders in the Ostmark Gau⁽³⁰⁾. Their former political sympathies and the extent of the double-membership with other associations are given in the following tables:

<u>POLITICAL SYMPATHIES</u> %	<u>OTHER ASSOCIATIONS</u> %
Bay. VP. 43	Stahlhelm 9
DNVP/Monarchist 11	Bauernbund 7
NSDAP 10	Landbund 6
SPD 5	Bayernwacht 6
KPD 1	(monarchist)
(etc)	(etc)

(29) e.g. Teltow Kreisverband claimed that some 70% of its 13,000 members were "treu zu unserer NSDAP" (1933) R43 II 824: letter 30-3-33 (K).
 (30) NS/20/112 (K).

Particularly noteworthy is the dominance of the "Bayerischen Volkspartei", the percentage of leaders involved with other right-wing associations (20-30%), and the low percentage of Nazis.

The campaign by the Nazis against Horn was aimed at drawing electoral support away from the Field-Marshal on 13th March. The amount of attention paid to the KB in the weeks leading up to the election is evidence that, despite its many organisational and other weaknesses, the Bund was viewed by the Nazis as a potential focus of opposition. While the leaders of the organisation certainly overestimated its authority - "Sie ist das letzte Bollwerk einer wirklichen seelischen Vereinigung im deutschen Volke - "(31) this viewpoint, even in 1932, was not entirely unjustified. On 10th April Hindenburg received the required majority at the second ballot, although Hilter's 13½ million share in the total vote was eloquent testimony to the onward march of National Socialism, and equally so, to Schleicher's earlier assertion that only Hindenburg could beat Hitler in a straight fight. Still, the return of Hindenburg provided a chance, albeit a slim one, for a retrenchment in favour of Brüning, Groener and the forces of reason. Horn's instinct to support the old Field-Marshal had been instrumental in persuading him to stand again. Even Horn's opponents recognised this: "Die DNVP weiss, dass massgeblich für diesen Entschluss die Bitten der Vorsitzenden des Kyffhäuserbunds und des Westarp-Ausschusses gewesen sind".(32) A confidential memorandum by Hugenberg (23rd April 1932) commented on the recent circular over von Enckevort's signature⁽³³⁾, asking the Nazis to stop agitating within the Bund. The attitude of the KB in the recent affair was, it alleged, calculated to lead to political impotence. The KB had continually engaged in politics and ought either to serve one of the two right-wing parties (DNVP and NSDAP) or become a party in its own right.

(31) Draft of "Open Letter for the KY" by Dänner and Enckevort March 1932 (NH 930)

(32) NL Schleicher 91, 31: confidential DNVP circular (F).

(33) "Die Wahl Hindenburg ... Vorgänge und Betrachtungen" (NH 931).

Failing that, they should keep out altogether. He went on to refute the circular clause by clause, especially that part blaming him for the parliamentary failure of the DNVP. Hugenberg's remarks on his personal encounters with Horn have a querulous defensive ring: "Horn was never accessible to political arguments"; "Horn continually talked of combinations that had either already taken place or were totally out of the question for me." The nature of these "combinations" can only be inferred from the general KB concern with a broad ethical "German Front", but it is quite clear that the "retired general" for once had a much clearer grasp of what the country really needed, than the "professional politician": on the other hand, the reverse was probably true with regard to ways and means of achieving it⁽³⁴⁾.

The re-election of Hindenburg to some extent vindicated the attitude taken by von Horn, and when the KB Präsidium members met on the Kyffhäuser (30th April/1st May) the opposition aroused in February had mostly subsided. An attempt by Colonel von Puttkamer (Magdeburg, Saxony) to organise a "break-away" meeting hostile to von Horn was foiled by a prompt counter-circular from von Enckevort (24th April). But this, like the continued hostility of Schleswig-Holstein was an internal affair of the Prussian branch. Of the KB Landesverbände, Mecklenburg-Schwerin alone (the only one to demand Horn's resignation) remained adamant, although they were to review matters in June. The debate on Horn's proffered resignation was carried on first of all in the Prussian Vorstand meeting on 1st May. In the end, while Horn's speech did much to allay criticism: he spiritedly refuted charges "als stände ich unter irgendwelchen Hemmungen, sei es zur Reichswehr, sei es zu einer Partei"⁽³⁵⁾, taking official cognisance of the trouble caused, the meeting accepted Horn's assurance that he had acted

(34) NL Schleicher 91, 117-124 (F).

(35) NL Enckevort, 25 (DZA).

throughout with non-political intentions. "Der Vorstand vertraut darauf, dass der Herr Präsident in diesem Sinne den Verband führen wird in engem Einvernehmen mit den verantwortlichen Führern der Organisation", as the resulting resolution and circular put it. In other words, Horn had been fortunate to escape with a reprimand. The KB leaders, meeting shortly afterwards, gave him a vote of confidence and there the matter of the presidential election came to a close. The press-release issued on the following day returned once more to the time-honoured themes of militarism, Pan-Germanism and revanchism, - safe ground after the storms of the last few weeks. The decisions arrived at were duly notified to all the officer associations; even Schleswig-Holstein finally came to heel (November) and to all intents and purposes May 1932 marked the end for the Bund of "dabbling in politics".

4. FROM THE RE-ELECTION OF HINDENBURG TO HITLER'S APPOINTMENT AS CHANCELLOR. (APRIL 1932 - JANUARY 1933)

Despite the re-election of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg the days of the Weimar Republic were numbered. The much-needed ban on the SS and SA (13th April) was opposed by Gen. von Schleicher who was once more pursuing his policy of "doing a deal" with the Nazis, and was materially to contribute to the resignation of Groener (13th May) and Brüning (30th May). Hindenburg himself, despite his advanced age, cannot avoid censure for his part in forcing Brüning to resign and replacing him with a "cabinet of gentlemen" supported neither by the largest party in the Reichstag (Social Democrats) nor the second largest (the Nazis). The July elections were to give Hitler no less than 230 seats, but the health of democracy in Germany had by then so far declined, that 6 months were still to elapse before the clique around the President was finally persuaded to admit him to the Chancellery. Ever since 1930 it had been becoming increasingly clear that Hitler would one day have the largest party in the Reichstag if things continued to develop in

the same way. The ineffectual nature of the steps taken to curb this tendency indicated the strength of the factors working in favour of the NSDAP "in high places", and this fact suggests that republican circles sadly underestimated the time they had available. There is some suggestion that Brüning was by 1932 hoping to find a way of restoring the monarchy: the obstacles to this were several, not least the fact that the ex-Kaiser was not prepared to contenance any other candidature than his own, and thus had vetoed the idea that the Crown Prince should stand for President in February 1932⁽¹⁾. Failing any effective steps to consolidate moderate opinion, failing any determined resistance by the Prussian Socialists in July 1932, failing the Army (who decided in a November "Kriegspiel" that they could not hope to defend the frontiers and combat the Nazis at the same time⁽²⁾), and the last remaining obstacle to Hitler was the aging President, so much under the influence of his son and their friend, Franz von Papen.

The ex-servicemen's organisations other than the Stahlhelm were to play no significant rôle in the political manoeuvring that brought the Weimar Republic to its conclusion. All the indications are that having burnt his fingers in the Reichspräsidentenwahl, Horn was determined to keep the KB out of party-politics, or to be more precise, avoid coming into conflict with the "national opposition". The Praesidium meeting of 30th April/1st May settled the disputes centred on Horn's declaration in favour of Hindenburg, and turned to the propaganda tasks for the KB's future activity. Chief of these was re-armament: the necessity of "stiffening the backs" of the German delegation at the Geneva disarmament talks, resulted in the strongly worded telegram sent by the Bund on 8th June⁽³⁾. The "Kyffhäuser" was time and again in the ensuing weeks to

(1) Eyck op.cit. p.351.

(2) Carsten op.cit. p.378-81.

(3) NH 931, "Kurzer Bericht" 30-4-32 and 1-5-32 (K)//KY 12-6-32.

return to the need for strengthening Soldatengeist, Wehrgedanke, and Grossdeutschen Gedanke. Talk of "Erhaltung des bedrängten Deutschtums in den losgerissenen Gebieten und in den neuen Versailler Staaten" clearly indicates that it would be false, certainly by this time, to draw any distinction between the KB's conception of "Gleichberechtigung" and general "revanchism"⁽⁴⁾. In July 1932 an officially approved step was taken to co-ordinate the propaganda work of the nationalists: together with the Foreign Office sponsored "Arbeitsausschuss deutscher Verbände" and the Munich "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Deutsche Wehrverstärkung" (the forerunner of the Nazi Wehrpolitisches Amt) the KB set up the "Aufklärungsausschuss für nationale Sicherheit"⁽⁵⁾. Like the corresponding attempts to co-operate with the Nazis in the Wehrsport field (Jugendertüchtigung) it failed totally to have any beneficial effect on the radical strivings of its Nazi component. The familiar vehicles for militarist propaganda continued to be employed: the big four-day rally at Dortmund (1st/4th July), the 4th Reichskriegertag, saw a gathering of many "patriotic" groups and provided as the main attraction an elaborate historical pageant on the ominous theme of "Barbarossa's Dream"⁽⁶⁾. Reichswehrminister Schleicher himself broadcast the same message to the nation, shortly afterwards (21st July) when he combined a strong line over the disarmament talks with an outright appeal on the necessity to train German youth for war⁽⁷⁾. The same theme was reflected in the film sponsored by the KB during 1932, "Der Kyffhäuserbund und seine Entwicklungsgeschichte"⁽⁸⁾, and similar sentiments found expression if less frequently, in the pages of the "DOB"⁽⁹⁾.

(4) KY 24-4-32; 8-5-32; 15-5-32.

(5) KY 31-7-32.

(6) KY 1-5-32.

(7) Schütze op.cit. p.174.

(8) KY 11-12-32.

(9) "DOB": 5-6-32: "Reichsmarine und Abrüstung".
 25-6-32: Gen. v. Metzsch sent to Geneva.
 4-8-32: Deutschlands Wehrpolitik.
 15-8-32: Pölnische Überheblichkeit.
 20-12-32: French Manouvres.

Not only was militarism the main subject for the propaganda of the veteran associations during the last months of the Weimar Republic, but it was also becoming the sole subject. The campaigns against Bolshevism and atheism had tended to fall by the wayside. Certainly, the "Kyffhäuser" still carried articles dealing with "moralische Rüstung": and the decrees against atheist - communist - freethinker organisations (May) were warmly welcomed⁽¹⁰⁾, but a definite change of mood had set in. Kapler, the head of the Evangelical Kirchenausschuss, tried to get negotiations with the KB moving again during April. Dr. Wollbing eventually met the Kirchenbund representative, Scholz, for a discussion of modifications to the Richtlinien previously proposed (2nd June). But with that, the projected joint propaganda campaign was laid to rest: "political conditions" were not favourable⁽¹¹⁾. Probably the majority of ordinary KV members would in no way have been hostile to some form of general co-operation with the Evangelical Church. The general mood among the ex-officers and NCOs who controlled the Bund was such, however, that the leadership was not prepared to risk another clash with the "Nationale Bewegung", particularly as Brüning's recent resignation (30th May) made it likely that the ban on the SA would soon be lifted. While the 1933 New Year Message talked of the "Wideraufstieg der deutschen Nation vorwärts mit Gott!", the prospect of Christianity playing much part in this was a very dim one - as the leadership of the Bund must surely have been aware⁽¹²⁾.

Positive support for the NSDAP was probably strongest at the Prussian Kreis level, as was illustrated by the response to the presidential election. At the higher Landesverband level of the KB itself, many of the leaders were retired generals and the same was true of the provincial/Regierungsbezirk chairmen within the Prussian Association. Politically,

(10) KY 6-3-32; 24-4-32; 8-5-32; 15-5-32.

(11) NH 929: Kapler to Fabeck 11-4-32; Gisevius 20-5-32; MS notes.

(12) See e.g. Fabeck's remarks (P.263-4)//KY 1-1-33.

these tended to give the praesidium meetings of both KB and "Preussischer Landeskriegerverband" a more expressly Deutsch-National flavour, in line with the outlook of the four generals (Horn, Enkevort, Amman and Fabeck) who controlled the executive praesidium⁽¹³⁾. This was illustrated in the critical attitude taken by the spokesman of the Kyffhäuserverband- (der Kriegsbeschädigten etc) towards the NSDAP attempts to set up their own disabled and dependants' association. In his remarks at the 30th April meeting Herr Goedicke pointed out that the obvious motive behind such an attempt was to attract more party members and the KB should consider in advance how they would combat this, whether by combatting the party directly or by more energetic action within their own organisation⁽¹⁴⁾. In fact, the Nazi attempts since late 1930 to set up their own local welfare cells had not met with conspicuous success and their policy in 1932 was rather directed towards taking over an existing association. Negotiations with the Zentralverband and Reichsverband were carried on to this end, in the latter case, successfully (early 1933)⁽¹⁵⁾.

Another matter that arose at the 30th April meeting was the question of the "Treubünde" of the Reichswehr. Soldiers discharged from the republican army had a variety of existing organisations to choose from. Serving officers had always been allowed to be members of Regimentsvereine, as long as these were not in the DOB, NDO, etc. On retirement these more political associations were open to them. NCOs seeking employment as "officials" generally enrolled on retirement in the "Reichsverband der Zivildienstberechtigten" (RdZ), a body that had been increasingly influenced by the NSDAP, from the late 20's onwards⁽¹⁶⁾. Ordinary soldiers and some NCOs also tended to form themselves into exclusively Reichswehr "Treubünde" which maintained contacts with the RdZ. The option of the KVe existed for

(13) See p. 15.

(14) NH 931: "Kurzer Bericht".

(15) See p. 304.

(16) Poliziedirektion Munich: 24a IIIIF 11/202 (MSO).

all types of discharged servicemen, and during 1932 Karwiese was engaged in negotiations with the Reichswehrministerium in the hope that an official ruling could be obtained recommending the KB. When he reported to the meeting, these negotiations were still in progress. One of the outstanding obstacles appears to have been the matter of subscriptions, and Karwiese proposed to submit a series of questions to the Landesverbände to discover what concessions could be made to ex-Reichswehr men, already perhaps members of a Treubund⁽¹⁷⁾. Probably a more serious obstacle in the long run was the political one. The KB was not in the true sense an "überparteilich" organisation, and important as the ties between it and the Weimar establishment were, the party-political involvements of the new Reichswehrminister (Schleicher) precluded any favours to an association that, albeit at Schleicher's own request, had so recently opposed the plans of NSDAP and Stahlhelm.

Horn's willingness, even desire, to co-operate with the Reichswehr had in no way diminished. On 15th April Schleicher informed Groener, who was then still Reichswehrminister, that the head of the KB, in association with Generals (Joachim) von Stülpnagel, and von Bock was active against the recent ban on the SA and SS⁽¹⁸⁾. It is certainly possible that Horn was taking a lead from Schleicher (and the Crown Prince⁽¹⁹⁾), but although the DOB for example came out openly against the ban,⁽²⁰⁾ no corresponding declaration was made in the "Kyffhäuser". Indeed, in view of Horn's previous criticism of such elements, and of the involvement in the intrigue against Groener of the Stahlhelm/DNVP leader Schmidt-Hannover, it is equally possible that Schleicher was exaggerating his part in the affair. Either way, Schleicher knew that the KB could not be counted on for political support and tended...

(17) NH 931: "Kurzer Bericht".

(18) Groener's, "Chronologische Darstellung" in Vogelsang op.cit.

(19) Eyck p.372.

(20) "DOB" 25-4-32.

Henceforth to avoid contacts with its leader. Horn and Karwiese were nevertheless fairly frequent visitors to the Bendlerstrasse. Thus the General called on 17th June the day after the new Papen government had lifted the ban on the SA and SS. This was no coincidence. Horn and Schleicher had already on several occasions discussed the question of a "Wehrsportverband" and the participation in this of the KB. Preparations for a "Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung" had been set in motion several months previously under Gen. Edwin von Stülpnagel. The government ban on the SA and SS, coupled with that on badges and uniforms had delayed things considerably. Now was the time, Horn felt, to reassert the KB's claim to be brought into the affair: "Seine Hauptsorgen waren, dass die Kyffhäuser-Organisation nicht genügend Beachtung fände, vor allem nicht innerhalb des Reichswehrministeriums. Er ist in erheblicher Kampfstellung gegenüber Stahlhelm, der seiner Ansicht nach, viel zu hoch eingeschätzt würde, gegenüber seiner (Horn's) viel umfangreicheren Organisation. Seine Absicht geht jetzt dahin, mehr durch die Presse in die Öffentlichkeit zu kommen und die vielfachen Bestrebungen des KBs auf dem Gebiet der Wehrpropaganda, der Wahrhaftmachung durch Jugenderziehung usw. mehr bekanntwerden zu lassen", reported Colonel von Bredow to his chief. Schleicher duly contacted the Innenminister von Gayl who was primarily concerned in organising the "Reichskuratorium"⁽²¹⁾. Horn's hostility to the Stahlhelm was to continue for a long time to come, and although official Reichswehr support at such events as the Dortmund Kriegertag (1st-4th July) was as enthusiastic as ever⁽²²⁾, Horn had clearly made a correct appreciation of the situation as far as his own links with Schleicher were concerned.

When Papen announced his steps against the Prussian government (20th July) some organisations (e.g. NDO⁽²³⁾) openly welcomed them. Horn himself

(21) Nachlass Bredow 1: Kurze Orientierung 17-6-32 (F).

(22) *ibid.*: Kurze O. 14-7-32.

(23) BPD p.448.

does not appear to have been unduly disturbed: meeting Bredow on the 23rd he gave the impression of being "ausserordentlich zufrieden und beruhigt" - although this was probably a reference to the progress being made in negotiations with the Innenminister over "Jugendertüchtigung"⁽²⁴⁾. The following month the Stahlhelm took steps to heal the rift that still existed between the two chief veterans' organisations. Gen. von Lenz was sent to von Horn to apologise for the tactlessness of the Stahlhelm's conduct. The fact that Bredow noted this for Schleicher's attention would suggest that the Minister had some interest in reconciling the two. This would appear to fit in with the suggestion that he was at least considering the idea of a "Verbändeachse", although there is little trustworthy evidence to suggest that an attempt to involve the socialist Reichsbanner along with the Stahlhelm and KB ever went beyond the merely speculative stage⁽²⁵⁾. At the same time Horn was in touch with the Field-Marshal's son in an attempt to restore KB credit in that quarter⁽²⁶⁾. Little came from any of this, and by the beginning of September Schleicher was displaying a marked reluctance either to meet Horn or to attend KB meetings⁽²⁷⁾. At the same time Karwiese's negotiations over the Treubünde finally failed. A Reichsinnenministerium circular of 3rd September (to the Länder) stated categorically: "Die alleinige Vereinigung für die Aufnahme aller ausgedienten Berufssoldaten ist der Reichstreubund ehemaliger Berufssoldaten"⁽²⁸⁾. This new association of "Treubünde", theoretically independent of all existing groups, was little more than a paper organisation and with Hitler's advent to power new negotiations were to take place to take into account the two main existing organisations interested - the KB and the Reichsbund der Zivildienstberechtigten⁽²⁹⁾.

(24) NL Bredow 1, 43/10: 23-7-32.

(25) *ibid.* 1, 99/8: 20-8-32.//Klaus Hornung, "Jungdeutsche Orden", p.125// Berghahn p.343.

(26) NL Bredow 1, 101/1: 22-8-32.

(27) *ibid.* 1, 134, 138.

(28) MA 104266 (MGS).

(29) See below p. 303, 306.

In the meantime, the Vertretertagung of the Kyffhäuserbund on 10th/11th September was informed that the individual Treublünde were to be approached and where possible, persuaded to enrol as Kriegervereine⁽³⁰⁾. The KB was thus further than even from regaining ~~its~~ former status as the establishment veterans' organisation. The importance of this question to the existing ex-servicemen's associations cannot be overestimated, for if the Reichswehr had succeeded in shutting-off the supply of new members in this way, they would, over the years, gradually ^{have} died out. This, of course, may well have been the long-term plan envisaged by Schleicher, and it had the advantage that it would not require drastic measures against the KB, Stahlhelm and SA. But instead of the 20/30 years necessary for this idea to come to fruition, Schleicher had only as many weeks.

The September Vertretertagung was also informed that normal relations had been resumed with the Stahlhelm. This was manifestly over-optimistic and less than a fortnight later Horn was once more badgering Bredow for an interview with Schleicher because he had heard that the Stahlhelm leaders had been received and he feared they were "stealing a march" on him⁽³¹⁾. In fact he was worrying unduly as Schleicher was firmly of the opinion that all the Verbände must "wieder scharf auf ihren Aufgabengebiete beschränkt werden: Wehrsport im Sinne Stülpnagel und Pflege des Wehrgeistes"⁽³²⁾. In this form of activity the KB had long been involved. At the September meeting the three main fields were described in detail: the voluntary Labour Service, Wehrsport/Jugendertüchtigung, and Luftschutz.

The KB had for a long time been co-operating with the "Arbeitsdienst", but far and away the biggest share in this was taken by the Stahlhelm, who by the end of 1932 was running between 300 and 400 labour camps and had some 20,000 of its members involved⁽³³⁾. Papen's order of 16th July 1932 was

(30) KY 25-9-32.

(31) NL Bredow 2, 23/9 and 24/2: 24th and 27th September 1932.

(32) *ibid.* 2, 104/7.

(33) Berghahn p.337.

taken up enthusiastically by KB and DOB who strongly recommended participation to their youth sections. The KB too ran its own camps, although its contribution in this field was of lesser importance than that of the Stahlhelm. An important aspect of the "Arbeitsdienst" was military training: "Wehrsport und Arbeitsdienst ... verdanken ihre Entstehung dem Artikel 173 des Versailler Diktats, der Abschaffung der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht". At the same time it was hoped in this way to harness potentially disruptive social elements to useful activity, rather than have them attracted in even greater numbers into the SA⁽³⁴⁾.

In September the "Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung" was finally launched by a presidential decree issued on the 13th. This was a much more specifically military undertaking, and fifty serving officers were seconded to organise it⁽³⁵⁾. Fifteen infantry-orientated camps were set up and one naval one. Courses lasting 3 weeks were each to train some 1-200 youngsters, between the ages of 16 and 26, in basic military skills. In fact the average number to start with was in the region of 140. In one complete intake in November 1932, 2,150 men were trained: 33% from the SA and Hitler-Jugend, 25% from the Stahlhelm and 10% from the KB. Most of the KB element came from Pomerania (Stettin), Berlin, Münster, Magdeburg and Hannover, areas where sympathy with the Nazis and Stahlhelm was already strong⁽³⁶⁾. Barthels, head of the Kyffhäuserjugend, was a member of the Reichskuratorium. Similarly the DOB Sportvereinigung co-operated fully⁽³⁷⁾. While the lower figure of KB participation reflects to some extent its definite lower potential as a "Kampfbund" when compared with SA and Stahlhelm, it is perhaps also indicative of its broader political composition. The socialist press had been quick to attack the venture - "Etappe zu einem deutschen Faschismus?"⁽³⁸⁾. The "Reichsbanner", theoretically the same size

(34) KY 18-9-32; 22-10; 30-10; 27-11; 18-1-33// "DOB" 25-8-32; 25-11-32; NL Bredow 3, 8: DOB approaches//Schützle p.166//Berghahn p.335-7.

(35) NL Bredow 1, 28: 6-7-32.

(36) Report by Stülpnagel to Innenminister, with appendix: (Schützle p.187).

(37) KY 23-10-32; 30-10-32; 13-11-32// "DOB" 25-9-32; 15-10-32.

(38) NL Marx 979, "Eichsfelder Volksblatt" 22-9-32 (KH).

as the KB, contributed little over 1% of the trainees, and KB participation in Stuttgart, for example, was nil⁽³⁹⁾. It seems likely that in the Rhineland and South Germany particularly, where the KV movement was certainly very active⁽⁴⁰⁾, many members were unwilling to have their sons participate in a movement whose tone was set by the Nazis. The attitude of the RC Church was probably also a factor, tending in the same direction.

The third field of military preparation in which the KB participated was that of "Luftschutz" or Air-Raid Protection. The "Deutscher Luftschutzverband" had been founded in 1927 and taken under closer government direction during 1930. In the course of 1932 exercises had been held in conjunction with military detachments in East Prussia. In September the KB announced its future involvement in this field and here again it is likely that the suggestion came originally from the Reichswehrministerium: local branches were ordered to appoint "Obleute" to co-ordinate matters, and negotiations at the top were initiated with the Luftschutzbund and the Technische Nothilfe. The Reich and Prussian Ministries of the Interior both issued orders to the effect that each local civil-defence advisory council must have at least one member from the local KV. The first course for "Obleute" was held at the Berlin Police Institute in January 1933⁽⁴¹⁾.

Thus the KB played an important part in the military preparations set in train by Schleicher and Groener under Brüning, broadened by Schleicher under Papen, and finally adapted to his own purposes by Adolf Hitler. It is difficult to assess the potential social values of the Arbeitsdienst and the Kuratorium, because they had only a short time in which to develop. It was certainly hoped that they would lower the political temperature and draw

(39) Report by Stülpnagel to Innenminister, with appendix: (Schültzle p.187).
 (40) Württemberg e.g. See p.195.
 (41) KY 18-9-32; 30-10-32; 13-11-32// "DOB" 25-8-32; 5-9-32 (PP 716-7, 729).

away some of the energies from the NSDAP. The Reichstag elections of November 1932 provided some grounds for the hope that the electoral influence of the Nazis might evaporate as quickly as it had arisen. But the NSDAP was more than a political party. While its youth sections worked hard to spread the Nazi gospel in the state Wehrsportverband and to a lesser extent in the Arbeitsdienst, the SA constituted a military force, with which the Reichswehr leaders (Army, Navy and Police) decided in November they could not deal - albeit in the unlikely event of a coincident invasion and communist revolt. This was the weapon Schleicher used to fell the Papen government in November - in the forlorn hope that he could yet bring in the Nazis on his own terms⁽⁴²⁾. Had Schleicher and the army stood firm behind Papen, it is possible even at this late stage that the storm might have been weathered - for they still had the vital support of the man who could make and unmake chancellors - Hindenburg.

Some observers considered that the Papen régime marked the high water mark of monarchism. Schleicher had even been cast in the rôle of a General Monk. The considered view of the British Ambassador, however, was that the tide had never been very high: "Most Germans of the Schleicher type will tell you that they are royalists - but they usually qualify their remarks by saying that their idea is a constitutional monarchy". Schleicher, of course, was seeing the Crown Prince some two or three times a week, but it seems probable that they were both agreed that the time for a restoration had not yet arrived. The mass of Germans were still apathetic, rather than directly hostile, to the Crown Prince. The most, perhaps, that he could hope for was a Regency when Hindenburg died⁽⁴³⁾. Even then a lot would depend on creating a "popular" agitation on his behalf. There is no

(42) Carsten p.378 et seq.

(43) FO 371, 15944 C4933/235/18: report 9-6-32//15947 C10422: report of Duncan Sandys' talk with Crown Prince 3-12-32// and: 16716 C455/319/18: talk 2-1-33.

evidence to suggest that any initiative in this direction was ever forthcoming from Papen or Schleicher, and the pattern of propaganda activity by the monarchist associations continued unchanged. The "Deutsche Kaiserpartei" under Count v. Spreti was refused any official support from the Crown Prince⁽⁴⁴⁾, which effectively prevented it becoming a real rallying-point. Despite the services rendered to the NSDAP by the NDO itself and by its members individually, its activities in Silesia (June 1932) attracted the hostile notice of the local party leader: "NDO sich für das angestammte Herrscherhaus ausspreche", and he went on to enquire: "ob nicht analog der Bestimmung, dass Stahlhelm Mitglieder nicht zugleich Mitglieder unserer Partei sein können, bezgl. des NDO verfahren werden könnte"⁽⁴⁵⁾. But Hitler wished to avoid antagonising the monarchists, even the political kind, at least until he was firmly in the saddle. The NDO was only banned to members of the SA. The DOB continued with its customary form of propaganda giving a good deal of coverage to the Crown Prince: on the occasion of his 50th birthday in May 1932 a celebration was staged in the Landwehr Kasino and the front page of the 5th May edition of the "DOB" carried a long article, "The Crown Prince as a leader in the World War"⁽⁴⁶⁾. On the occasion of Gen. von Hutier's birthday in August the "DOB" referred to "seine (Hutier's) unerschütterliche Treue zu Kaiser und Reich". Hutier had directed the policies of the Bund since 1919⁽⁴⁷⁾.

In January 1933, besides carrying the usual statement of loyalty to the Kaiser, the "DOB" printed its joint protest (with the NDO) against the remarks of the Nazi General Litzmann, criticising Hindenburg and the Kaiser. Litzmann had already been mentioned in February 1932 as a possible (Nazi) successor to von Horn⁽⁴⁸⁾. If the officer associations were beginning to

(44) NL Seeckt 80 (FO).

(45) SSch 220: Silesian NSDAP to Reichsleitung Munich 7-6-32 (K).

(46) "DOB" 5-5-32; 15-5-32; also: 25-5-32; 15-8-32; 5-7-32.

(47) "DOB" 25-8-32.

(48) "DOB" 25-1-33. // NH 926.

become more aware of the very real differences of outlook that separated them from the NSDAP, the same applied much more so to the KB. Ever since February 1932 the Nazis had been waging a smear campaign against the KB leaders, both in their own press and via their sympathisers within the Bund itself. By the beginning of June the Nazi slanders reached such a level that the Bund was forced to issue a public denial that their presidents had been embezzling KB funds!⁽⁴⁹⁾ During the summer, it had been alleged, an agent from Doorn toured Germany, sounding out opinion in monarchist circles. In September the question of a possible initiative by the KB on behalf of the Kaiser's return to Germany (not his restoration) was raised by the industrialist Heinrich Freese. In a letter to Riebicke, the editor of the "Kyffhäuser", he suggested the publication of an article "Die Heimkehr des Kaisers". Riebicke referred the matter to the praesidium: von Enckevort could see no objection to publishing the article as a "letter from a reader" (not i.e. as an official KB statement). Von Fabeck, on the other hand, was strongly in favour of official KB action in the matter, and suggested taking up contacts with the NSDAP to that end. This is interesting inasmuch as it must have been fairly typical of many men of his rank and class: blindly optimistic; despite all that had happened, the Nazis were "a good thing" and could still be viewed as a means of restoring the monarchy. Like Schleicher, few of these Prussian aristocrats seriously considered that it might in the end be the Bohemian corporal who was to "call the tune". Horn himself preferred first of all to sound out opinion at the "Schatullverwaltung" (the Kaiser's Berlin Agents). There he was apparently informed that the Kaiser had no intention as yet of considering such a move, so the matter of KB agitation was dropped. The attitude of Schleicher possibly also played a part. Contacts between the leaders of the Bund and the Hohenzollerns

(49) KY/PB 5-6-32: Front page (over Enckevort's signature).

certainly became closer as a result of this episode. Horn and two subordinates were received for tea by Queen Hermine in October. Formal written contact became more frequent⁽⁵⁰⁾.

The veteran associations' common interest in monarchism, combined with the ambiguous attitude of the NSDAP (Hitler had described himself as a "pacemaker" for monarchism, and Göring had visited Doorn in the autumn)⁽⁵¹⁾ could be seen to present a prima facie case for a "Kaiserliche Front". The public authority of a combination of veterans' associations including the Stahlhelm and supported by the government and president would have been very considerable; failing an initiative from Papen or Schleicher, then one from the Hohenzollern side itself would have been necessary. Neither was forthcoming. KB relations with the Stahlhelm had not improved⁽⁵²⁾ and the "Bund der Frontsoldaten" had by January 1933 attached themselves to the fateful Papen/Hitler axis⁽⁵³⁾. Schleicher, now forced to occupy the "hot seat" of chancellor himself (from 3rd December 1932) made futile attempts to rally support for his government, even making approaches to the SPD and Reichsbanner⁽⁵⁴⁾. On 15th January the KB staged its annual rally at the Sportpalast commemorating the foundation of the Reich. Besides Hindenburg, Mackensen, the Crown Prince, Prince Eitel Frederick and Chancellor Schleicher there were many other representatives of the Reichswehr and Civil Establishment. Horn's speech on this occasion contained a strong plea that the "freedom movement" combine itself with some form of monarchism: "Ohne diesen starken Willen zur Nation im Geiste Bismarcks kann die Freiheitsbewegung, in der wir augenblicklich stehen, nicht durchgeführt werden .."⁽⁵⁵⁾ What more could Horn say in such company? The "Bismarck-spirit" was another

(50) Kaufmann op.cit. p.210, 212//NH 910, 107-121.

(51) Kaufmann p.216-7;

(52) e.g. KY/PB 18-10-32.

(53) Berghahn p.356.

(54) Rohe op.cit. p.445//Bracher op.cit. p.684.

(55) R43 I 766, 231: report of 15-1-33 rally (K).

of those imprecise phrases that could be taken a number of ways. To the key figure at the Sport-Palast rally, the old Field-Marshal President, it involved, two short weeks later, discarding the wily Schleicher in favour of Hindenburg's friend Papen, under the "nominal" leadership of the new Chancellor, Adolf Hitler.

SECTION FIVE

1933 - 1943

and

CONCLUSION

1. Veterans' Organisations, NSDAP and SA 1933-34
 2. The Nazis and the Monarchist Associations 1933-4
 3. Veterans' Organisations after January 1934
- CONCLUSION

1. VETERANS' ORGANISATIONS, NSDAP AND SA (1933/34)

January 1933 effectively marked the end of the Weimar Republic. The NSDAP rapidly engrossed the centres of power; von Epp seized control of Bavaria (March), the SPD was banned (June). During 1934 the monarchist Verbände outside the ex-servicemen's associations were dissolved, the power of Röhm and the SA smashed (30th June) and finally, on 2nd August, when Hindenburg died, Hitler combined the offices of President and Chancellor in his own person. The army gave their seal of approval by agreeing to the new oath of loyalty, to " ... Adolf Hitler, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces". The way in which the veterans' organisations were adapted to meet the new conditions, and the way the KB finally emerged as the one establishment association in 1938, strongly reflect the influence of the different power blocks within Nazi Germany - the SA (up to 1934), SS, Nazi Party bureaucracy and Wehrmacht. They also reflect the experience of the NSDAP with ex-servicemen's groups before the period of Hitler's Chancellorship began and are thus of more than passing interest to the historian of the Weimar Republic.

The KB's initial attitude was one of caution, awaiting the close of the election campaigns on polling day, 5th March. In the meantime the Bund publicly welcomed the prospective dissolution of the KPD and the Reichsbanner, for whose political positions 12 million Germans were nevertheless still to vote⁽¹⁾. With regard to the election itself, the KB announcements contained the customary militarist effusions, making considerable play with the need for "Lebensraum", economic recovery, etc⁽²⁾. On the day before the election Horn sent a long letter to Hitler placing the Bund at his disposal. Emphasising their work for the "German

(1) NH 929: KY 4-2-33 (K).

(2) KY 26-2-33.

Front", the activity in militarist directions, the co-operation with the Nazi "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Wehrverstärkung", their 80,000 strong Youth Group, work in Luftschutz and Arbeitsdienst, and the welfare associations, Horn complained "dass die grösste Soldatenorganisation der Welt ... in den letzten Wochen und Monaten kaum Beachtung gefunden hat", and asked for more consideration.⁽³⁾ The KB wrote again on the 11th welcoming the government's intention to deal with unemployment and suggesting legislation on behalf of ex-"Frontkämpfer"⁽⁴⁾. The "Parolebuch" on the 12th stressed the Bund's readiness to follow the President and the national government⁽⁵⁾. The cordial reply of Staatssekretär Lammers on the 14th must have come as something of a relief, holding out as it did the prospect of a personal meeting between Horn and Hitler⁽⁶⁾. On the 18th Horn wrote again requesting clarification of the position of KV members with regard to the "police auxiliaries": in Prussia only SA, SS and Stahlhelm were being enrolled; in Saxony many KB members as well⁽⁷⁾.

At the end of March Horn sent out a circular requesting all levels of the organisation to co-operate with the "national freedom-movement". The same sentiments were stressed in subsequent numbers of the "Kyffhäuser". At the same time preparations were set in train for a big rally in Potsdam (for 2nd July) presumably to demonstrate the "power" of the Bund⁽⁸⁾. Horn and Hitler met on the 6th April and it would appear that the optimism expressed in the "Kyffhäuser", a few days previously ("Reichskanzler Hitler anerkennt die Arbeit des KB"), particularly with regard to the future of the Bund in Bavaria and of the Kyffhäuserjugend⁽⁹⁾, was not disturbed. Occasional local friction between SA and KB groups was only

(3) R43 II 824: 4-3-33 (K).

(4) *ibid.* 11-3-33.

(5) KY 12-3-33.

(6) R43 II 824: 14-3-33 (K).

(7) *ibid.* 18-3-33.

(8) KY 9-4-33; 16-4-33; 30-4-33.

(9) R43 II 824: Lammers to Horn 1-4-33 etc (K)//KY 2-4-33.

to be expected, but the policy of the government was in no way hostile. An instruction issued by the Innenminister (the Nazi, Frick) confirmed the position of the "privileged" KVe in such matters as funeral parades and possession of weapons (6th April). The Prussian Innenminister (the Nazi, GÖring) followed suit⁽¹⁰⁾. Official reassurance had already been received by the KB in the matter of "police auxiliaries"⁽¹¹⁾.

By the end of April the KB leaders were still fairly confident over the future. On the 29th the "Reichsluftschutzbund" was established at a meeting in the Air Ministry: the KB had a representative on the praesidium along with those from the SS, SA, Stahlhelm and Technische Nothilfe⁽¹²⁾. Already in March, the Reichswehrministerium had agreed to urge the various "Treubünde" to seek corporate membership of the KB. In May, the KB came to an arrangement with the other interested party - the "Reichsbund der Zivildienstberechtigten", whereby matters of "Zivilversorgung" were to be left with the latter and both KB and RdZ were to oppose any scheme to create one "Reichstreubund" for ex-Reichswehr soldiers⁽¹³⁾. This agreement was rather unwisely published in July. On 2nd May Horn was received by GÖring and was given a somewhat rude awakening. Far-reaching changes were mentioned and GÖring stressed the need for thorough discussions with the NS "Wehrpolitisches Amt" (before September 1932, the Munich "Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Wehrverstärkung"). The "Wehrpolitisches Amt" came under von Epp (Franz Xaver Ritter von Epp, Major-General, Reichsstatthalter of Bavaria and head of the Kolonial-Kriegerbund - a small organisation strongly hostile to the KB), and more generally, under Röhm and the SA⁽¹⁴⁾. As a preliminary step the KB praesidium meeting on 7th June (with Col. Sighting from the "Wehrpolitisches Amt" present) adopted the "Führerprinzip" and entrusted full powers to von Horn⁽¹⁵⁾. These events together with the Bund's complete subordination to the Nazis, were notified to Hitler in a long telegram the following

(10) LA Gelnhausen 4969 (Ma).

(11) KY 2-4-33.

(12) KY 1-5-33- 14-5-33.

(13) KY 16-7-33.

(14) NH 1870//KY 7-5-33.

(15) KY 14-5-33.

day⁽¹⁶⁾. On the 21st a special meeting of KB representatives received Horn's instructions. Henceforth one of his two deputies was to be appointed by the NSDAP (this was Col. Sichting); at least half of his advisors were to be party members; Landesverband leaders were to be appointed by the President (Horn); local praesidia were also to have 50% party-members, who were preferably to be World War veterans⁽¹⁷⁾. This proved more easily said than done. In many places no KV members belonged to the NSDAP⁽¹⁸⁾.

During May and June negotiations with the "Wehrpolitisches Amt" continued and the full extent of Nazi plans became apparent. The 88,000 strong Kyffhäuserjugend had to be dissolved; this took place at a large rally in Potsdam on 20th July⁽¹⁹⁾. Also to go was the flourishing "Kyffhäuserverband" - the welfare section of the KB. The old "Reichsverband" and "Zentralverband" had amalgamated in mid-1932, to form the new "Reichsverband der Kriegsoffer". In 1933 this was further amalgamated with the Nazi "Kriegsofferversorgung" to form the "NS Reichsverband". This body in turn set up a loose "Nationale Kampfgemeinschaft" with the welfare group of the DOB, and Kyffhäuserverband. Following the dissolution of the Communist and Socialist welfare associations (May 1933) the DOB and KB withdrew from the "Kampfgemeinschaft". Only after prolonged resistance was the KB persuaded to accept an amalgamation with the NS Reichsverband. This was formally achieved on 12th July when the "National-Sozialistische Kriegs-Opfer Versorgung" (NSKOV), came (once more) into being. By 1st October all local groups had to transfer to the NSKOV. The DOB too lost its welfare section⁽²⁰⁾. Other changes included more specific condemnation of "Marxists" (Socialists, i.e.) although the ban on the SPD obviated the need to expel party-members from the KB⁽²¹⁾,

(16) R43 II 824 (K).

(17) *ibid.*

(18) KY 2-7-33.

(19) KY 23-7-33.

(20) "DOB" 15-5-33; 25-7-33; 5-8-33; 5-10-33//MA 104266 (MGS)//See p. 36.

(21) NH 915, KY 2-7-33: KB to Ost-Friesische Bund 12-4-33 (K).

and a reorganisation of the Bund into 22 Landesverbände corresponding to the Nazi Gaue⁽²²⁾.

The KB, however, was not the only ex-servicemen's association and during the summer of 1933 the question of the "Regimentsvereine" came once more to the fore. It seems likely that one of the inducements held out to the KB in return for its co-operation was the prospect of being able to engross all the existing veterans' associations, such as the "Regimentsvereine". The KB leader Gen. von Fabeck certainly had this impression and prematurely publicised it in the journal of his own regimental club. This drew enquiries from such associations as the Field-Artillery Waffening (17th July): earlier rumours had already led to the "Verband Hessischer Regimentsvereine" writing to the Reich Chancellery. In August, the president of the 4th Guards Regiment Association (the former "Regiment Reinhard" - Freikorps), still the same Col. Wilhelm Reinhard - already a Nazi, wrote a strongly argued plea in favour of closer links between the regimental associations and the Reichswehr. Of the KVe, whose president he was very shortly to become, he wrote in the most disparaging terms - "in diesen heute noch vielfach Elemente sitzen, die bei der Revolution ihren Offizieren die Achselstücke abgerissen haben ---". Reinhard considered that von Epp was likely to agree with his suggestion. On being approached by Lammers, Hitler denied that he had given the KB any reason to make such an assumption, and Fabeck was officially requested to retract his statement (29th August)⁽²³⁾.

The question of adjusting relations between Army, veterans and SA was to drag on for several months, and in view of the forces ranged against them, the prospect for the KB was now far from rosy. During September new statutes were issued and a new standard complete with swastika pennon was

(22) "Das Archiv", ed. Berndt: Nachtragsband II, 1933, p.744 (18-8-33).

(23) R43 II 824: July/August 1933 (K).

adopted. In October the Nazi forms of correspondence were enforced, and on the 16th Hindenburg became "Schirmherr", von Epp "Ehrenführer", and Horn himself took the title of "Bundesführer"⁽²⁴⁾. Later in the month Horn recommended that the Bund approve Hitler's policy in the referendum of 12th November.⁽²⁵⁾ Also in November the KB adopted the use of the swastika armband. What more could Horn do to please the new masters of Germany? It seems clear nevertheless that the SA chief Röhm was contemplating a dissolution of the Bund as soon as this became expedient (i.e. when Hindenburg died). The first matter to be settled was which organisation soldiers leaving the Reichswehr should enter - the SA (as Röhm would have preferred), the Regimentsvereine (Reinhard's first suggestion), the Treubünde, the Reichsbund der Zivildienstberechtigten or the KB? The army had still sufficient independence to solve this matter itself. Already in July, the old praesidium of the RdZ had been replaced by a Nazi body under the leadership of Oberbürgermeister Schwede (Coburg). Negotiations with the Reichswehrministerium resulted in the amalgamation of RdZ and Reichswehr Treubünde into the "Reichstreubund ehemaliger Berufssoldaten", effected on 11th December 1933 by dissolving the Treubünde and reforming the local branches of the old RdZ. (where these existed). The implementing order went out on 5th December and contained an explicit statement that Röhm's ban on SA/SS members entering new organisations did not apply to the new Reichstreubund. Similarly a circular of the old Reichswehr "Reichstreubund" (established in 1932 as an administrative convenience) dated 8th December 1933, pointed out that members over 45 need not join the SA Reserve II. In fact Röhm was able to bring sufficient pressure to bear to have the "Reichstreubund" included in the associations whose members had to seek additional membership of the SA⁽²⁶⁾. Henceforth, however, the main organisation for ex-Reichswehr

(24) KY 3-9-33; 17-9-33; 1-10-33; 22-10-33.

(25) KY 29-10-33.

(26) Sammlung Schumacher 472//KY 10-12-33//WK VII 1253 (F)//Polizeidirektion Munich 24a IIIIF 11/202: "Augsburger Abendzeitung" 6-7-33 (MSO).

soldiers was to be the new "Reichstreubund".

This had been more or less settled a long time before December 1933 and made the other problems a little easier to solve. One obvious answer was to combine the remaining groups into a single big association - as had been done with the welfare societies. Von Horn, influenced to some extent by his long standing antagonism to von Epp, refused to co-operate and in view of Hindenburg's protection a solution could not be forced through⁽²⁷⁾. Another line of approach was suggested by the policy adopted over the Stahlhelm. Local conflicts between this organisation and the Nazis moved Hitler in the summer of 1933 to sanction its absorption into the SA. By the end of October the assimilation of the "Wehrstahlhelm" (ages 18-35) had been accomplished⁽²⁸⁾. At some stage it must have occurred to the Nazi leaders that here was an excellent way for dealing with the other ex-servicemen's organisations. Correspondingly, the "Obersten SA Führer" order of 6th November ordained the establishment of the SA Reserve I (Stahlhelmers 18-45) and the SA Reserve II (members of the KB, officer and regimental associations, Waffenringe, Marine- und Kolonialverbände). The head of SAR II was to be Col. Reinhard⁽²⁹⁾. It is fairly clear that the intention of Röhm at least, was to destroy the existing associations and that the 6th November order was the first step. The SAR I lost its organisational independence on 25th January 1934. The remnants of the Stahlhelm (those over 45) were shortly afterwards (April) formed into the "NS Deutsche Frontkämpferbund"⁽³⁰⁾. That the same fate did not befall the "SARII" associations was due to a number of factors: firstly, the separate interests of the Nazi leaders dealing with the affair; von Epp was head of the Kolonialkriegerbund, Reinhard represented the officers' regimental clubs, and von der Goltz was the elected representative/leader of

(27) SSch 247: Memo by Reichsleitung NSDAP: 26-11-34 (K).

(28) Berghahn p.387-9.

(29) "Völkischer Beobachter" 29-1-34.

(30) Berghahn p.389.

the officer associations, other than the DOB⁽³¹⁾. Already on 11th November Reinhard sent to Gen. von Hammerstein, the head of the Reichswehr, a copy of a letter to Röhm asking him to participate in a joint conference with himself, Epp, Goltz and an Army representative, to discuss the difficulties of bringing the various Verbände under his control⁽³²⁾. Secondly, strong opposition to the SA was forthcoming from the DOB and NDO (Röhm had banned membership of these organisations to the SA in December 1932)⁽³³⁾. Thirdly, there was increasing suspicion of Röhm's intentions on the part of other Nazi leaders; finally, of course, the feelings of the old Field-Marshal had still to be taken into account. The upshot of this was essentially a compromise: the existing officer associations amalgamated to form a new "Reichsverband deutscher Offiziere" under Goltz, with Reinhard as one of his two deputies (January 1934); Horn was to be removed and his place taken by Reinhard. Thus the provisions of the November order concerning SAR II had been abandoned within only a few weeks. The SAR II was confined to the KB, including its members of all ages, and no legal provisions were deemed to have sanctioned a forcible incorporation of the regimental associations and Waffening Vereine. The decision to leave the veteran organisations other than the Stahlhelm intact was partly a product of the factors already discussed, and partly a reflection of changing Nazi policy towards the monarchists. This aspect will now be examined in more detail.

2. THE NAZIS AND THE MONARCHIST ASSOCIATIONS

The Nazi advent to power was seen by many genuine supporters of the Hohenzollerns as a step in the right direction. There remained formidable obstacles to a restoration - apathy within Germany, hostility from France and

(31) "Völkischer Beobachter" 27-11-33.

(32) RH I/V 24 (F).

(33) R43 II 824: SA order 30-12-32(K).

Great Britain without, the inflexible attitude of the ex-Kaiser - determined that while he lived no other Hohenzollern should reign in Germany. Hitler initially did nothing to discourage royalist hopes. According to Papen - in conversation with Duncan Sandys (7th March 1933) - the monarchy was certain to be restored some time, and Hitler had recently said as much to the Crown Prince⁽³⁴⁾. In June the former Chancellor Brüning told the British Ambassador himself that he considered that only the restoration of a limited constitutional monarchy could save Germany from prolonged unrest and trouble⁽³⁵⁾.

The question of the KB taking an initiative on the Kaiser's behalf - ostensibly only for his return to live in Germany - was still occasionally raised, but as previously, foundered on the Kaiser's avowed wish not to return yet awhile⁽³⁶⁾. The ex-monarch's vanity perhaps prevented his agreeing to appear in a suppliant rôle. Germany had sent him into exile, and it was for Germany to invite him back. In the meantime, he sat back and awaited developments. If the KB leaders appeared to seize this excuse to maintain a scrupulous neutrality, this was to some extent understandable. The events of the presidential elections were still too recent for Horn's peace of mind. Other societies however, were concerning themselves more actively in the question. The old Generaloberst von Einem and Rechts-anwalt Dr. Everling had formed the "Deutsche Kaiserbewegung" from the mass of small monarchist groups and were canvassing the cause, particularly among the Kriegervereine and officer associations⁽³⁷⁾. While little impression was made on the leadership of the KB more was achieved with the biggest of the officer associations, the DOB. Although officially welcoming the Nazi successes in the elections⁽³⁸⁾ the Bund's declaration published on 5th March, left no room for doubt about their monarchist sympathies: ---

(34) FO 371, 16719 C2341/18.

(35) *ibid.* 16725 C5660/319/18; Conversation (June) (PRO).

(36) NH 910, 126: PLKV to Silesian Prov. 13-4-33 (K).

(37) *ibid.* 128-30: March/April 1933.

(38) "DOB" 15-3-33 p.211.

"Vorwärts mit Gott für König und Vaterland, für Kaiser und Reich"⁽³⁹⁾.

The reasons behind this policy statement were perhaps not unconnected with the fact that the DOB committee meeting 2 days earlier had been addressed by the specially invited Dr. Everling on the ways and means of promoting the royalist cause⁽⁴⁰⁾. And of course only 4 days previously, the first Reichstag of the "Third Reich" had been ceremonially opened at Potsdam: "The Chair reserved for the Kaiser was left empty and immediately behind sat the former Crown Prince, in full dress uniform". Hindenburg solemnly saluted the empty throne and the Crown Prince with his Field-Marshal's baton. Hitler went out of his way to defend the Kaiser from charges of war-guilt⁽⁴¹⁾. It seemed almost that the royalists' hour had come.

In spite of this "master-stroke of conciliation towards the President, the Army and the Nationalists"⁽⁴²⁾, its immediate aim was to consolidate support for the "Enabling Bill" which was shortly to give Hitler virtually dictatorial powers. Already by the following month there were rumours of a monarchist Putsch⁽⁴³⁾. The appearance of officers in the Imperial uniform at an Essen celebration marking Hitler's birthday (19th April) led to strenuous protests by the local SS. These in their turn brought about a counter-protest by all the veterans' organisations in Essen (4th May) and the taking-up of the affair by General von Radowitz the DOB executive-director. Radowitz approached the Reichskanzlei on 11th May and was rapidly invited to meet Hitler personally. At their conference on 15th May it was agreed that the DOB should adopt the "Führerprinzip" and issue a statement supporting Hitler, at the same time holding to their monarchist position: "Getreu den geheiligten Traditionen der alten ruhmreichen Wehrmacht hält der DOB an seiner monarchischen Einstellung fest ...". The statement was

(39) "DOB" 25-3-33: Front page: "Zur Nationaler Erhebung".

(40) "DOB" 5-4-33, p.273.

(41) Alan Bullock, "Hitler", 1952: p.267-8.

(42) *ibid.*

(43) FO 371, 16721 C3377/319/18 (April 1933) (PRO).

duly published in the "Deutscher Offizier-Bund" on the 25th May and two days later the Reichskanzlei sent a letter of reprimand to the SS leader concerned⁽⁴⁴⁾. This incident indicated the Nazis' real desire not to antagonise the ex-servicemen's associations at this stage, for behind them, ultimately, stood the power of the Reichswehr. At the same time, the biggest of the officer associations appears to have concluded a temporary pact with Hitler. This made it no longer necessary to court the other main officer group, the NDO, with whom von der Goltz and the "Vereinigung vaterländischer Verbände" were closely associated. The NDO were more tenacious in their royalist sentiments. Their conference of 24th April expressed support for the government, but: "Die Krönung aller Aufbauarbeit sieht der NDO nach wie vor in der Wiedererrichtung der Monarchie unter der ruhmvollen Regierung der Hohenzollern"⁽⁴⁵⁾. Von der Goltz's interview with Hitler, arranged for 17th May, was postponed to an indefinite date in the autumn⁽⁴⁶⁾. The influential nationalist leader was left to cool his heels.

Thus, by May 1933, the KB and DOB were both co-operating with the NSDAP and reorganising themselves according to the government's wishes. The DOB leaders Hutier and Radowitz were received by the Führer again on 6th July⁽⁴⁷⁾. At the same time, Gen. von Hülßen was active among the Berlin Regimentsbünde, and an increasing number of requests were being made to the government, - that the Kaiser be allowed to return, and that Hitler offer him the Wilhelmshöhe Schloss. While similar sentiments were expressed by important local branches of the Bund, Horn refused to be drawn into the agitation⁽⁴⁸⁾. Von der Goltz was meanwhile changing his attitude. Early in July he wrote to Hitler intimating that he would be prepared to accept a personal invitation to join the NSDAP⁽⁴⁹⁾. This produced no immediate response, but at the

(44) R43II 824 (K)//"DOB" 25-5-33 Nachrichten.
 (45) BPD p.448.
 (46) R43II 826 (K).
 (47) "DOB" 15-7-33 p.559.
 (48) NH 910, 136: Lyons to Fabeck 18-7-33, and F's notes (K).
 (49) R43II 824: von der Goltz' letter 8-7-33 (K).

beginning of August Hitler personally attended the funeral of the former president of the NDO, Admiral von Schröder. This was in some ways a smaller scale repeat of the March performance at Potsdam⁽⁵⁰⁾. The Nazi "revolution" had been striding rapidly forward, encompassing the dissolution of the political parties and the 14th July law instituted penalties for people attempting to maintain or form any rival parties to the NSDAP. With this Hitler decided, the "revolution" had gone far enough. Henceforth he was concerned more with consolidating what had been achieved and restraining the more radical strivings of Röhm and the SA⁽⁵¹⁾. To do this it was necessary to keep the Reichswehr (and hence the monarchist nationalists) in a co-operative frame of mind. Shortly after the funeral of von Schröder, von der Goltz issued a positive declaration supporting Hitler⁽⁵²⁾. He still had to wait another two weeks before the Reichskanzlei finally approved his suggestion of six weeks standing and asked him to get in touch with Hess (the NSDAP chief executive)⁽⁵³⁾. The result of talks in the following weeks was that von der Goltz was entrusted with the task of bringing together the officer associations. The first step towards this was the "Führerring" set up during October/November 1933. The NDO, ROB and MOV combined under von der Goltz and Reinhard⁽⁵⁴⁾. The DOB declined as yet to participate, and once again seemed to be contemplating a more active monarchist policy⁽⁵⁵⁾.

The events of January 1934 are still partially obscure, but the change of official policy that took place with regard to monarchism was marked and sudden. Hitler's attitude hitherto had been to keep the monarchists quiet with vague promises of a restoration, "some time", and meanwhile to adapt

(50) "DOB" 5-8-33, Nachrichten.

(51) Bullock op.cit. p.277.

(52) R43 II 826: 10-8-33 (K).

(53) *ibid.* 23-8-33.

(54) R43 II 824: "Völkischer Beobachter" 26/27-11-33 (K).

(55) Loyalty declarations: "DOB" 25-11-33; 3-1-34.

their most important organisation to the Nazi state; thus the Stahlhelm and KB had been subordinated to the SA and steps were being taken to amalgamate the officer associations under dependable leaders (e.g. Nazis). So far this policy had successfully prevented the inauguration of an ex-servicemen's front to "bring back the Kaiser" which, in view of the attitude of Hindenburg and the army, could not easily have been ignored - particularly as Röhm and the SA were being viewed with increasing suspicion by the Nazi leaders. However, January 1934 brought once again the double celebration of the Reichsgründungsfeier and the Kaiser's birthday, and in view of the advanced age of their biggest potential ally, Hindenburg, the monarchists were likely never again to have such a favourable opportunity for staging a joint demonstration. This, at any rate, is how things must have appeared to the Nazis. Nevertheless as late as 13th January, Reichsinnenminister Frick's circular envisaged with regard to the "Deutsche Kaiserbewegung" nothing more drastic than that local police should warn the association against overt political propaganda⁽⁵⁶⁾. The following day, at the customary KB Reichsgründungsfeier in the Sportpalast, attended and addressed by SA "Chief of Staff" Röhm,⁽⁵⁷⁾ one of the official speakers allegedly spoke in favour of a restoration - although the London "Times" report (29th January) talks more vaguely ("a voice was heard")⁽⁵⁸⁾. At the same time the Austrian Nazis were expressing their own fears and objections to a Hohenzollern restoration, while on 22nd January the British Embassy in Berlin received confidential information to the effect that France was no longer opposed to a restoration⁽⁵⁹⁾. This was thought sufficiently reliable and important to telegraph to London. On 23rd January the head of the staunchly Nazi Schleswig-Holstein Landesverband wrote to Gen. von Horn

(56) SSch 219: "Deutsche Kriegerbund" (NOT the KB) (K).

(57) "Völkischer Beobachter" 15-1-34.

(58) FO 371, 17758 C606/490/18: 22-1-34, reports speech (Jan 18th) by Goebbel's deputy, Goßlitzer, who so alleges/"Times" 29-1-34.

(59) FO 371, 17758 C490, C590 (PRO).

and the local NSDAP Gauleiter protesting at the continued agitation of the "Kaiserbewegung" within the KB⁽⁶⁰⁾. On the following day Reichsinnenminister Frick spoke at Weimar in an explicitly anti-monarchist manner⁽⁶¹⁾. Other officials too, are recorded to have expressed themselves similarly in public. On the evening of 26th January the officer associations held their annual celebration marking the Kaiser's birthday; also present were Gen. von Horn, Nazis such as Col. Reinhard, and prominent Stahlhelmers. The affair was staged as usual in the assembly rooms at the Zoo, and the majority of officers there were in the old Imperial uniform and accompanied by their wives. The occasion was also to mark the founding of the joint "Reichsverband deutscher Offiziere", under General von der Goltz. Just as the latter called for a toast to the Kaiser the room was invaded by a mob of SA louts who scattered itching powder, let off squibs and roughed up many of the officers present, paying special attention to General von Horn. The affair ended in general pandemonium, and the celebration was abandoned⁽⁶²⁾. Horn resigned his office the following day, and was replaced by Reinhard, the head of the SA Reserve II. Already allegedly in "precarious health" Horn died a week later (4th February). It is difficult not to see a connection between the disgraceful scenes at the Zoo and Horn's sudden death at the age of 68. Such was the fate of one "suspected of reactionary sympathies" in Nazi Germany⁽⁶³⁾.

The Kaiser's birthday was subject to a reporting ban, although this did not deter groups such as the DOB and Stahlhelm printing the customary notices. On 30th January the national press published Göring's letter to Frick proposing the immediate dissolution of monarchist associations, and Hitler stated in the Reichstag that the times were unsuitable for thinking about a restoration⁽⁶⁴⁾.

(60) NH 910, 137 (K).

(61) FO 317, C606/490/18:(PRO).

(62) "Times" 29-1-34//NL Schwertfeger 430, 63-4 (K)//Wheeler-Bennet op.cit. p452

(63) "Times" 9-2-34.

(64) FO 371, C718/490/18: (PRO).

Such are the facts. It remains necessary to offer some explanation of the general change of heart and in particular of the extraordinary affair at the Zoo. Reports from the British Embassy in Berlin suggest that the action against the monarchists was triggered off by a telegram from the Kaiser to the officer associations, suggesting that the time had come for serious talk of a restoration⁽⁶⁵⁾. Similarly, French sources intimated that some of the Nazi leaders had been giving serious thought themselves to the matter⁽⁶⁶⁾. It might also be pointed out here that according to Hitler's account of the "Röhm" purge in June 1934, General von Schleicher (a confidant of the Crown Prince) and the SA leader himself, had been in touch with French diplomats⁽⁶⁷⁾. And France had recently changed her policy with regard to a possible restoration, as already mentioned. Whether the murders of Schleicher and Bredow, in contrast with those of the SA leaders, were merely paying-off old scores, or whether there was some deeper significance is unknown. It seems unlikely that the Zoo celebration had been intended to inaugurate a general agitation for a restoration - if only because the moving spirit, von der Goltz, had long been co-operating loyally with Röhm, Epp, Reinhard and other Nazis. The monarchist movement remained essentially unprepared and it seems more than likely that the suppression of their associations was merely another aspect of "Gleichschaltung" - a tying-up of loose ends left after the dissolution of the other political parties. The action against the ex-officers - and one can scarcely doubt that this was officially sanctioned - was almost certainly to serve as a political object lesson: toe the line, or else! Since it also helped to remove the moderate anti-Nazi, monarchist von Horn, it was doubly valuable.

Thus the last phase in the adaption of the ex-servicemen's organisations

(65) *ibid.* C1150: Memo 14-2-34.

(66) *ibid.* C1155.

(67) Bullock *op.cit.* p.295

to Nazi Germany was completed. The officer associations amalgamated as planned in the course of February and in common with the Regimentsvereine were excepted from the ban on monarchist associations⁽⁶⁸⁾. The new leader of the "Reichsverband deutscher Offiziere" Gen. Graf von der Goltz, publicly abandoned the cause of active monarchism: "Als RDO können wir die Zukunft nicht beeinflussen. Dafür monarchische Propaganda zu treiben, wäre politisch taktlos und ausgesprochen unklug, denn es ist notwendig, stets das politisch Zweckmäßige zu tun"⁽⁶⁹⁾. A brief mention of "the loyalty of our hearts" does nothing to palliate the cold "political expediency" invoked by the man who had led the monarchist movement throughout the Weimar Republic. Of the handful of men who directed the conservative nationalist associations, Seldte and Dülsterberg, Gen. Graf von der Goltz, Gen. von Horn, Gen. von Hutier, Gen. von Radowitz, Admiral von Schröder, Gen. von Wächter, Maj. von Jena and Gen. Ludendorff, the only one who had any clear appreciation of the dangers attached to co-operation with the Nazis, the only one, albeit spasmodically, to work against them politically, and the only one to place value on a broad moderate conservative front, on an ethical basis, was the leader of the KB. Nevertheless, despite his Klaren Überlegten Kopf, Horn was no politician: "Herr von Horn ist ein viel zu vornehmer und rechtlich denkender Mann, um auf der politischen Drecklinie mitmarschieren zu können. Wir alte Offiziere sind übrigens vielfach - siehe Hindenburg - nicht der Intrigen-Wirtschaft-politischer Skrupellosigkeit und oft fanatischen Ehrgeizes gewachsen"⁽⁷⁰⁾. Horn too, was often enough forced to compromise and retract, particularly in view of the lack of consistent support from either the Weimar governments or the Hohenzollern family. His failure and failings were at least less culpable, less dishonourable, than those of the others.

(68) SSch 220, Reichsinnenminister 21-2-34 (Bavarian Political Police 10-3-34(K))

(69) "DOB" 5-4-34: report of Goltz' speech.

(70) Nachlass Enckevort, E. to Lüninck, 20-2-32. (DZA).

3. VETERANS' ORGANISATIONS AFTER JANUARY 1934

The relationship between KB and SA had from the outset not been a close one. While the Stahlhelm members were incorporated more or less en bloc, the final enforcement of the OSAF order of 6th November 1933, and subsequent orders, allowed KB members the choice, whether to join the SA reserve or not⁽⁷¹⁾. During 1934/5 the KB slowly attracted more regimental and Waffening associations, although the latter's separate organisation also remained in being. "Wild" KVe were generally given the choice of enrolling in the KB or dissolving completely. Even the Freikorps Verbände, especially the "Reichsverband der Baltikumkämpfer" (whose "Schirmherr" was von der Goltz) were finally banned, although individual Vereine who were also members of the KB were permitted to continue⁽⁷²⁾. During 1935 a separate "NS deutscher Marinebund" was established from the former "Bund deutscher Marineverbände"⁽⁷³⁾. With effect from the first day of 1936 the new "Soldatenbund" became the official organisation for all army reservists, and other men who had left the Reichswehr after 1921. The local branches of the Soldatenbund were set up in closest co-operation with their parent army units. Similar associations, a new "Marinebund", and "Luftwaffenbund", were established for the Navy and Air-force. At the same time, the "Reichstreubund" continued to function as the professional, economic association for all three services. The KB was during the same year restricted to veterans discharged before 1921 and together with the old NS-Marinebund, the NS Kriegsoferversorgung and the Reichsverband deutscher Offiziere were to compromise a "Vereinigung der Frontkämpferverbände"⁽⁷⁴⁾. Reinhard was given SS rank in 1935. During 1937 the KB itself was subordinated to the SS,⁽⁷⁵⁾ but this arrangement too was short lived. Finally,

(71) e.g. Obersten SA Führer order 20-12-35(Verordnungsblatt p.184).

(72) SSch 221//R58, 1028 (12-9-35)(K).

(73) R43 II 824 (K).

(74) ibid. 825: "Völkischer Beobachter" 22-10-36//WK IV 75: Soldatenbund 1937 (F //SSch 472 (K)//R43II 824 etc (K).

(75) SSch 247 (K)//Biographic material (BDC).

with an order of 4th March 1938, Hitler ordered the establishment of the "NS Reichskriegerbund", which brought all veterans under the leadership of Reinhard, soon promoted by stages to "General der Infanterie". The one exception to this was the NSKOV, which was confined to the welfare side of ex-service activity⁽⁷⁶⁾, but all other groups including the officers and the Wehrmacht reservists came into the new Kyffhäuserbund. Thus, twenty years after losing its establishment position, the oldest and biggest ex-servicemen's association was restored to its original pre-eminence. The divisions promoted by the social and political disharmony and weak governments of the Weimar era and prolonged by the rivalries among the different power blocs within Nazi Germany, were at last officially removed.

Hitler's motives in coming to this settlement were partly traditional but mainly political. Already in November 1935 when the "Stahlhelm" (NS Deutscher Frontkämpferbund), or rather its remnants, were finally dissolved, Hitler had stated: "Um jenen Mitgliedern des Stahlhelms, die nicht den Willen zur politischen Tätigkeit und Mitarbeit in sich empfinden, die Möglichkeit einer Fortführung der Pflege ihrer soldatischen Erinnerungen zu geben, empfehle ich den Eintritt in den Kyffhäuserbund"⁽⁷⁷⁾. This is clearly a reflection of the Führer's contempt for the Bund's poor showing as a political "Kampfbund" during the Weimar period. On the other hand, the NSDAP chancellery and the forces of law and order for several years continued to view the KB and other veterans' organisations as centres of "reaction"⁽⁷⁸⁾. The type of "reaction" criticised was mainly anti-party sentiment and sympathy with the Church. Even in the middle of the War (1942) Reinhard was forced to send out a strongly worded circular against deliberate breaches of his regulations concerning the Church. (Official participation by KVe at services had been prohibited, as was any

(76) NS 10/108 (K)//SSch 247 (K).

(77) "Völkischer Beobachter" 9-11-35.

(78) SSch 247: Memo 26-11-34//NS 20/112: Official Report 1935/6 on leaders of Ostmark (Bavaria) Gau Kriegerverband//R58, 999 & 1094: Reports on "Rechtsbewegung" 1937-9 (K).

display of old traditional colours)⁽⁷⁹⁾. This is interesting testimony to the strength of the conservatism inherent in the KB. Reinhard certainly claimed to have removed many of the older leaders. Thus, in 1938 only 14% of local chairmen were ex-officers, while 44% were ex-NCOs and 42% ordinary soldiers⁽⁸⁰⁾. Similarly in 1937, he claimed that some 400,000 of the KB's 3½ millions were party members, with 221,000 in the SA and SS, but the first figure in particular should be viewed cautiously as Reinhard had, particularly at this time, the strongest possible motive for exaggeration⁽⁸¹⁾. (The question of the final form of the new organisation was still under discussion). By and large, taking into account reports such as that on the Bavarian Ostmark Gau Kriegerverband in 1935/6⁽⁸²⁾, it would appear that the majority of local KB leaders were at best, apathetic towards the Party. In Bavaria, the influence of the Church and the Bavarian Volkspartei had always been specially strong in the KVe.

The new NS Reichskriegerbund held sway until March 1943 when Hitler ordered its dissolution as part of his economies for "total war". The local KVe were not affected and survived until the Allies banned them at the end of the War. General Reinhard refounded the KB in 1951, but today it is only one of several ex-servicemen's organisations in West Germany. Whether the understandable and close co-operation between KB and Bundeswehr contains any secret and sinister aspects, as communist observers have implied, is highly doubtful, and must remain a subject for historians of the future⁽⁸³⁾.

(79) NS 10/108: circular 22-7-42 (K).

(80) SSch 247 (K).

(81) NS 19/neu 1912: Reinhard to Himmler 15-4-37 (K).

(82) NS 20/112: (K).

(83) BPD p.310//NS 1/485: Hitler's order 3-3-43 (K).

CONCLUSIONS

The basic point to emerge from this study is that the Kyffhäuserbund and the Offiziersverbände were not primarily Kampfblünde in the tradition of the Freikorps and their party-political successors. The Kriegervereine had had a long history before 1918 and although they had been organised and exploited by Imperial Germany to serve both political and military ends, the motives that drew ex-servicemen into their ranks were basically still social and economic, - the desire for comradeship and financial security. By 1918 the KB had established a virtual monopoly of veterans' clubs and had become practically part of the Imperial establishment, playing an important national rôle, especially in matters of welfare. Its many years activity as an anti-socialist organisation, although officially terminated in 1915, left a lasting mark on the attitudes of members and leaders alike. The development of hostile socialist ex-servicemen's organisations during the War and of rival right-wing associations after the demobilisation of the Imperial Army, did much to weaken the KB. The more active political rôle of the new organisations, particularly the socialist "Reichsbund der Kriegsbeschädigten" and the Conservative "Stahlhelm", proved initially to be a stronger attraction to the veterans of the World War than the traditional, "kameradschaftlich" image of the Kriegervereine.

To the rifts introduced into the ex-service-movement by the proliferation of new associations must be added an accentuation of existing social divisions. The KB itself was an inherently conservative force and did much to prolong the existence of old social barriers and prejudices in the new republic, but the officer associations were even more definitely based on "élitism" and class-privilege. The large numbers of ex-reserve officers from the middle classes consciously sought the company and imitated the ways of their aristocratic ex-regular comrades. Thus many of them tended to ignore the comparatively more moderate influence of their social equals and inferiors, and in some measure, lost touch with the

political "grass-roots". Increasingly, they joined in the purely negative activity of the enemies of the Weimar Republic. While the social influence of the officer associations was tangibly disruptive of "Volksgemeinschaft", the picture presented by the KB and its Kriegervereine is not so clear cut. In country villages where they were often the only secular organisation, and in their important, national, welfare service, their contribution in a social sense is undeniable. On the other hand, uncontrolled uniformed parades in industrial and more explicitly socialist areas, together with the big national rallies after 1925, did a great deal to deepen existing hostilities.

Even in the immediately post-war period the KB had the prestige of its name, size, traditions, welfare organs, and, especially, the important public support of the Reichswehr, on ceremonial occasions. This all helped the association to win its fight for survival between 1918 and 1923. At the same time, the new official policy of "Überparteilichkeit" enabled the ties with the government severed by the revolution to be re-established, so that by 1923 large financial grants could be made to assist the Bund. In return the KB refrained from using its influence against the new republic, in marked contrast to such groups as the Stahlhelm and NDO.

The middle years of the Weimar Republic saw a considerable increase in "patriotic", militarist propaganda, in particular of large-scale public rallies. The KB's part in this was important inasmuch that it was the only national veterans' organisation with whom the Reichswehr was permitted to co-operate on public ceremonial occasions. Of course, numbered among the guests at such occasions were often the most objectionable, politically speaking, individuals and societies. In this way, and via its extensive press-network, the KB contributed significantly to bringing ordinary working-class men and women into contact with the "patriotic" effusions of the political Right, which were, after all, little more than a projection of the "officer" concept of "honour" into the realm of national and international politics. The protective influence of Hindenburg was an important factor

after 1925, and "old comrades" of the Field-Marshal, - men like Admiral von Schröder, - played a part in persuading the President to interfere increasingly in political matters, in the "patriotic" interest. The indiscriminating secret co-operation of the Reichswehr with all kinds of right-wing Wehrverbände and veterans' organisations still further complicated the position of the government of the Republic. As a result it was not found possible to ban the "patriotic associations" out-of-hand, and the first alternative adopted was to encourage rival political bodies, such as the "Reichsbanner"; even the Communist "Rote Frontkämpferbund" was tolerated for a while. Besides immeasurably deepening existing hatreds and increasing the tendency towards political polarisation, these left-wing associations added colour to Nazi propaganda concerning the "red peril". Instead of effectively controlling the activities of all societies including the veterans' organisations, the statesmen of the Republic even encouraged certain aspects of their "patriotic" work, as in the field of propaganda via the "Arbeitsausschuss deutscher Verbände". The forlorn hope that extremist organisations could be harnessed to the service of the Republic, was fatefully pursued right up to the Nazi take-over in 1933. The KB itself played an increasing part in such matters as frontier defence and pre-military youth training alongside the more specifically political SA, Stahlhelm and similar groups. With this and its public activity, the Bund also contributed to Allied suspicions of German "good intentions". The organisation moved perceptibly to the Right between 1923 and 1928; although overt opposition to the Republic was avoided, its links with anti-republican societies tended to blur the real distinctions that still existed, especially in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church, and such Social Democratic ministers as Severing.

Between 1928 and 1932, the new leader of the KB, General von Horn, tried periodically to redefine the ethical position of the Bund, by loosening ties with groups like the Stahlhelm, criticising the radical agitation of the NSDAP and even establishing tentative links with the Evangelical Church. ...

However, after 1930 a vociferous minority of local leaders were becoming sympathetic to the Nazis. Horn's activity in February 1932 was a major factor persuading Hindenburg to stand for re-election, and thus was instrumental in deferring the advent of Hitler to governmental power. The Nazis certainly thought so and the storm of protest whipped up by them effectively curtailed Horn's attempts to create a more moderate rôle for the KB in a broad, conservative "German Front". Henceforth, the Bund avoided antagonising the "national opposition" and concentrated on co-operating with the government in the fields of military training and militarist propaganda. Basically, the propaganda activity of both KB and officer associations served only to further the interests of DNVP and Nazis, - even when the Bund leaders remained officially neutral. In this important aspect, Horn's moderate policy had very little effect. In the case of the officer associations, especially the NDO, support for the Nazi "freedom-movement" was often open and unrestrained.

Potentially, with its established organisational network and press, its traditions and prestige, the KB could well have played a much more positive political rôle. The pre-requisites would have been a greater degree of political uniformity, achieved by surrendering its statutory neutrality, (even at the expense of some of its special privileges or a section of its membership,) and either throwing in its lot with one or more of the existing parties or setting up on its own in the political field. Whatever the final result, the middle-class Liberals and Conservatives could only have benefited from this. Apart from a strong Centrist influence in the big southern branches, the predominant outlook of the KVe was Deutsch-National, in a moderate, ethical, monarchist sense. Given encouragement from the army, the government, the President, the DNVP or even from the Hohenzollerns themselves, and the KB could well have formed the basis for political agitation aimed at the restoration of a constitutional monarchy. The existence of such a movement would at least have concentrated the non-Nazi Conservatives, and prevented so many of them being taken in by Hitler's half-promises in this connection during the vital months following January

1933. However, in common with many other "bürgerlich" circles, the veteran associations lacked any real constructive political initiative. Dangerous they could certainly be when uncontrolled by the State, but this was mainly in creating attitudes hostile to the Republic. Between 1918 and 1933 the ex-servicemen's organisations were essentially the tools and pawns of government and political parties.

To Hitler, the proper function of the veteran societies was their original semi-establishment rôle in welfare, tradition, comradeship, - and as military reserves in support of the civil power. He recognised that their activities should be closely supervised by the State, and not by any one of its foci of power; moreover, this was best to be achieved by creating a monopoly round one principal organisation. This monopoly, with the exception of welfare, he restored to the Kyffhäuserbund in 1938.

The history of the ex-servicemen's societies in the Weimar Republic is one of division and conflict, reflecting the social and political hatreds allowed free rein in the country at large. The failure of all efforts to re-establish a broad ex-servicemen's front reduced the stabilising potential of the biggest "non-political" associations, and indicated that retired soldiers, even young war-veterans, seeking comradeship and economic security (NOT i.e. with specific political axes to grind) were not easily to be welded into a homogeneous political force, certainly not without really inspired leadership of a political nature. Retired Prussian generals, with all their years of distinguished service and admirable personal qualities were not naturally capable of providing such leadership. Indeed, from the point of view of government and internal stability it is highly questionable whether they should. Westphal's contention, "Politische Soldatenvereine sind ein Unding", was a sentiment entirely shared by Adolf Hitler, - after he had come to power.

-325-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(A) UNPUBLISHED SOURCES:

Bundesarchiv, Koblenz:

Hauptarchiv der NSDAP (NS 26), Files 906 to 931 (Kyffhäuserbund).
284 (reports on opponents of NSDAP), 1870 (Wehrpolitisches Amt), 1906
(Reichsbanner and KVE), 1820 and 1928: Himmler Collection 1.
Reichskanzlei, R 43 I 709, Akten betr. Fürsorge.
R 43 I 766, Akten betr. Militärvereine.
R 43 I 770, Akten betr. Vaterländischer Vereine.
R 43 II 824, 825, Akten betr. Militärvereine 1933-39.
R 43 II 826, Akten betr. Vaterländischer Vereine.
Sammlung Schumacher (FA 48), 219-221: Bünde, Klubs, Verbände.
247: Kyffhäuserbund.
255: NS Kriegsoffer-Versorgung.
472: Soldatenbund.

Reichssicherheitshauptamt,

R 58 I 1028, 1114, 1115, 1150.

R 58 II 999, 1028, 1029, 1094: reports on "Rechtsradikale
Bewegung", "Monarchisten", etc.

Adjutantur des Führers, NS10, 30 and 108.

NS 1, 485; NS 19, neu 999 and 1912.

NS 20, 108 and 112.

Präsidiale Kanzlei (R54), Membership of Clubs.

Nachlass Otto Gessler.

Nachlass Wilhelm von Gayl.

Nachlass Bernhard Schwertfeger.

Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg:

Wehrkreis IV, 75: Soldatenbund.

Wehrkreis VII, 707: Traditionsverbände.

2690: DOB und Reichswehr.

2697: Reichswirtschaftsverband der Berufssoldaten.

2905: 1924 verbotene Organisationen.

4050: Bayerische Offiziersregimentsvereine.

4147: Traditionsverbände.

RH I/V: 14, 24, 71.

IIM-65: 7 and 8 (Marine).

Nachlass Generalmajor Ferdinand von Bredow.

Nachlass Generalleutnant Heinrich Schedtch.

Nachlass Kurt von Schleicher.

Deutsches Zentralarchiv, Potsdam:

Nachlass Gerd von Enckevort.

Document Centre, Berlin:

Biographic material ... Oberst, later General Wilhelm Reinhard
General Graf Rudiger von der Goltz
Major, later General (Waffen SS) Leo von Jena.

Foreign Office Library, London:

Nachlass Hans von Seeckt (microfilm).
Nachlass Gustav Stresemann (photo-copies).

Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Munich:

Gesandtschaft Berlin 1162, Krieger- und Regimentsvereine 1878-1921.
MA 104 266, Vereinswesen 1923-32.
MA 104 267, Offiziersbund 1919-30.
MA 104 268-69, Bund der Unteroffiziere etc. 1919-23.

Generallandesarchiv, Karlsruhe:

233/12453-56: DOB etc 1919-20.
236/17116: Badisches Ministerium des Innern, Polizei Sittlichkeit:
"Badischer Kriegerbund" 1919-26.

Hauptstaatsarchiv, Stuttgart:

E 130 IV, Staatsministerium:
614, 3, Kyffhäuserbund Wettkampfschiessen 1926-39.
1479, Kriegervereinswesen 1879-1942.
1480, Deutscher und Württembergischer Offizierbund 1919-37.
J 45, Flugschriften:
191, Krieger- und Wehrverbände 1902-43.
Nachlass Walther Reinhardt.

Hessisches Staatsarchiv, Marburg:

Landratsämter: Ziegenhain 3138, 3139, 3167 and 4186.
Gelnhausen 4969, 6290 and 6514.
Wolfhagen 1413.

Historisches Archiv, Köln:

Nachlass Wilhelm Marx.

Kriegsarchiv, Munich:

11508 Bund der Aktiven Unteroffiziere.

Public Record Office, London:

Foreign Office Correspondence, FO 371.

Staatsarchiv, Ludwigsburg:

Württembergisches Ministerium des Innern 206:
Tubingen Oberamt: F 205, 316, 318, 475.
Ravensburg Oberamt: F 193, 341, 381

Staatsarchiv für Oberbayern, Munich:

Polizeidirektion Munich Verz. 24 a I F:
117/5363 Bund deutscher Kriegsteilnehmer 1918-29.
Verz. 24 a III F:
11/202 Reichstreubund ehemaliger Berufssoldaten 1901-33.
11/203 Bayer. Veteranenverein 1910-28.
20/351 Kriegerbund 1932.

(B) PERIODICALS:

Zentralbibliothek der Bundeswehr, Düsseldorf:

"Deutscher Offizier-Bund".

Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, Stuttgart:

"Deutsches Offizierblatt".

Stadtbibliothek, Wuppertal:

"Kriegerzeitung" 1925.

"Kyffhäuserbund", Wiesbaden:

"Kyffhäuser".

Wiener Library, London:

"Centralverein Zeitung".

(C) SECONDARY WORKS:

BERGHAHN, V.R.: "The Stahlhelm", London University Ph.D. thesis 1964.

BERNDT, A.I. (ed): "Das Archiv", Nachtragsband II, Berlin, 1933.

BRACHER, K.D.: "Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik", Stuttgart/Düsseldorf, 1955.

BULLOCK, Alan: "Hitler, a Study in Tyranny", London 1952.

CARSTEN, F.L.: "The Reichswehr and Politics", Oxford 1966.

DEMETER, Karl: "The German Officer Corps", London 1965.

EYCK, Erich: "A History of the Weimar Republic", Two Volumes, Cambridge
Massachusetts 1967.

FLECHTHEIM, Ossip K.: (introd. Weber): "Der KPD in der Weimarer Republik",
Frankfurt 1969.

FORELL, G.H. von: "Nachschlagewerk des Deutschen Reichskriegerbunds Kyffhäuser",
Berlin 1936.

GÖRLITZ, Walter: "Hindenburg", Bonn 1953.

GORDON, Harold J. (Jr): "The Reichswehr and the German Republic", Princeton
1957.

GROENER, Wilhelm: "Lebenserinnerungen", Göttingen 1957, (ed. Frhr. Hiller von
Gaertringen).

GROSSE BROCKHAUS, 1931.

HORKENBACH, Cuno: "Das Deutsche Reich", Vol. I, Berlin 1930.

HORNUNG, Klaus: "Jungdeutsche Orden", Düsseldorf 1958.

Jena, University of: "Die Bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland", Vol. I 1968,
Vol. II 1969, Leipzig.

KANZLER, Rudolf: "Die Einwohnerwehr: Bayerns Kampf gegen Bolschewismus",
Munich 1931.

KARWIESE, Erich: "Wesen, Zweck und Ziele der Deutschen Kriegervereins-
organisation", Berlin 1927.

- KAUFMANN, Walter H.: "Monarchism in the Weimar Republic", New York 1953.
- Kyffhäuserbund: "Heeringen an den Kriegervereinen", Berlin 1926.
- Kyffhäuserbund: "Hindenburg zu Ehren", Berlin 1927.
- Kyffhäuserbund: Jahrbuch, Berlin 1930, 1931.
- MANSTEIN, Erich von: "Aus einem Soldatenleben", Bonn 1958.
- MEYERS LEXIKON, 1926.
- Nationalverband deutscher Offiziere: "Gedenkschrift .. zum 10 Jahrigen Bestehen", Berlin 1928.
- PETERSDORFF, Hermann von: "Die Vereine deutscher Studenten", Leipzig 1891.
- RABENAU, Friedrich von: "Seeckt, aus seinem Leben", Leipzig 1940.
- REINHARD, Wilhelm: "Wehen der Republik", Berlin 1933.
- REINHARD, Wilhelm: "Der NS Reichskriegerbund Kyffhäuser", Berlin 1939.
- ROHE, Karl: "Das Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold", Düsseldorf 1966.
- RYDER, A. J.: "The German Revolution of 1918", Cambridge 1967.
- SAUL, K: "Der Deutsche Kriegerbund", in "Militär-geschichtliche Mitteilungen", 2/1969.
- SCHNEIDER, Bernhard: "Daten zur Geschichte der Jugendbewegung", Bad Godesberg 1965.
- SCHÜDDEKOPF, Otto Ernst: "Heer und Republik", Hannover/Frankfurt 1955.
- SCHULZ-LUCKAU, Karl: "Soldatentum und Kameradschaft", Berlin 1936.
- SCHÜTZLE, Kurt: "Reichswehr wider die Nation", Berlin 1963.
- Sperlings Zeitschriften: Leipzig 1931.
- STAMPFER, F.: "Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse", Köln 1963.
- VOGELSANG, Thilo: "Reichswehr, Staat und NSDAP", Stuttgart 1962.
- WAITE, Robert G.: "Vanguard of Nazism", Cambridge Massachusetts 1952.
- WERNER, Karl: "Breslauer Kriegerkameradschaft", Breslau 1935.
- WESTPHAL, Alfred: "Handbuch der Kriegervereine", Berlin 1922.
- WHEELER-BENNET, Sir John: "Hindenburg: the Wooden Titan", London 1936.
- Württembergischer Kriegerbund: "50. Jubiläum", Stuttgart 1927.
-