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SOLDIERS, SPORTSMEN, AND POLITICIANS.

MILITARY SPORT IN GERMANY, 1924-1935.

A Dissertation Presented

By

Michael Baker Barrett

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May

1977

History

SOLDIERS, SPORTSMEN, AND POLITICIANS.

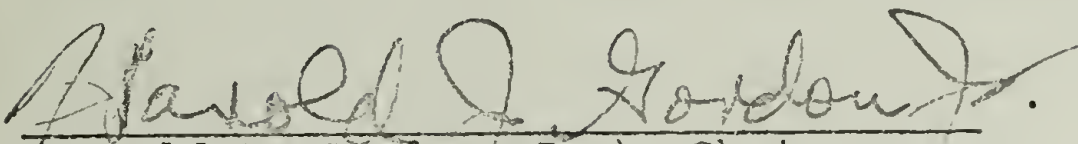
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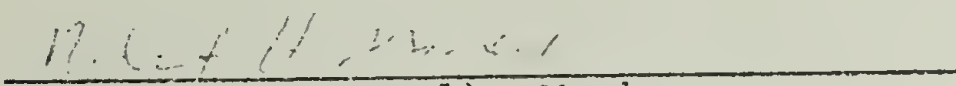
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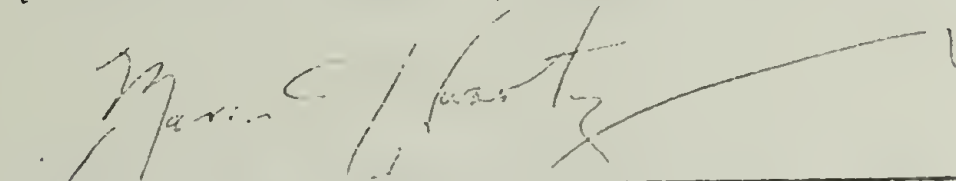
Michael Baker Barrett


Approved as to style and content by:


(Harold J. Gordon, Jr.), Chairperson


(Peter Fliess), Member


(Robert H. McNeal), Member


(Marvin Schwarz), Member


(Gerald W. McFarland) Department Head
History

ABSTRACT

SOLDIERS, SPORTSMEN, AND POLITICIANS.

MILITARY SPORT IN GERMANY, 1924-1935.

May 1977

Michael B. Barrett, B.A., The Citadel
M.A., Ph.D., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Professor Harold J. Gordon, Jr.

This dissertation focuses on the subject of military sport training in Germany from 1924 to 1935. Through this type of instruction, which paralleled basic military recruit training, the Army attempted to circumvent the Versailles Treaty restrictions which prohibited a military reserve force. The Army Command hoped that military sport graduates would form a reservoir of semi-trained manpower available for military emergencies. Military officials did not openly sponsor military sport training; instead, they provided indirect subsidies through other government agencies for sport organizations, youth groups, and veterans associations which conducted military sport instruction.

Military sport training proved popular, and numerous political organizations formed their own military sport organizations at the urging of their members. This development presented Defense Ministry officials with an awkward problem. They wanted to offer military sport instruction to the vast number of men which the political organizations could mobilize, but at the same time, Army officers did not want any

political ideology to creep into this training, lest their reservoir of semi-trained manpower become politicized and unreliable. Moreover, the Army insisted that its leaders rather than those of the political parties would control these putative reserves in the event of mobilization. On the other hand, although the political leaders welcomed the discipline and experience which their political armies would acquire through military sport training, they feared, with justification, that the Army intended to undermine the loyalty of their followers. These fears prevented the Government from implementing, on a nation-wide basis, its military sport training program until 1932.

From its origins in 1924 to its termination in 1935, the military sport training program provides an excellent case study of the attitude of the Army Command and the Defense Ministry toward the major political parties in Germany. The Army, convinced of the value of military sport instruction, predicated its expansion and mobilization plans on the existence of a large military sport program. On becoming Chancellor, Hitler not only continued the military sport training program, but transferred it to the SA and increased military sport activities almost a hundredfold. The Army Command nonetheless continued its efforts to minimize any political indoctrination attendant to military sport instruction, fearing that the Army would become politicized.

Based on unpublished archival sources, this disserta-

tion concludes that the policy of the Army Command prior to 1933 aimed at undermining the loyalty of a major source of Hitler's support, the young men in his SA. After 1933, leading Defense Ministry officials continued the broad outlines of this policy by attempting to separate and isolate the extreme radicals in order to eliminate their influence on the new government.

PREFACE

This dissertation focuses on the subject of military sport in Germany from 1924 to 1935. While at first glance such a subject might appear to be of interest only to specialists, the topic was the one area in which the Army, the political parties, sport associations, and paramilitary organizations all had a common interest. Although the policies of the Army Command have been examined in numerous works for both the Weimar Republic and National Socialist periods, very few historians, whose work is now dated, have examined both eras to determine if any continuity exists. Military sport, of vital interest to the Army Command during the Weimar Republic and the early years of the Hitler Regime, and heretofore unstudied by historians, provides us with an excellent vehicle for a case study in the attitude of the Army Command toward political movements and in particular, toward National Socialism.

At the risk of subjecting myself to the accusation of pedantry, I have provided what some may consider excessive documentation. Two reasons dictated this course of action. First, with well over one-half of the source material coming from unpublished archival sources, I feel obligated to expose this material to other scholars. Second, the controversial nature of several of my theses requires me to point out exactly where and why I differ with other histori-

ans. Writers contemporary with the Nazi regime and those who wrote in the immediate post-war period argued that the German Army materially aided Hitler in his quest for political power. In contrast, recent scholars have claimed, for the most part, that while the Army may have not actively aided the Nazis, it certainly did nothing to hinder them, and once they were in power, collaborated with the new order. My research concludes that the Army opposed the Nazis prior to 1933 by trying to undermine their sources of political support, and once the Nazis were in power, leading Army officers attempted to separate and isolate the extreme radicals in order to eliminate their influence on the course of the new government.

Folk knowledge holds that a drowning person reviews his life before taking the final plunge. The analogy between a drowning person and the writer of a dissertation is perhaps apt, for there have been numerous occasions during the preparation of this work when I felt myself sinking in a sea of material. As I submit the dissertation, the final plunge, so to speak, it seems appropriate to "review" my life during its preparation, acknowledging with pleasure those who assisted me and through their efforts improved it.

An immeasurable debt is owed Prof. Harold J. Gordon, Jr., who was not only my faculty advisor and dissertation director but who was also, in every sense of the word, the Doktorvater. He and his family have endured with exemplary

patience late-night phone calls and visits. Prof. Marvin Schwarz helped to transform several rough draft chapters into reasonable products, and he and Profs. R. H. McNeal and Peter Fliess, the other members of my dissertation committee, merit my gratitude.

The staffs of the various archives, institutes, and libraries where I conducted my research were all very helpful and unfailingly courteous. Several colleagues and friends contributed greatly to this undertaking, offering criticism, encouragement, and friendship. Among these were Mr. Gilbert E. Southern, Jr. and Dr. Philip N. Cronenwett. Professors Henry Smith and Joseph Gundel helped render my awkward translations into literate English without sacrificing precision or subtlety. My typist, Mrs. Frances Rosier, performed yeoman service in her first attempt at typing the German language.

Without financial assistance the dissertation would have proven impossible. I deeply appreciate the support provided by the History Department of the University of Massachusetts, the Germanistic Society of America, and the Fulbright-Hays Commission.

The greatest debt, however, is due my family. The confidence expressed by my parents and parents-in-law was most encouraging. To my wife, Sara, who supported all my endeavors, I owe everything, and it is to her that this work is dedicated.

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Table of Common Abbreviations

<u>AAA</u>	<u>Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes</u>
AWA	Akademisches-Wissenschaftliches Arbeitsamt
BA	Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
BA-MA	Bundes-Militärarchiv, Freiburg i.B.
BDC	Berlin Document Center, Berlin
BHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, München I Allgemeines II Geheimes IV Kriegsarchiv
Chef AW	Chef des Ausbildungswesens (der SA)
CHL	Chef der Heeresleitung
<u>DGFP</u>	<u>Documents on German Foreign Policy</u>
GVA	Geländesport-Verein-Arbeitsgemeinschaft
HA	Hauptarchiv der NSDAP, Hoover Institution Microfilm Collection
HJ	Hitlerjugend
IfZG	Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München
IISG	International Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam
<u>IMT</u>	<u>The Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal</u>
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
OSAF	Oberste SA-Führung
RAD	Reichsarbeitsdienst
RFM	Reichsfinanzminister
RMdI	Reichsminister des Innerns
RWM	Reichswehrminister

SA	Sturmabteilung (der NSDAP)
Sam Sch	Sammlung Schumacher, Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
SS	Schutzstaffel (der NSDAP)
TA	Truppenamt (General Staff)
WK	Wehrkreis

CHAPTER 1

THE END OF THE FREIKORPS

ERA, 1924

German Army officers never reconciled themselves to the strength limitations of the Reichswehr, which they regarded as hopelessly inadequate for defending Germany's borders.¹ The diminutive size of the Reichswehr, 100,000 men, was hardly a matter of their choice, but rather had been imposed upon Germany by the victorious Allies in 1919 in a vain effort to cripple Germany militarily. Further treaty stipulations prohibited any mobilization planning and banned the creation of a military reserve force.² Limited by law and treaty to a peace and wartime military

¹Friedrich von Rabenau, Hans von Seeckt: Aus seinem Leben, 1918-1936, Leipzig, 1931, 481. (Hereafter cited as Rabenau, Seeckt.) See further the Gordon Papers, II, "letters from Reichswehr officers, 1919-1926". Letters from the following former Reichswehr officers state that the Reichswehr was adequate as a police force, but that size and equipment deficiencies rendered hopeless any resistance against a determined foe: Generaloberst a.D. H-J. v. Arnim; Gen. d. Inf. a.D. Kurt Brennecke; Gen.d.Inf.a.D. Theodor Busse; Gen.d.Art.a.D. Fr-W. Hauck; Generaloberst a.D. Gott-hard Heinrici; Generaloberst a.D. Karl Hollidt; Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring; Gen.d.Art.a.D. Emil Leeb; Gen. d.Inf.a.D. Curt Liebmann; Gen.d.Inf. a.D. Walter Melzer; Gen.d. Panzertruppe a.D. Walter Nehring; Gen.d.Flakart.a.D. Wolfgang Pichert; Gen.d.Nachrichtentruppe a.D. Albert Praun; Gen.d.Inf.a.D. Georg v.Sodenstern; and Generaloberst a.D. Adolf Strauß.

²Articles 160, 166, and 178. Der Friedensvertrag Zwischen Deutschland und den Alliierten und Assoziierten Mächten, Charlottenberg, 1919, 164-172. This is a trilingual text, with English and French (the official languages of the Treaty) given alongside the German.

establishment of one hundred thousand men, the German Army Command could only watch, with increasing despair, their neighbors train annually more than one hundred times the number of recruits as did Germany. With a combined total of ca. 7 million trained men available for mobilization, Germany's potential foes (excluding Great Britain and the Soviet Union) enjoyed a numerical preponderance of 70 to one.³

The world made safe for democracy appeared no less wicked to most Germans than the old world. The behavior of Poland and France following the 1914-1918 War hardly reassured the German Defense Ministry (Reichswehr Ministry) of their pacific intentions. Poland's unsuccessful attempt to exploit the confusion of the Russian Civil War was followed by an effort to wrest Upper Silesia from Germany before the official plebiscite, and the subsequent actions taken by the Allies and the League of Nations confirmed for many Germans the axiom that might makes right.⁴ The

³Otto Geßler, Reichswehrpolitik in der Weimarer Zeit, Stuttgart, 1958, 203f. Former Reichswehrminister Geßler provides the following figures:

	recruits	peace strength	mobilized
Germany	13,000	100,000	100,000
France	240,000	786,000	4-5 million
Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia	200,000	570,000	3 million

⁴In deciding the fate of Upper Silesia, 62% of the inhabitants indicated a preference for German rule in a plebiscite conducted by the League in 1921. The disappointed

military inability of Germany to prevent or even to hinder seriously the French occupation of the Ruhr region in 1923 further underscored the need for a stronger military force.⁵

In addition to the requirement for a stronger force to protect the territorial integrity of the Reich, internal unrest dictated a larger force. On several occasions during the first years of the Republic, police forces proved incapable of handling revolutionaries and required military assistance. The revolutionaries did not present a serious threat to the armed forces; however, the military requirement to prepare for all contingencies resulted in the small Reichswehr occasionally finding itself spread too thinly.⁶

Poles promptly launched an insurrection with the tacit approval of the Polish Government. The English and French occupation forces, bitterly divided over the results of the plebscite, proved incapable of handling the situation. After reviewing the vote, the League announced in October 1921 that Poland would receive slightly under one-half of the province, including most of the industrial areas which were indisputably German. See S. William Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy. A Political History of the Reich from 1918 to 1933, New York, 1946, 206ff.

⁵In April 1921 the Army Command realistically acknowledged its relative impotence vis-à-vis France by ordering its commanders of western military districts to withdraw their units peacefully should the French cross the Rhine. Harold J. Gordon, Jr., The Reichswehr and the Republic, 1919-1926, Princeton, 1957, 226. (Hereafter cited as Gordon, Reichswehr and Republic.)

⁶Although the majority of the German Freikorps flourished during the first six months of 1919, several Freikorps which had revolted at the prospect of disbanding were temporarily recruited by the Reichswehr for assistance during the aftermath of the Kapp Putsch, for employment in Upper Silesia, and above all, during 1923. See Gordon, Reichs-

With the avenue of legal expansion blocked by the Treaty and the Allies, the Defense Ministry and the Government believed that they had no choice but to find expedient and perforce illegal solutions to the shortage of manpower. The resort to such palpably forbidden activities caused few crises of conscience: the peremptory treatment accorded the Germans at Versailles and what Germans considered to be subsequent Allied transgressions of the Treaty, above all the French occupation of the Ruhr, convinced the Army Command and the Government that the French had first broken the Treaty.⁷

It was only after the most penetrating soul-searching that the General Staff (Truppenamt) officers accepted the necessity of relying on the temporary assistance of non-regular paramilitary organizations. As illustrated by the Upper Silesian Affair, the Army Command in most instances had no alternative to employing irregular formations. The deployment of regular troops to Upper Silesia to combat Polish insurgents would have not only denuded the German

wehr and Republic, 126f., 225, 230, 232ff, 215ff; and Francis L. Carsten, The Reichswehr and Politics, 1918-1933, Oxford, 1966 (U. of Calif. paperback, 1973), 88, 149f., 151ff. (Citations are taken from the paperback edition, hereafter cited as Carsten, Reichswehr.) A rather lurid description of the Ruhr revolt is given in R.G.L. Waite's The Vanguard of Nazism. The Free Corps Movement in Post War Germany, 1918-1923, Cambridge, Mass., 1952, chapter VII. (Hereafter cited as Waite, Vanguard.)

⁷Gordon, Reichswehr, 254f.

border elsewhere of security forces, but might have inaugurated an escalation of military activity with Poland culminating in war, an action certain to involve France.⁸ The deployment of irregular German formations in Upper Silesia was not an irresponsible folly, but instead represented the careful judgement of sober, experienced officers, for whom the natural law of self-defense transcended a legalistic adherence to the Carthaginian strictures of the victorious Allies.

The major problem which the Army Command faced in employing irregular forces was control; there simply was no sure means of compelling the commanders of the paramilitary organizations to obey orders. Having experienced difficulties with these tough-minded and resolute condottieri on several occasions, most notably during the Kapp Putsch of 1920, the Army Command hesitated to employ non-regular forces and only committed them in the most desper-

⁸The Allies, at the instigation of the French Government, refused to allow Germany to send a single soldier into Upper Silesia to quell the Polish-backed insurrection. The French made it clear that if the Germans dispatched Army forces to Upper Silesia, they would occupy the Ruhr, leaving the Germans the option of either abandoning Upper Silesia or employing irregular forces. With the approval of all the German political parties except for the Communists and the Independent Socialists, irregular troops marched into Upper Silesia. See Gordon, Reichswehr, 226f.; Waite, Vanguard, 227-232; and Thilo Vogelsang, Reichswehr, Staat und NSDAP, Stuttgart, 1962, 29-32. (Hereafter cited as Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP.)

ate circumstances.⁹ Generally speaking, the Reichswehr employed three categories of irregular forces: free corps (Freikorps), temporary volunteers (Zeitfreiwillige), and "labor" commands (Arbeitskommandos).

The Freikorps, over which the Army exercised little, if any authority, were usually composed of war veterans who found civilian life tedious and unexciting, especially when unemployed. Not at all squeamish about using violence to attain their ends, the men in the Freikorps generally despised the Weimar Republic, preferring instead some form of authoritarian government to which their military service had conditioned them. Although most Freikorps units served loyally, several of the larger ones, when ordered to muster out of service, rebelled against the Government. While major bloodshed was avoided, the distressing tendency of these units to act independently of any authority but their own encouraged Seeckt and his staff to find more suitable auxiliaries. Nonetheless, on pressing occasions, such as the Ruhr Revolt of 1920, the Upper Silesian Affair, and the French invasion of 1923, the Chief of the Army Command either used or considered using Freikorps units, albeit with great reluctance.¹⁰

⁹Carsten, Reichswehr, 156ff; Gordon, Reichswehr and Republic, 126f, 217f; Rabenau, Seeckt, 300, 460, 466, and 475.

¹⁰Carsten, Reichswehr, 74f, 149, 156f; Gordon, Reichswehr and Republic, 24f, 53f, 93f; Waite, Vanguard, 54ff, 106, 136f, and 184.

Temporary volunteers, recruited and officered by ostensibly discharged or retired officers, trained and were billeted with regular Army units and were, in some fashion or another, in the pay of the Defense Ministry. The Army accordingly exercised greater control over the temporary volunteers than the Freikorps units. Usually recruited for a specific duration and consisting for the most part of idealistic students, temporary volunteers normally proved more reliable than their more volatile colleagues, the Freikorps.¹¹

While the employment of Freikorps and temporary volunteers had come, for the most part, to an end by mid-1920, the crisis year of 1923 compelled Army authorities not only to employ non-regular forces, but, in Bavaria, to reach a modus vivendi with political paramilitary organizations. The Army Command prepared plans to enlist temporary volunteers, and a considerable number of "labor" commands (Arbeitskommandos) and "labor" groups (Arbeitsgemeinschaften) were organized by Major (Ret.) Buchrucker. While some military training was given to these units, most of them performed labor details for the Army. Even these units proved intractable; when faced with dissolution (a matter of time once the Government abandoned its

¹¹Carsten, Reichswehr, 187, 222f; Gordon, Reichswehr and Republic, 187f, and 156.

policy of passive resistance in the Ruhr) they rebelled, casting further doubt on the wisdom of relying on non-regular forces during emergencies.¹²

In addition, the anti-Republican and anti-democratic attitudes common to most non-regular and paramilitary organizations logically spoke against using these formations to defend the Republic. True, many Reichswehr officers sympathized with the authoritarian and nationalistic political ideals of the irregular forces, but the reliance by the Army on conservative and right-radical irregulars merely reflected their numerical preponderance and the inroads made by anti-military and pacifist propaganda in the ranks of the Socialists and Communists.¹³ Moreover, the Army Command appears to have had doubts concerning the willingness of Republican paramilitary formations to fire on the working classes.

The Ruhr Occupation and the Hitler Putsch of 1923 publicly illustrated the dangers inherent in using irregular forces, while simultaneously underscoring the necessity of a trained military reserve force. The uproar which fol-

¹²Gordon, Reichswehr and Republic, 233f, 256f; Carsten, Reichswehr, 156-160, 168f.

¹³Even Carsten in his otherwise highly critical work concedes this point. See his Reichswehr, 156. See also Waite, Vanguard, 53f.

lowed Hitler's Munich fiasco over the political activities of the Bavarian Reichswehr division led to increased Allied vigilance concerning violations of the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. The Defense Ministry gladly took advantage of the Putsch as an excuse to end all ties with home guard, non-regular, and political paramilitary formations.

Although the Reichswehr reliance on the Freikorps, temporary volunteers, and political paramilitary organizations had clearly been one of reluctant expediency and was terminated in 1924, its raison d'etre still existed: the 100,000 man limitation imposed on the size of the Army by the Versailles Treaty. Of equal consequence, yet not as difficult to circumvent as the strength ceiling on the Reichswehr, was the treaty prohibition against mobilization planning. In practice, planning was easily disguised and kept secret, but no matter how brilliant or thorough the mobilization plans, they constituted little more than staff exercises so long as the strength and materiel limitations remained in effect.

As early as 1921, General Staff officers began to consider mobilization measures. At a meeting of senior staff officers held on 15 January 1921, General Hans von Seeckt, the Chief of the Army Command, presented a memorandum titled "Basic Concepts for the Reconstruction of our Armed Forces", which presumed some form of conscription and called for an arithmetic expansion of the seven Reichswehr

infantry divisions (to 14, then 21, etc.) until the divisions numbered sixty-three.¹⁴

With military conscription forbidden by the Versailles Treaty, Seeckt's plan represented wishful thinking and preparation for a better future, a fact realized by the General Staff and reflected in their 1924 revised mobilization schedule, which called for a more realistic field force of only twenty-one infantry divisions.¹⁵ This smaller force also appeared to reflect Seeckt's commitment to ending the Reichswehr's reliance on non-regular forces. Although the mobilized force would be small, it at least would be firmly controlled by military authorities; the new divisions, commanded by regular officers, would be filled with volunteers. While more realistic in its scope, this plan did not really solve the problem. In all probability, sufficient numbers of volunteers would present themselves during a crisis, but without prior training, at once illegal and difficult to conceal from the suspicious Allies, such volunteers would prove more a burden than a help. The Army, in the midst of mobilization and expansion, would simply have no time to train new recruits.

¹⁴Seeckt Papers/287, Joachim von Stülpnagel notes, Bl. 6. Rabenau reprints Seeckt's "Grundlegende Gedanken für den Wiederaufbau unserer Wehrmacht" in Seeckt, 474f.

¹⁵Rabenau, Seeckt, 474f.

Although there were millions of veterans from the First World War who theoretically could be called to service in the event of mobilization, six years had elapsed since the end of the war, and the military skills of many of these veterans had atrophied, necessitating retraining. This was particularly true of officers, especially staff officers. Moreover, although men called to service in the last year of the war were still young enough in 1924 for combat duties, most other veterans were older and the passage of each year meant that fewer would be young enough to perform front line duties by normal standards. The majority of potential soldiers then, who were to be mobilized in the event of war, and certainly those who were to serve in the front lines, would have to come from the post-war generation which had had no military training. The Army Command thus faced a shrinking reservoir of trained men whose skills were slowly deteriorating and had no prospect of legally increasing this reservoir.

The disastrous trained manpower shortage was not merely a matter for the generals. German politicians had not forgotten Clemenceau's dictum and defense matters, even though reduced to a tiny scale in Germany, lost none of their importance and were subjected to an exacting scrutiny by the politicians. In many respects the greatest opposition to the Army's efforts to circumvent the Treaty came not from the Allies but from parsimonious and doctrinaire German

politicians of the political Left, who tended to be anti-military and in some cases, pacifists.

Military or military-related issues underwent an unrelenting but often uninformed scrutiny in the Reichstag and in the press of the various political parties. The Communists and the Majority Socialists (SPD), ideologically suspicious of the Army and claiming real or imagined injuries at its hands, ignored libel laws and common sense in their often inflammatory and inaccurate polemics against the armed forces. The Socialists (SPD), many of whom were pacifists, adamant that the mission of the Army was first and foremost to protect the Weimar Republic against domestic opponents, were convinced by their own rhetoric that the Army continually fomented plans to overthrow any "progressive" (i.e., Socialist) government. Opposed to an army of long term service professionals, the Socialists in theory embraced the principle of universal military service in a militia. Even though conscription was highly unpopular with large numbers of urban workers, the mainstay of the Socialist Party, the Socialists could safely express their rhetorical advocacy of equal and universal liability for military service, knowing that the chances for the actual introduction of conscription remained remote so long as the Versailles Treaty continued in effect.¹⁶

¹⁶Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages: Stenographischen Berichte, Berlin, 1920ff., Hue (SPD), 13. 4. 1920, vol. 333, 5075; David (SPD), 7.7. 1922, vol. 356, 8372;

The Communists expressed an inexorable hatred for the Reichswehr. Taking advantage of their parliamentary immunity from slander, Communist Reichstag deputies excoriated the Army, denouncing it as the tool or reactionary, monied interests. Using the annual Reichstag budget debates as a forum in which to proselytize their views, the Communists appeared more interested in execrating the Army than in reforming it. Appealing to sensationalism, their often unfounded allegations served little purpose other than to titillate the faithful, while simultaneously alienating the Reichswehr and many patriotic Germans.¹⁷ Far more discrediting to the Communist campaign to villify the Reichswehr than their patent prevarications was the imposition of party discipline from Moscow, which on oc-

Schöpflin (SPD), 14.3. 1922, vol. 353, 6232f; Müller (SPD-Franken), 30.10. 1922, vol. 353, 6247; Künstler (SPD), 27.2. 1923, vol. 358, 9891; Schöpflin (SPD), 18.3. 1921, vol. 348, 3215f. (Hereafter cited as RTV.) See Gustav Noske, Von Kiel bis Kapp, Berlin, 198f; Carl Severing, Mein Lebensweg: In, Auf und Ab der Republik, II, Köln, 1950, 111. (Hereafter cited as Severing, Lebensweg); Otto Braun, Von Weimar zu Hitler, New York, 1940, 206f. (Hereafter cited as Braun, Weimar zu Hitler.) A valuable article is Gustav Adolf Caspar, "Die Sozialdemokratische Partei und das deutsche Wehrproblem in den Jahren der Weimarer Republik" in Beiheft 11 of Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau, October 1959, 13f. (Hereafter cited as Caspar, "SPD und Wehrproblem".)

¹⁷RTV, Höllein (KPD), 3.6. 1921, vol. 349, 3780; Künstler (KPD), 11.11. 1921, vol. 351, 4966; Thomas (KPD), 14.3. 1922, vol. 353, 6255-60; Koenen (KPD), 25.6. 1922, vol. 356, 8069f; Koenen, (KPD), 12.7. 1922, vol. 356, 8502; Fröhlich (KPD), 23.2. 1923, vol. 358, 9845f; Koenen (KPD), 28.9. 1923, vol. 361, 11919; and Gordon, Reichswehr, 364ff.

casion placed the Communists in league with strange bed-fellows. When, for example, reports of collaboration between the Reichswehr and the Red Army to circumvent the Versailles Treaty appeared from time to time in the German press, the Communists maintained an embarrassed silence or when confronted with damaging evidence, joined the rightist parties in issuing strident and hollow denials.¹⁸

From the middle and opposite sectors of the political spectrum, and especially from the conservative parties, came the strongest support for the armed forces. The Democratic Party, while voting in favor of the Army budget, was critical of Reichswehr recruiting practices and suggested a number of minor changes. On the important issues, however, the Democrats stood behind the Army Command. The Center, German Peoples' (DVP), and German Nationalist (DNVP) parties all supported the Reichswehr and the policies of the Army Command in the Reichstag and in their party presses, although on occasion the German Nationalist newspapers attacked the Defense Ministry.¹⁹

In practice, this political support proved to be a mixed blessing. While secretly welcoming the backing of

¹⁸Gustav Hilger and Alfred G. Meyer, The Incompatible Allies: A Memoir of German-Soviet Relations 1918-1941, New York, 1933, 204f. (Hereafter cited as Hilger and Meyer, Incompatible Allies.)

¹⁹Gordon, Reichswehr, 395-411.

the conservative parties (the DVP and the DNVP), the Army had, as an ostensibly non-partisan institution, to refrain from seeking and acknowledging partisan endorsements. Not only did the Army Command have to minimize the social and ideological affinities existing between an officer corps tied by blood and education to conservative groups, but it also had to cope with the natural tendency of an officer corps maligned and abused by Socialists and Communists to forge close ties with the party which appeared to be their staunchest ally, the Nationalist Party.

On the other hand, Reichswehr efforts to elevate national defense policy to the sphere of non-partisan politics, a desire shared by many intensely nationalistic and conservative Germans, meant that conservative party leaders did not have the opportunity of criticizing either defense policies or the Army itself. With the leadership of the rightist parties remaining for the most part mute vis-à-vis national defense, there existed the danger of their members becoming exposed to and identifying themselves with the interests of the Army, which could result in a substantial collapse of party discipline and unity should it appear that the interests of the Army and the party diverged.

Like the Communists, the radical Nazi Party (NSDAP) castigated the idea of a non-partisan army. To both, the army served the party which was the state. In denouncing the idea of a non-partisan Reichswehr, the Nazis initially

exercised a notable lack of restraint in their vicious and often personal attacks against the Army Command. A typical article in the official Nazi newspaper concluded that General von Seeckt received his orders from the Jews and Social Democrats.²⁰ While this inflammatory rhetoric and logic (!) found a ready and credulous audience in the fringe elements of a society experiencing radical transformations, it was bound to alienate the more reasonable and moderate majority of Germans. While Hitler went out of his way to revile and heap invective on the "moderate majority" (Spießbürger), he deduced in the aftermath of his "march on Berlin" that he could not successfully oppose the Reichswehr militarily. Such a conclusion left only the alternative of politics, the realities of which dictated an outward change of course toward defense politics.

As a professed revolutionary movement claiming to oppose the entire rotten and corrupt Weimar system, the adulatory and uncritical attitude regarding the military leadership adopted by many Germans who were most likely to favor Nazism presented the Party with problems of the greatest magnitude. Were Hitler to employ his normal

²⁰Völkischer Beobachter, 26 September 1923. The repercussions from this article precipitated a crisis between the Army Command and the Bavarian Division (7th Division) Commander, culminating in the abrogation of special military prerogatives for Bavaria. See Harold J. Gordon Jr., The Beer Hall Putsch, Princeton, 1972, 228ff. (Hereafter cited as Gordon, Beer Hall Putsch.)

rhetoric, denouncing the Army as the prop of a decadent and politically bankrupt regime, the almost certain result would be an exodus of Nazi followers to more "patriotic", nationalist parties. Yet a policy of open cooperation with the Reichswehr would compromise his revolutionary stance, render suspect his claim to oppose all vestiges of the execrable Republic of the "November Criminals", and would scarcely be welcomed with open arms by his supporters.

During the winter of 1923-24, such considerations were academic for both Hitler and the Army Command. Immediately following the debacle on the Residenzstraße, and the gunfire at the Bavarian Military District (VII) Headquarters, neither Hitler nor the Army Command had the remotest idea of ever again reaching a modus vivendi. By the spring of 1924, however, the Bohemian Corporal, displaying the audacity and brilliance which would propel him from the defendant's dock to the Reich Chancellory, transformed his trial for high treason into an indictment of the Weimar Republic and began the first groping steps toward a rapprochement with the Reichswehr. Having learned the morning of 9 November 1923 that the Army would not march with him, Hitler attempted to insure that it would not march against him. His tactical course was, notwithstanding its simplicity and directness, brilliant. Ingeniously reversing the Reichswehr's alleged apolitical position, he adopted an apolitical attitude toward the Army. Avoiding the pit-

falls of condemnation and effusive praise with their attendant loss of political support, he informed his accusers in the Munich courtroom and all Germany that "when I learned that it was the Green Police [Bavarian Landespolizei] which had fired [on the Putschists], I had the happy feeling that at least it was not the Reichswehr which had besmirched itself; the Reichswehr stands as untarnished as before."²¹

The shots fired on the Odeonsplatz not only crushed the Beer Hall Putsch, they also ended the era of overt Reichswehr collaboration with paramilitary organizations, temporary volunteers, and Freikorps units. At the same time as Hitler began anew his campaign for political power, General Staff officers began anew their efforts to augment Germany's inadequate military strength. The experiment with non-regular forces had failed and the medicine had proved almost as dangerous as the disease. Yet the chronic shortage of trained or semi-trained manpower still existed, the Army officers began a spirited search for a more amenable solution to the reserve force problem.

²¹Quoted from Konrad Heiden, Der Führer. Hitler's Rise to Power (trans. by R. Mannheim), Boston, 1944, 205f. (Hereafter cited as Heiden, Der Führer.) As usual, Hitler stretched the truth. The Reichswehr did fire on a group of the Putschists. See Gordon, Beer Hall Putsch, 347ff.

C H A P T E R I I

THE PEOPLE'S SPORT PROGRAM

1924-1927

A Reserve For the Reichswehr

During the spring of 1924 Army Command staff officers considered at length the problem of creating some reservoir of trained or semi-trained manpower. In January, Seeckt rejected a revival of the Krümper system, which called for the annual substitution of trained soldiers by recruits. He also rejected a proposal to extend the temporary volunteer soldier (Zeitfreiwilliger) program.¹ In addition to Seeckt's dissatisfaction with the performance and unreliability of temporary volunteer units, the Krümper and Zietfreiwilliger plans were in all probability rejected because they were violations of the Versailles Treaty which would have been impossible to disguise or keep secret.

In March, discussion in the Defense Ministry turned to the concept of pre-military training,² that is, providing some basic military instruction, such as marksmanship or drill, prior to actual enlistment. Pre-military training would thus shorten considerably the time required for training recruits, and it presented an attractive alterna-

¹Seeckt Papers, 281; General Lieber Notes on the Hasse Diaries.

²Ibid.

tive to the Krümpfer system or volunteer units because it could be conducted by civilians, and if carefully planned to avoid actual military weapons training, would not constitute a clear violation of the Versailles Treaty.

While insufficient evidence exists to trace the evolution of pre-military training in the Reichswehr Ministry from March to October,³ the Reichswehr, in October, began its first pre-military training course which had the euphemistic code name "Peoples' Sport" (Volkssport). The first course commenced on 1 October 1924, in the village of Wünsdorf, south of Berlin.⁴ In all likelihood Wünsdorf was chosen as the location for the Volkssport course because the Reichswehr Sport School was also located there and it could provide clandestine assistance. The Volkssport course had a distinct military mission: "... to provide, at the least, a pre-trained reserve for the contingency plan Border Guard."⁵ Even though many of the

³For evidence which indicates government interest in pre-military training, see Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, München (Hereafter cited as BHStA), I, MI 72449, "Bericht über die Besprechung am 5. August 1924 im Corpshaus Suevia, Universität Heidelberg", 21.8. 1924, Nr. 2022; and Otto Lehmann-Russbueldt, Aggression, New York and London, n.d., 21-22.

⁴BA, R-43 II/519, "Wehrhaftmachung der Jugend", Bl. 2; Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München (Hereafter cited as IfZG), Zgs. 44, Oberst i.G.a.D. Granz Gaertner, "Volkssport zur Staatsjugend", Bl. 26-7.

⁵BA, R-43 II/519, Reichswehrminister Groener to Reichskanzlei, 3669/30 W Id geheim, 18 October 1930, "... um

course participants were former officers,⁶ Volkssport courses were not restricted to veterans, but were also to include untrained personnel, who would be provided a modicum of training which would serve to lessen the amount of training in the event of mobilization.⁷ The mission of creating a large, semi-trained reserve was the first consideration of the Army Command in establishing Volkssport courses.⁸

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) O. Billmann led the first courses at Wünsdorf. He integrated small bore marksmanship into the Volkssport curriculum, which also included gymnastics, close order drill, map reading, and terrain studies. Twenty-five students participated in the first

für den im Ernstfall notwendigen Grenzschutz einen wenigstens einigermaßen vorgebildeten Ersatz heranzubilden." Bl. 2. For an explanation of the Border Guard, see Chapter IV.

⁶IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Volkssport zur Staatsjugend", Bl. 26-29. Volkssport trainees were probably from a conservative, nationalist middle class or artisan class background. Gordon, in Reichswehr and Republic, 58, 207, and 290-1, provides an explanation and literature review of the reasons for the lack of working class participation in military activities, a phenomenon encouraged by the Communist, Independent Socialist, and Majority Socialist Parties.

⁷BA, R-43 II/519, "Wehrhaftmachung der Jugend, Bl. 2.

⁸Ibid. In this report, prepared by Oberstlt. von Schleicher, the purpose of Volkssport was defined as "Für den jungen Ersatz, der keine militärische Ausbildung genossen hatte, mußte eine gewisse Vorarbeit geleistet werden, um die militärische Ausbildung auf einen geringen Zeitraum zusammenzudrängen. Zu diesem Zweck wurde die Volkssportorganisation geschaffen."

course, most of whom were former company-grade officers from Silesia or Brandenburg. The course lasted two weeks, and at the end of the course the participants decided to hold an annual refresher course, not only to improve and refine skills, but also to share experiences arising from teaching Volkssport courses in home town areas.⁹

Military authorities hoped to establish a Volkssport school in every province, or at the least, in every military district.¹⁰ Upon completion of the course, Volkssport graduates were to teach similar courses in their home town areas, possibly utilizing the assistance of local veterans' groups, sport clubs, and youth groups.¹¹ By

⁹IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Volkssport zur Staatsjugend", Bl. 26-9.

¹⁰BA R-43 II/519, "Wehrhaftmachung der Jugend", see also Rainer Wohlfeil and Edgar Graf von Matuschka, Reichswehr und Republik, Frankfurt, 1970, 211. (Hereafter cited as Wohlfeil, Reichswehr und Republik.) There were seven military districts during this period: I (headquarters in Königsberg) consisted of East Prussia; II (Stettin) covered Pomerania, Mecklenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and Lübeck; III (Berlin) included Brandenburg and Silesia; IV (Dresden) encompassed Anhalt, the Prussian Province of Saxony, and the state of Saxony; V (Stuttgart) included both Hesses, Thuringia, Baden, and Württemberg; VI (Münster) covered Hannover, Westphalia, Brunswick, the Rhineland, and Oldenburg; and VII (Munich) consisted of Bavaria. Clandestine military activities within Germany were conducted, for the most part, in the eastern districts, I, II, III, IV, and to a lesser extent, VII. Surviving evidence limits this discussion of Volkssport activities to districts II, III, and VII. There is no reason to assume that similar activities did not occur in districts I and IV.

¹¹IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Volkssport zur Staatsjugend", Bl. 26-9; Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik

teaching Volkssport students, in relatively small classes, to serve as training cadres for further pre-military training courses, the Army Command lessened the chances that its indirect ties to the Volkssport courses would be discovered, while simultaneously increasing the effectiveness of the program at a minimum cost.

The Volkssport program thus offered several advantages for the Army Command. Youths who otherwise would not have received any military training would be instructed in the basic military fundamentals. A pool of semi-trained personnel, useful for defensive operations if integrated with regular units, would be developed and available in the event of mobilization. Moreover, veterans would be able to refresh and perfect their military skills by serving as Volkssport instructors.

The Reichswehr, especially in Military District III (Berlin, Brandenburg and Silesia), energetically supported the Volkssport program.¹² Major (Ret.) Hentschel, an employee of District III, supervised the activities of the Wünsdorf school. A second Volkssport school was established in Silesia at the troop training area of Neuhammer during

1918-1945, Series B, 1925-1933, (Hereafter cited as AAA), Göttingen, 1958, vol. I, part 2, Nr. 238, letter Wels-Müller to Geßler, 6 December 1926, 555.

¹²For an account of the financing of Volkssport in Wehrkreis III, see Francis Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 1918-1933, Oxford, 1964, 224. (Hereafter cited as Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics).

the winter of 1924-1925. Captain (Ret.) von Winterfeldt, the school leader, conducted many courses with a focus on the guerilla tactics employed by General von Lettow-Vorbeck in German East Africa. These courses were popular, especially with younger students. Youth, sport club, veterans, and political paramilitary group (e.g., SA, Stahlhelm) members were allowed to participate in the Neuhammer training, but any form of political expression, recruitment, and propaganda was forbidden.¹³

The graduates of the first Wünsdorf course met, as planned, in July 1925 to discuss their experiences in teaching Volkssport courses since leaving Wünsdorf. All agreed that the results had been generally positive, but several graduates complained that the students they were now instructing were neither in good physical condition nor had they any experience or particular qualifications in sports or sport instruction. The Wünsdorf graduates decided to insist that students in the future be tested for physical fitness prior to enrollment. A special effort would be made to find students with considerable athletic experience.¹⁴

Two additional Volkssport schools were established

¹³IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Erlebnis", Bl. 12-16.

¹⁴Ibid., "Volkssport zur Staatsjugend", Bl. 26-9.

under the aegis of Military District III in Silesia in 1925-1926. The popularity of Volkssport necessitated a larger facility in Silesia than Neuhammer, and Military District III staff officers directed von Winterfeldt to find a more suitable location. He chose the Braunau estate (Schloß Braunau) near Löwenberg in Upper Silesia.¹⁵ A former naval officer, Corvette-Captain (Ret.) Hermann, established a smaller school, with an enrollment of twenty-five students, at Reichenbach in Oberlausitz. The army cavalry division in Breslau provided some assistance to Hermann's school. The core of instruction at Reichenbach consisted of Lettow-Vorbeck's guerilla tactics. The twenty-five students of the first course, conducted during the summer of 1925, quickly established their own Volkssport schools in the Silesian mountains.¹⁶

Officers of Military District II (headquarters in Stettin) were equally active in conducting Volkssport instruction. Major (Ret.) Wagner, ostensibly a civilian employee of the district, taught drill, marksmanship, war games, and terrain studies at a Volkssport school in Kreckow, near Stettin. Captain (Ret.) Metger, also a civilian employee of District II, assisted Wagner. His

¹⁵Ibid. Bl. 31-2. No date is given for the establishment of the Braunau school. It was, in all likelihood, 1926, as Winterfeldt was busy in Neuhammer in 1925.

¹⁶Ibid., Bl. 26-29.

further responsibilities extended to directing the Volkssport movement within the Stettin area, while Lieutenant (Ret.) Hermann directed the movement within the Gutenhagen area.¹⁷

The popularity of Volkssport within the Stettin area was so great that Wagner was forced to send prospective students to courses conducted in the countryside. Former military officers ran Volkssport schools at "Hochburg" in Neubrandenburg and "Mierow" in Mecklenburg. Both schools were financially supported by the Reichswehr.¹⁸

About fifteen former officers served as special deputies for Military District II Volkssport activities. Several were attached to various unit staffs, and eight to ten officers operated at-large throughout the district. These officers controlled secret weapons caches and conducted Volkssport courses. The Reichswehr paid the salaries of these "special deputies" and covered expenses arising from Volkssport instruction.¹⁹

Bavarian Reichswehr officers established a pre-military training program in Bavaria somewhat similar to the Volkssport program conducted by the Reichswehr in Military Districts II and III. In a letter of 6 February

¹⁷AAA, B, I, part 2, Nr. 238, enclosure 7 of Wels-Müller letter to Geßler, 6 December 1926, 554-555.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., 556.

1925 to the Bavarian Government, the Commanding General of the Bavarian Military District (VII), Baron Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, proposed that physical-military fitness programs be instituted throughout the Bavarian school system. Kress claimed that 80 to 90 percent of candidates for recruitment in the Reichswehr had to be rejected as physically unfit for service, a deplorably high percentage resulting, he said, in all probability from the war and post-war dietary deficiencies. A mandatory physical fitness training program integrated into the school curriculum would, according to the Army, help to rectify the problem of the poor physical condition of Army recruit candidates. Kress cited the Reserve Officer Training Corps programs of the United States and Great Britain as examples of how military-physical training was integrated into school curricula abroad. Although he acknowledged that Germany could not conduct the overt military aspects of such training, he hoped to see school and state authorities institute a physical training program whose goal would be "... the creation of the closest possible substitute for the defunct universal conscription."²⁰

Instead of founding Volkssport schools like their counterparts in northern Germany, Bavarian Reichswehr of-

²⁰IfZG, MA-619, letter of Wehrkreis VII/7 Inf. Div., Ia 320 pers., to Bavarian Minister-President, 6 February 1925. "Ziel muß, m.E. sein, ... einen möglichst vollwertigen Ersatz für die in Wegfall gekommene Wehrpflicht zu schaffen." Bl. 1612872.

ficers left Volkssport-type activities to the Deutscher Notbann (German Emergency Group), an organization sponsored by the Bavarian Government.²¹ The Bavarian Reichswehr, however, worked closely with the Notbann whose commandant's office was located in Military District VII headquarters.²² Major General (Ret.) Franz Ritter von Epp,²³ a notorious Freikorps leader who was eased out of the Reichswehr on account of his pro-racist (Völkisch) activities, commanded the Notbann. During 1924 the Notbann had concentrated its energies on the training of temporary volunteers and functioned, for all intents, as a secret military reserve for the Bavarian Government. The Bavarian Ministry of the Interior and private sources paid for the cost of this train-

²¹The Deutscher Notbann was organized after the Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923 as a successor to the Organisation Escherisch and the Bavarian Notpolizei. See BHStA, I, MI 72449, Report of the Reichskommissar für Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung, I 5330/24 I, 23 June 1924; and Gordon, Hitler and Beer Hall Putsch, 599ff.

²²BHStA, I, MI 72449, Report of the Reichskommissar für Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung, I 5330/24 I, 23 June 1924.

²³1864-1947, Generalleutnant a.D. Epp had a distinguished career as a regimental commander in the First World War and was ennobled for his services. His activity in racist-radical politics eventually led to his retirement in 1923, the official reason being that no suitable post could be found for him. Active in NSDAP circles, he joined the party in 1928 (Nr. 85457), advised Hitler on military-political relations, and served as leader of the NSDAP Wehrpolitisches Amt from 1932 to 1935 and as Reichsstatthalter in Bavaria from 1933 to 1934.

ing.²⁴

By 1925 the Reichswehr phased out the temporary volunteer program and the interest of the Bavarian Government in paying for a secret reserve force had declined. Bavarian authorities were willing to make money available for training auxiliary police but not for training auxiliary soldiers. Instead, the Bavarian Government urged the Notbann to take an interest in pre-military training,²⁵ apparently in response to the urging of military leaders as evidenced in the above-mentioned letter of 6 February from General Kress.

In a meeting of Bavarian cabinet ministers and Notbann leaders on 24 March 1925, Bavarian Minister-President Held urged that the Notbann undertake the preparation of young men for military service by establishing and supervising pre-military training activities in the Bavarian schools. The Reichswehr, he added, agreed to this proposal. This training, he explained, included hiking, physical conditioning, marching, field exercises, map reading, and

²⁴BHStA, I, MI 72449, Notes of the Staatsminister des Innern, "Ergebnis der Besprechung am 18.6.24 Nachmittag über den 'deutschen Notbann'", 19 June 1924. After 1 July 1924, owing to pressure from the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission, the Notbann was disbanded. This, however, was merely a "Scheinauflösung" and orders from the Ministry of the Interior were given orally rather than in writing. See ibid., Notbann Kreisleiter meeting, 19 December 1924, Bl. 1-3.

²⁵Ibid., "Kurze Niederschrift über die Besprechung am 24. März 1925 über Notbann", 26 March 1924; Gordon, Reichswehr and Republic, 260.

theoretical exercises. Small bore marksmanship courses, he noted, could be run in coordination with local shooting clubs. The entire program could be conducted publicly, and Held stated that it was his opinion that it should become part of the school curriculum. In communities which did not have school instructors qualified to teach pre-military training, he hoped that former army and police non-commissioned officers would be hired to teach the pre-military training courses. After a heated discussion and debate, Notbann leaders agreed to Held's proposal.²⁶

Minister-President Held then offered to have the Bavarian Government assist in financing the pre-military training program, provided the Government retained ultimate control of the program. The Notbann, he added, would have to remain a silent partner in these activities on account of difficulties which might arise in the Bavarian Parliament and also on account of the sensitivity with which the military-related activities in addition to those permitted by the Versailles Treaty were viewed abroad. The Notbann must not, said Held, be publicly identified or connected with pre-military training under any circumstances, and would, in the near future, "... make its appearance under a different name."²⁷ Financial support would come

²⁶Ibid., "Ministerbesprechung am 24.3. 25", 2-3.

²⁷Ibid., "... unter einen anderen Firma Auftritt."
3-4.

from private circles to the Notbann through the Bavarian Government, which would undertake the responsibility for raising the necessary funds.²⁸

Although evidence of the Notbann's subsequent activities is insufficient to allow any estimate of the size or effectiveness of its pre-military training program,²⁹ the Notbann pre-military training program of 1925 demonstrates an interest and commitment to pre-military training by the Bavarian Government on a scale potentially greater than Volkssport in Prussia. Notbann pre-military training and Volkssport encompassed, in all details, identical training activities and goals.

Army Command officers, apparently pleased with the Volkssport and Notbann pre-military training programs, hoped to expand them throughout Germany. General von Seeckt wanted to establish a National Sport Office in 1925. This apparently civilian institution would have integrated

²⁸Ibid., and "Aktenvermerk" of the meeting between Ministry of the Interior officials and Oberstlt. a.D. Kaspar [Notbann Chief of Staff] 15 April 1925.

²⁹Bund Oberland, the Isengau, and the Hermannsbund all subsequently joined the Notbann pre-military training program. See ibid., "Aktenvermerk", Referat 15 and 17 of Staatsmin. d. Innern, 23.5.25, and letter Epp, Nr. 648, to Staatsmin. d. Innern, 27.5.25. Gordon gives the Oberland strength in Bavaria during November 1923 at ca. 2000, a figure that by 1925 was in all probability much smaller. See his Beer Hall Putsch, pp. 94-99, 206, 440, and 449.

the Volkssport schools in all the military districts into the larger framework of civilian sport activities. The National Sport Office would have also directed the activities of the paramilitary groups into useful channels by integrating them into the Volkssport movement. The establishment of a secret and illegal mobilization registration system for all youth would have been a further function of the National Sport Office. Seeckt failed, however, for reasons unknown, to gain the necessary cabinet approval for the creation of the National Sport Office.³⁰

Reichswehr interest in Volkssport activities had not gone unnoticed by the political parties, especially those of the political left. The Socialists carefully scrutinized the annual Reichswehr budget for any evidence of Reichswehr association with or support for the paramilitary units and they were quick to denounce such.³¹

³⁰Rabenau, Seeckt, 481. Rabenau states that these secret mobilization measures were in part responsible for Seeckt's forced resignation in October 1926. For a more complete discussion of Seeckt's resignation, see Gordon, Reichswehr and Republic, 261-8. Volker Berghahn, in Der Stahlhelm, Bund der Frontsoldaten 1918-1935, Düsseldorf, 1966, 58f, claims that Seeckt did establish "sport schools" throughout Germany as part of a program to create a secret army. Berghahn utilized sources from East Germany, the Deutsches Zentralarchiv in Potsdam, to which this author did not have access. (Berghahn will hereafter be cited as Berghahn, Stahlhelm.) See also Wohlfeil, Reichswehr und Republik, 210f.

³¹RTV, Schöpflin (SPD), 26 May 1925, vol. 385, 2020-26; Hilferding (SPD), 11 February 1926, vol. 388, 5432; Künstler (SPD), 3 March 1926, vol. 389, 5874-80;

The imprecise nature of the military budget hampered the Socialists in their search for evidence because the Reichswehr Law of 1921 permitted the submission of a bland document that did not list proposed expenditures in any great detail.³² Even had the Reichswehr budget given a complete account of proposed spending, the political parties still would have been unaware of what was actually being spent and for what purposes. The Defense Ministry, unique among the Government ministries, did not have to either return or account for appropriated funds that were not actually spent for assigned purposes.³³ Thus money budgeted for other uses could be siphoned off by officers in the Defense ministry for Volkssport and clandestine re-armament activities without the overt knowledge of the political parties. In addition to funds appropriated by the Reichstag, the Reichswehr had its own sources of money which further complicated Socialist-Communist efforts to ascer-

Scheidemann (SPD), 16 December 1926, vol. 391, 8577-86; Caspar, "SPD und Wehrproblem", 31-2, 43, 70-2.

³²RTV, Chancellor Marx, 16 December 1926, vol. 391, 8586f.

³³Braun, Weimar zu Hitler, 107; RTV, Herz (SPD), 16 February 1927, vol. 392, 9021. The SPD claimed that in 1926, 33% of the Army and 40% of the Navy budget operating expenses could be carried over to another year, and were effectively removed from parliamentary control. In 1927 the carry-over from the 1926 Reichswehr budget was 60 million RM, and in 1928 RM 37 million was carried over from 1927. See Caspar, "SPD und Wehrproblem", 73f.

tain military expenditures.³⁴

The Socialists, cognizant of Reichswehr secret activities in Prussia,³⁵ were also aware, to a degree, of the pre-military training activities conducted by the Army and the

³⁴Elements of the Reichswehr budget were hidden in the budgets of other Reich ministries. In addition, the Reichswehr had secret funds, which, for example, it used to pay Freikorps during the Silesian-Polish insurgency and later to finance clandestine rearmament activities in Russia. To replenish these funds, Reichswehr officers invested money in civilian firms. The failure of the "Phoebus" movie company, in which the Reichswehr had invested heavily, led to public disclosure of the secret funds and the resultant scandal in 1927-28 ended only with the resignation of Defense Minister Geßler. BHStA, I, MI 72449, "Ergebnis der Besprechung am 18.6.24 nachm. über den 'deutschen Notbann'", 19 June 1924; RTV, Schöpflin, (SPD), 26 May 1925, vol. 385, 2023; Geßler (RWM), 26 May 1925, vol. 385, 2135; Scheidemann (SPD), 16 December 1926, vol. 391, 8577-80; Gordon Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945, Oxford, 1964, 410; and for the Navy's use of secret funds see International Military Tribunal, Trials of the Major War Criminals, Nuremberg, 1947-49, (Hereafter cited as IMT), vol. XXIV, Dok. 156-C, Kapitän zur See Schlusser, "Kampf der Marine gegen Versailles", 554ff.

³⁵The Reichswehr procured illegal weapons in Russia and arranged for armor and aviation training for its personnel in Russia, dating from 1921. The Socialist leadership knew of these arrangements from their onset. See Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 232-8; and Hans W. Gatzke, Stresemann and the Re-Armament of Germany, Baltimore, 1954, 86 (Hereafter cited as Gatzke, Stressmann); Hilger and Meyer, Incompatible Allies. Even as late as 1926 the SPD was willing to keep secret the ties with Russia. See Otto Eggerstedt, "Protokoll" of a meeting of government and SPD officials, 1 December 1926, in "Die Reichswehr und die Regierung, Briefe des Monats", sent in by Dr. Robert M. W. Kempner, Der Monat, I(6), March, 1949, 103-5. (Hereafter cited as Eggerstedt, "Protokoll", 1 December 1926). See also BA, R-43 I/1417, "Kabinettsprotokoll", 15 December 1926. The SPD was also well aware of secret arms caches. See Severing testimony, 21 May 1946, IMT, vol. XIV, 250-251, 255, and letter of SPD Deputy Adolf Braun to Geßler, 29 July 1922, US National Archives, series T-79, roll 82, 105-108.

paramilitary groups. Beginning in 1925, the Socialists collected evidence of illegal Reichswehr activities, in all likelihood because of suspicions that the Reichswehr had revived the Zeitfreiwillige units, which the Socialists appear to have confused with Volkssport, and was training monarchists and reactionaries who planned to overthrow the Republic. Efforts to prove the existence of this conspiracy failed and caused the Socialist government of Prussia some embarrassment.³⁶

Undaunted by such setbacks, Prussian Minister-President Otto Braun presented Defense Minister Geßler with a number of further complaints concerning illegal military activities including Volkssport on the 29th of October 1926. Foreign Minister Stresemann was also present at this meeting, as the issue of army-paramilitary group collaboration was especially sensitive in light of the German effort to have the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission in Germany abolished. Braun's allegations of Reichswehr-paramilitary cooperation were not denied by Geßler, who merely shifted the blame for Defense Ministry inaction concerning past complaints of a similar nature to the former Chief of the Army Command, General von Seeckt. Geßler added that the recent retirement of Seeckt meant the inauguration of

³⁶Braun, Weimar zu Hitler, 99-100; and Gordon Papers, testimony of Reichsminister a.D. Willhelm Sollmann.

a new course.³⁷

The German request to have the Military Control Commission disbanded was pending,³⁸ and Braun's complaints doubtless increased Stresemann's anxiety, as the French appeared somewhat hesitant to abolish the Control Commission, principally owing to their concern over German paramilitary associations. Aristide Briand, the French Foreign Minister, used the occasion of the famous luncheon at Thoiry of 17 September 1926 to urge Stresemann to do something about Volkssport and the paramilitary groups. Stresemann's affirmative reply that day did not entirely satisfy the French, who continuously repeated their concern over this issue during October and November.³⁹

The decision to terminate the Control Commission in Germany was not made by the League of Nations until 11 December, and although Stresemann was aware that the outcome, in all probability, would favor Germany, he could have hardly wanted the Volkssport program to provide the French with

³⁷AAA, B, vol. I (2), Nr. 168, Aufzeichnung des Reichsministers des Auswärtigen Stresemann, 29 October 1926, 394; and Gatzke, Stresemann, 62f.

³⁸BA, R-43 I/1415, Report of Staatssekretär Pünder and Generalleutnant Pawelsz to Ministers Conference, 20 September 1926, Bl. 20-23; and Gatzke, Stresemann, 53-6.

³⁹BA, R-43 I/1415, Pünder Report, Bl. 20-23; Ministerbesprechung, 24 September 1926, Bl. 3; AAA, B, I(2), Nrs. 184 (6 November), 187 (9 November), and 199 (18 November); Gatzke, Stresemann, 62-7.

an excuse to prolong the life of the Control Commission.⁴⁰ Certainly after his 29 October meeting with Braun, he was aware that an opposition party had some evidence of Reichswehr collaboration with the paramilitary groups, evidence which if published could conceivably topple the Government and undermine all of his "fulfillment" policy. Thus sometime in November, Geßler, probably at Stresemann's insistence, ordered the Reichswehr to cease its participation in Volkssport activities and so informed the Socialists at a 1 December meeting.⁴¹

The Socialists, during the 1 December meeting, again presented further charges and evidence of illegal Reichswehr activities. The Government representatives were Chancellor Wilhelm Marx, Stresemann, and Geßler; and from the Socialist Party were former Chancellor Hermann Müller, party leader and former Vorwärts editor Otto Wels, Reichstag Deputies Rudolf Breitscheid and Philipp Scheidemann, and Otto Eggerstedt, the Police President of Altona.⁴²

⁴⁰Stresemann appears to have attempted to meet reasonable French demands. For example, a veterans' group (Stahlhelm) Volkssport training booklet, which had been expressly mentioned by Briand at Thoiry as illustrative of Reichswehr-paramilitary group ties, was taken off the open market during November at the insistence of the Reich government. See Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 62; and Michael Salewski, Entwaffnung und Militärkontrolle in Deutschland 1919-1927, München, 1966, 353. (Hereafter cited as Salewski, Entwaffnung).

⁴¹Eggerstedt, "Protokoll", 1 December 1926, 103ff.

⁴²Ibid.

Scheidemann began the Socialist attack almost apologetically; he acknowledged that what he had to say might compromise Stresemann's foreign policy, but the French, he claimed, were already familiar with some of this material. Moreover, he noted, past complaints of illegal military activities made to Geßler had resulted in little or no satisfaction, so that it might be best to bring the issue into the public light. The Socialists would, he added, give the Government one last opportunity to redress the situation.

He then launched into a litany of complaints: employment of retired officers by the Reichswehr, ostensibly in civilian capacities, to direct illegal recruiting efforts for the Zeitfreiwillige; the activities of the Junkers Aircraft Company in Russia; the manufacture and stockpiling of illegal munitions in Russia; and the illegal ties between the Reichswehr and the paramilitary groups which included joint marksmanship training. The last mentioned activities, claimed Scheidemann, were funded by both the Reichswehr and industrial circles.

Wels then repeated Scheidemann's complaints, emphasizing that Reichswehr-paramilitary group relations were dangerous, and added "... that a sharp delineation must be made between the Reichswehr and the sport associations, for the paramilitary groups had forged themselves into sport associations in order to maintain their contacts with the Reichs-

wehr."⁴³

Wels' complaint, interestingly, was not against the pre-military training concept of Volkssport, but rather against the opportunity inherent in Volkssport, as was then conducted, for the Reichswehr and the paramilitary groups to meet on common ground. He instead proposed a nationwide sport and gymnastic movement in which all youth could participate, but which would be divorced from any contact with the Reichswehr.⁴⁴

Geßler answered Scheidemann and Wels by requesting an opportunity to ascertain the accuracy of the charges and accompanying evidence. He implied that some of the blame for illegal Reichswehr activities lay with Seeckt, with whom it had been very difficult to work and who deliberately had kept Geßler in the dark on many issues. Things seemed to be working much smoother, he said, with Seeckt's successor, General Wilhelm Heye. Moreover, in respect to the allegation of Reichswehr support for the paramilitary groups and Volkssport activities, he stated that "... already in the last few days negotiations had taken place [and] the Army and Navy have received direct-

⁴³Ibid., 104. "...daß eine scharfe Trennung zwischen diesen Sportverbänden und der Reichswehr bestehen müsse, denn die vaterländischen Verbände hätten sich jetzt zu solchen Sportvereinigungen zusammengeschlossen, um so die Verbindungen mit der Reichswehr aufrechterhalten zu können."

⁴⁴Ibid.

ives to maintain a strict neutrality."⁴⁵

Chancellor Marx then asked the Socialists to allow the Government sufficient time to prepare a response to each allegation. A future meeting would then be scheduled. This suggestion met with general agreement, but Wels reiterated the Socialist position that something visible would shortly be required to illustrate clearly the Government's new course.⁴⁶

The 1 December meeting demonstrated that the Socialists' anger was directed not so much at Volkssport as at the participation of the Army in sport activities with the paramilitary associations, the majority of which were avowed enemies of the Republic. The Socialists felt that not only did this joint Reichswehr-paramilitary group participation border on the edge of violating the Versailles Treaty, but also that it had a potential for the revival of their bete noir, the Zeitfreiwillige. The Socialists' accusations concerning secret re-armament activities in Russia seem to have been raised pro forma and were certainly answered in that fashion by Geßler.

Stresemann nonetheless must have worried that the

⁴⁵Ibid., 105. "...daß darüber gerade, in den letzten Tagen Verhandlungen stattgefunden hätten, daß die Reichswehr und Marine bestimmte Anweisungen bekommen habe [sic] völlig neutral zu handeln."

⁴⁶Ibid., 104.

Socialists might publicize their material on illegal Reichswehr activities before the League of Nations made its decision on the abolition of the Military Control Commission in Germany. He therefore stalled for time; hence Marx's request that the Government be given additional time to study the Socialist charges and evidence. His request would not have appeared unusual as the Government normally ascertained the accuracy of complaints prior to making a response.⁴⁷

After the 11 December League decision to dismantle the Control Commission no later than 31 January 1927, the Socialist charges no longer presented a serious threat, as is evidenced by the perfunctory Government response to Scheidemann's speech of 16 December in the Reichstag, during which he made public the accusations made during the 1 December meeting.⁴⁸

The Reichswehr may have wanted to continue clandestine ties of some sort to the Volkssport program, for the

⁴⁷Salewski, Entwaffnung, 361; and BA, R-43 I/1417, "Kabinettsprotokoll" of 8 December 1926. Geßler explained that he had asked the Socialists to delay their Reichstag interpellation until Stresemann returned from Geneva, a proposition which they accepted.

⁴⁸The SPD material on illegal Reichswehr activities had been gathered by Carl Mierendorff, a former front officer turned left Socialist. Mierendorff offered the material to SPD Reichstag Deputy and former Reichsinnenminister Wilhelm Sollmann, who promptly returned it, saying, "the man who makes this speech will never give another in the Reichstag." Scheidemann, who wanted publicity, seized the material

program was not entirely terminated after Geßler told the Socialists on 1 December that he had ordered the Army and Navy to cease their activities with the paramilitary associations. Instead, responsibility for the Volkssport program was transferred to the Reich Ministry of the Interior and only after assurances from civilian authorities that the same level of financial support would continue.⁴⁹ Perhaps the appointment of Wilhelm von Keudell of the German Nationalist Party as Reich Minister of the Interior in January 1927 influenced the transfer of the Volkssport program to the Interior Ministry. The transfer, in appearance at least, would stress the new civilian nature of Volkssport, while the German Nationalists could be relied upon to continue the level of financial support for the program.

Evidence indicates that Reichswehr Volkssport activities ceased on or about 1 December 1926 and that responsibility for the Volkssport program was transferred to the Interior Ministry in January 1927. General (Ret.) Wilhelm

and convinced a doubtful SPD Reichstag fraction to permit him to give the speech. Sollmann was correct; it was Scheidemann's last Reichstag speech. The speech caused an uproar; amidst cries of treason the DNVP fraction walked out and the Government resigned the following day. See Gordon Papers, testimony of Reichsminister a.D. Wilhelm Sollmann. For Scheidemann's speech, see RTV, 16 December 1926, vol. 391, 8577-86, and 8586f. for Chancellor Marx's reply.

⁴⁹BA, R-43 II/519, Groener to Reichskanzlei, 18 October 1930, Bl. 2.

Groener,⁵⁰ Geßler's successor as Defense Minister, later wrote, without giving the exact date, that the Reichswehr terminated its connections to the Volkssport movement at the insistence of the Reich and Prussian Ministries of the Interior because of potential domestic and foreign policy complications should the direct participation of the Army in Volkssport be exposed.⁵¹

Although the transfer of Volkssport to the Reich Ministry of the Interior temporarily ended both military, and for all practical purposes, Government support, Colonel

⁵⁰1867-1939. Son of a Swabian non-commissioned officer, Groener headed the General Staff Railway Section during most of the First World War. He later commanded a division on the Western Front and replaced Ludendorff as First Quartermaster General in 1918. Groener was instrumental in arranging a modus vivendi between the Army and the new Republican Government in 1918. Retiring from the Army in 1919, he served as Reich Minister of Transportation and later as Reich Defense Minister (1928-1932).

⁵¹BA, R-43 II/519, Groener to Reichskanzlei, 18 October 1930, Bl. 2. In the 29 October 1926 meeting of Braun, Geßler, and Stresemann, Braun mentioned that Severing (then Prussian Minister of the Interior) had complained to Geßler of Reichswehr-Sportverbände activities, as had Braun, who had received this reply from Schleicher: "Die Reichswehr hat die Schnüffeleien der Preußischen Regierung satt." AAA, B, I(2), Nr. 168, Aufzeichnung des Reichsministers des Auswärtigen Stresemann, 29 October 1926, 394; and Nr. 238, footnote 7, letter of Chancellor Marx to Otto Braun, 6 January 1927. Marx wrote that talks on the transfer to Volkssport activities to the Reichsinnenministerium were still in progress and he hoped that differences would soon be resolved, for this work (Volkssport) was essential and had to continue. Cf. Wohlfeil, Reichswehr und Republik, 211.

von Schleicher⁵² of the Wehrmachtabteilung of the Defense Ministry never ceased trying to find support for Volkssport, or similar programs, from patriotic private and industrial sources.⁵³

Despite the abrupt end of overt military participation in the Volkssport program, the experiment had been of great value. The quality of the training may have been questionable, but more important, Volkssport kept alive the concept of service to and sacrifice for the state. It provided a means for directing the energy of youth and the paramilitary groups into militarily useful channels and served as a forum for the transition of the values of the front generation to the post-war generation. The Reichswehr accepted pre-military training as the most practical alternative to conscription and the establishment of a

⁵²1882-1934. A former member of the 3rd Guard Infantry Regiment, Schleicher served during World War I as a General Staff Corps officer assigned to General Groener's Railroad Section and became Groener's unofficial adopted son. During most of his career in the Reichswehr, Schleicher served as a political liaison officer and chief of staff to Groener when he became Defense Minister. Schleicher subsequently became Defense Minister and Chancellor in 1932. He was shot by the SS during the Blood Purge of 1934, although at whose orders has never been determined.

⁵³Bundesmilitärarchiv, Freiburg, (Hereafter cited as BA-MA), Nachlaß Schleicher, N-42/20; and Generalleutnant a.D. Vincenz Müller, Ich fand das wahre Vaterland, Nachgelassene Memoiren, [East] Berlin, 1963, 287.

potential reserve military force that was possible under the limitations of the Versailles Treaty. The transfer of Volkssport to the Reich Ministry of the Interior did not lessen military interest in pre-military training. Reichswehr officers kept abreast of the civilian military sport (Wehrsport) movement that developed after 1927 and they were ready to re-introduce pre-military training when the circumstances were propitious.

C H A P T E R I I I
A CONSCIOUS GERMAN SPIRIT
THE MILITARY SPORT MOVEMENT,
1927 to 1932

Although the transfer of Volkssport activities from the Defense Ministry to the Reich Ministry of the Interior resulted in the loss of most government subvention for Volkssport groups, the military sport (Wehrsport) movement not only survived after 1927 but gained momentum.¹ Various paramilitary associations, student groups, sport clubs, and work-groups took over the Volkssport facilities or created new ones, and conducted military sport training for their members. It was unlikely that ties between the Reichswehr and military sport groups were ever completely severed; many military sport instructors and leaders were former officers who maintained their friendships with comrades still on active service and leading Reichswehr officers were aware of currents within the military sport movement.²

¹The term Wehrsport (defensive sport), the training content of which was identical to Volkssport, came into usage and gradually superseded Volkssport after 1927. See IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Volkssport zur Staatsjugend", Bl. 32. Throughout the remainder of this dissertation, military sport will be used to describe training activities associated with Volkssport, Geländesport (terrain sport), and Wehrsport.

²For example, see the Truppenamt directives concerning Wehrsport in BA-MA, RH-8/v896, CHL TA 251/31g.K. "Z", T2IIIA, 20 March 1931; CHL TA 784/31g.K. "Z", T2IIIA, 24 July 1931.

Even though Reich and State Governments kept a close watch upon the military sport movement and regarded the participation of political parties and their auxiliary groups in military sport activities with some alarm,³ there was little that any State or Reich minister could do to hinder or halt such developments. The Reichswehr Law of March, 1921,⁴ prohibited the organization of uniformed, military formations other than those permitted by law for defense and police purposes, but there was little danger of military sport groups running afoul of the law so long as they emphasized the sport aspects of their programs. Local government officials who petitioned higher authorities for permission to prohibit military sport activities often received the reply that no action could be taken because the leagues and clubs active in military sport training explained that their purpose was to further physical training, the attainment of which was quite legitimate.⁴

³Internationale Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (Hereafter cited as IISG), Nachlaß Grzesinski, G 1514, PMdI, II 1420 b 5/1, 7 May 1929; Severing, Lebensweg, II, 202ff.

⁴Reichsgesetzblatt, 1921, 329-341.

⁵Letter of Reich Ministry of the Interior to Thüringian Ministerium für Inneres und Wirtschaft, 28 January 1925, quoted in Karl Rohe, Das Reichsbanner: Schwartz, Rot, Gold. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Struktur der politischen Kampfverbände zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik, Düsseldorf, 1966, 160. (Hereafter cited as Rohe, Reichsbanner.) Hauptarchiv of NSDAP (hereafter cited as HA), f. 1554, PDM VI d notes, 14 October 1929; f. 1878, PDM report to Bay. Staatsmin.d.Innern, 25 September 1931; F. 1553, PDM VI d. 2339/32, 14 October 1932,

The Socialists (SPD), who were most anxious to prohibit the paramilitary groups of their political opponents from conducting military sport activities, conveniently overlooked the extensive military sport program directed by the Reichsbanner,⁶ a paramilitary organization with close ties to the Socialist Party. Their one major triumph was short-lived. Claiming, in October 1929, that a recent Stahlhelm (a large veterans organization with close ties to the German Nationalist Party) field exercise conclusively demonstrated the military nature of Stahlhelm military sport units, Prussian Minister of the Interior Albert Grzesinski, a Socialist, banned the Stahlhelm in the Prussian Rhineland provinces. Reich-President Hindenburg, an honorary member of the Stahlhelm, intervened personally and lifted the prohibition within three months of its inception.⁷

The only telling action which the Socialists could

"... daß geländesportliche Übungen militärähnlichen Verbände nach der Entschl. [ießung] des Staatsmin. des Innern vom 23.7.32, Nr. 2198f. a 32, nur dann wie Versammlungen oder Aufzüge zu behandeln sind, wenn sie demonstrativen Charakter tragen".; f. 317, PDM report to Bay. Staatsmin. d. Innern, 4033 IA, 22 December 1932.

⁶See pp. 67ff, this chapter.

⁷IISG, Nachlaß Grzesinski, G 1524, PMdI, II 1420 b/39, 24 October 1929; G 1520, "Die sog. [enannten] Wehrsport-tätigkeit des Stahlhelms in Rheinland und Westfalen" n.d. [Dec.]929]; G 1524, letter Grzesinski to Otto Braun, Prussian Minister-President, 9 July 1930.

take against military sport groups was to eliminate Government sport subventions to suspect groups. This procedure was restricted, however, to the years (1928-1930) during which the Socialists controlled the Reich Interior Ministry, the agency responsible for sport subsidies.⁸ Moreover, the weapon of withdrawing Government financial assistance was blunted by the numerous inter-locking directorships and affiliations which existed among the military sport groups and which made it extremely difficult for the Government to determine the recipients of sport subsidies. Finally, most military sport organizations were not entirely dependent on Government assistance, which was at best niggardly.⁹

Thus the decision of the Reich Government to terminate its semi-official sponsorship of Volkssport groups in January 1927 had little effect in the long run on the burgeoning military sport movement. Military sport groups proliferated, taking over the facilities of Volkssport organizations and expanding their activities. In its search for an expedient solution to its manpower problems, the Army Command had struck a responsive chord.

The facilities of the Braunau Volkssport school were taken over by a group called the Work-Group Braunau (Arbeits-

⁸Severing, Lebensweg, II, 221ff.

⁹BA, R-43/519, Anlage 2 to RWM WId, Nr. 3669/30, 17 October 1930; and "Wehrhaftmachung der Jugend", RWM 86/31, 4 March 1931, Bl. 18.

gemeinschaft Braunau), directed by Major General (Ret.) Severin.¹⁰ The Braunau school, led by von Winterfeldt, formed the nucleus of the thirteen military sport schools that composed the work-Group Braunau. The schools were scattered throughout the Silesian mountains. Winterfeldt's growing interest in the National-Socialist movement led to an increasing number of Nazi leaders, especially Hitler Youth leaders, participating in the Work-Group's activities.¹¹ Financial support for the Work-Group Braunau, in all probability, came from membership dues and contributions from patriotic individuals and business circles, although assistance from the Reich Interior Ministry cannot be completely dismissed.

One of the more active figures in the military sport movement was Brigadier General (Ret.) Ludwig Vogt. Upon his retirement from the Reichswehr in 1926, he joined the League of Young Germany, succeeding, as director of the League, retired General Rüdiger Freiherr von der Goltz, the nephew of the League's founder, Field Marshal Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz.¹² With ca. 250,000 members, the

¹⁰His last Reichswehr post was City Commandant of Berlin, from which he retired in 1927. See Rangliste, 1927, p. 21.

¹¹IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Volkssport zur Staatsjugend", Bl. 31f; Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 230f.

¹²Colmar von der Goltz founded the Bund Jungdeutschland in 1911 for the purpose of furthering pre-military

League of Young Germany conducted encampments at which the members of various nationalist and conservative youth leagues, clubs, and associations could gather and through sport courses improve "... the physical, spiritual, and traditional strength of youth in a conscious German Spirit"¹³

Although the League was composed of numerous political youth organizations, recruiting, propaganda, and other political activities were not permitted during League encampments. It was hoped, instead, that sport would forge the splintered nationalist-conservative youth movement into a common front, united against the enemy, the political left.¹⁴

The League's activities were guided by a board of directors elected by its national assembly, a representative body of deputies from each of the member organizations. The board of directors appointed General Vogt as executive president. Financial support came from dues, industrial

youth training. See Dieter Fricke, Geschichte der Bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, 1830-1945, 2 vols., [East] Berlin, 1968, I, 162-176. (Hereafter cited as Fricke, Bürgerlichen Parteien.)

¹³IfZG, Ed-67/19, "Satzungen des Bundes Jungdeutschland e.V.", Bl. 161ff. "...zu fördern... die körperliche, geistige und sittliche Kräftigung der Jugend in bewußt deutschen Geiste..."; Fricke, Bürgerliche Parteien, I, 162f.

¹⁴IfZG, Ed-67/19, Bl. 161ff.

circles, and the Reich Ministry of the Interior. The member organizations numbered over fifty and among the most important were the Boy Scouts, the Eagle and Falcon, the Young Nationalist League, the German Youth League, the Journeymen, the Bismarck Youth, the Youth of the German Peoples' Party (DVP), the Young Stahlhelm, and the Scharnhorst Youth.¹⁵

In late 1930 Vogt organized, apparently as an affiliated organization of the League of Young Germany, the Work-Group of Terrain Sport Associations (Geländesport-Verbände-Arbeitsgemeinschaft), commonly referred to by its German initials, GVA. Its goals were to promote all facets of military sport undertaken by its various member groups, to prepare guidelines for military sport clubs, to effect liaison with Government authorities, and to assist in finding financial backing for military sport activities.¹⁶

The GVA was a nation-wide organization composed of clubs, student groups, paramilitary associations, and youth

¹⁵Ibid., See also Vogt letter to Dr. von Witzleben (Siemens), 8 May 1928, Bl. 160; and Vogt letters to Siemens Company asking for funds, 1 February 1929, 9 March 1929, and 30 August 1930. A complete list of all member and affiliated groups can be seen in Fricke, Bürgerliche Parteien, I, 162f.

¹⁶BA, R-43/519, Vogt to Reichskanzler, Brüning, 4 Feb. 1932, Bl. 1-6, with two enclosures. The enclosures, unfortunately missing, were GVA annual reports. For government subvention, see ibid., Anlage 2 of RWM, WId, 3669/32, 17 October 1930, Bl. 17.

groups actively involved in military sport programs. Among the members were the Boy Scouts, the League of Colonial Boy Scouts, the Free Squad of the Young Nation, the Reich Association League, the Young Storm of Home Defense, the Reich Group of Patriotic Workers, the Student Corporation, the German-National Merchant Employees Group, the League of Country Youth, and the Kyffhäuser League.¹⁷

The combined individual membership of the groups in the GVA numbered ca. 500,000, although it is uncertain if all these individuals were active military sport participants. The GVA was best organized in the Berlin area. Establishing several military sport camps near Berlin, GVA instructors conducted theoretical instruction in thirty-four different locations within Berlin alone. Over 20,000 participants were graduated from military sport courses by the GVA during the winter of 1931-1932.¹⁸

Vogt maintained close ties with both civil and military authorities. In February 1931, he held a conference

¹⁷BA-MA, RH-8/v896, CHL TA 251/31g.K. "Z", T2IIIA, 20 March 1931; CHL TA 784/31 g.K. "Z", T2IIIA, 24 July 1931. There is reason to believe that at one time the SA may have been a member of the GVA. See p. 164f., n. 78.

¹⁸BA, R-43/519, Vogt to Brüning, 4 February 1932; IfZG, Ed-67/19, "Aktennotiz über eine Besprechung mit Herrn General Vogt am 7.3.1932", by Dr von Witzleben, Siemens G.m.b.H., Bl. 144f; and letter of von Witzleben to Siemens Director Dr von Winterfeldt, "persönlich im Hause", 6 June 1933, Bl. 134-141.

with Dr. Joseph Wirth, the Reich Minister of the Interior, during which Wirth boldly asked Vogt if he were training a militia. Vogt affirmed this, but insisted that his activities were neutral, that is, that there were no ties between the GVA and any political party. This statement apparently met with Wirth's approval, for the GVA received financial support from the Reich Ministry of the Interior during 1931.¹⁹ Financial difficulties in 1932 prevented the Reich Government from giving any monetary assistance to the GVA, but Vogt succeeded in raising money from the Siemens, I.G. Farben, and Borsig corporations. He told these firms that he needed their assistance only for a short period, until the temporary "drought" in Government funding, as General von Schleicher called it, ended.²⁰

The Defense Ministry, however, maintained something of a "fair-weather" friendship with Vogt. From 1928 to 1930, he was a frequent visitor at the Defense Ministry, trying to secure, without apparent success, money for

¹⁹IfZG, Ed-67/19, "Aktennotiz", 7 March 1932; BA, R-43 II/519, Vogt to Brüning, 4 February 1932.

²⁰IfZG, Ed-67/19, "Aktennotiz", 7 March 1932. Vogt told Siemens officials that he needed RM 15-20,000 for his operations, and that Dr. Kalbe of IG Farben had already pledged RM 10,000. Dr. Vögler [a leading Volkssport fund raiser in 1924] of Borsig Company gave RM 1500. Siemens finally gave Vogt RM 3000 on 17 March; ibid. letter of von Witzleben to von Winterfeldt, 17 March 1932; and BA, R-43 II/519, Vogt to Brüning, 4 February 1932.

"youth and military fitness training."²¹ Shortly after the founding of the GVA, the Reichswehr expressed a positive but cautious attitude towards the work of the GVA. The "non-political," "military work" of Vogt's group created a favorable impression, but Reichswehr commanders were warned that nothing more than advice could be extended to General Vogt, and that he and his followers were in no fashion to be regarded as representatives of, or associated with, the Defense Ministry.²²

Several months later, in July 1931, the Reichswehr adopted a more friendly attitude. Acknowledging the work of the GVA as a valuable contribution to defense, the Army Command described the GVA military sport program as "... a preliminary step and a makeshift foundation..."²³ for a reserve for the Border Guard and the Army. Nonetheless, military officials were adamant that responsibilities be delineated and maintained: "While the defense fitness training work is exclusively the responsibility of the paramilitary organizations, military training is entirely the provenance of the Reichswehr. This delineation has

²¹Müller, Das wahre Vaterland, "...Jugend- und Wehrrertüchtigung", 279.

²²BA-MA, RH-8/v896, CHL TA 251/31 g.K. "Z", T2IIIA, 20 March 1931.

²³Ibid., CHL TA 784/31 g.K. "Z", T2IIIA, 24 July 1932, "...Vorstufe und notdürftige Grundlage..." Bl. 5.

to be maintained."²⁴

Reichswehr support for the GVA and other military sport groups continued throughout 1931. Vogt claimed to have had 60 former officers and non-commissioned officers, trained by the Defense Ministry, as military sport instructors, placed at his disposal in 1931.²⁵ Military authorities also allowed Vogt to use troop training facilities at Döberitz, a training area close to Berlin.²⁶

While General Staff (Truppenamt) officers extended limited assistance to military sport groups, the Defense Ministry and the Reich Ministry of the Interior planned to organize their own military sport association, which would, in effect, render the GVA superfluous. Vogt had even proposed such a Government sponsored organization in June 1931, with, of course, a prominent position reserved for himself. His plan was apparently rejected because it

²⁴Ibid. "während die Wehrertüchtigungsarbeit ausschließlich unter die Verantwortung der Verbände fällt, ist die militärische Ausbildung allein Sache der Reichswehr. Die Grenze muß unbedingt eingehalten werden." Bl. 5f.

²⁵IfzG, Ed-67/19, "Aktennotiz", 7 March 1932, Bl. 144. Efforts to confirm Vogt's claim have been unsuccessful, however, the economic situation was such that instructor positions in the GVA would have been very attractive to recently discharged or retired military personnel. Other groups active in military sport also attempted to hire recently discharged military personnel.

²⁶Ibid., Witzleben to von Winterfeldt, 6 January 1933, Bl. 138. See also Fa-88/337, HJ Stabsleitung, Ref. VI, 1/32, 26 August 1932, circular to HJ Gebiets- und Bannführer.

duplicated the Government project.²⁷ With both the GVA and a Government-sponsored military sport organization competing for the same limited funds in 1932, it probably was no coincidence that funds previously available to the GVA in 1931 were no longer available in 1932.

Vogt realized the vulnerability of his position once the Government committed itself to establishing a military sport organization, and in the fall of 1932 he concluded an agreement with Lt. General (Ret.) Edwin von Stülpnagel, the leader of the Government military sport organization. Under the provisions of this pact, Vogt organized a sport program for boys under 16 years of age, and Stülpnagel's group conducted military sport training for young men from 16 to 25 years of age. Reflecting this new mission, Vogt reorganized the GVA on 24 November 1932 into the German Youth Service (Deutscher Jugenddienst), or DJD. The DJD received financial support from its predecessor's patrons: the Reich Ministry of the Interior, Siemens Co., I. G. Farben, and the Borsig Corporation.²⁸

²⁷BA, R-43 II/519, Vogt to Brüning, (Rk. 5609) 29 May 1931, "Gedanken über die Durchführung eines Wehrsportes in grösseren Rahmen". The Reichswehr comment on his proposal was, "Man hält eine solche Stelle für überflüssig." The government-sponsored military sport organization, the Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung, is discussed in Chapters V and VI.

²⁸IfZG, Ed-67/19, von Witzleben to von Winterfeldt, 6 January 1933, Bl. 138.

Students in various institutes of higher learning enthusiastically participated in the military sport movement. Fraternities became interested in small-bore marksmanship and hand-to-hand combat sports as early as 1926, and by 1930 the more traditional interest in gymnastic sports was eclipsed by the growing popularity of military sport. 1931 was an especially active year for student military sport enthusiasts: as a result of student interest, chairs of military studies were established at several universities, and the Academic-Scientific Work Office (Akademisches-Wissenschaftliches Arbeitsamt, or AWA), an organization of student groups interested in military sports, was founded with the approval of the Defense Ministry.²⁹

The mission of the AWA was "...to build up the legally permissible collegiate military sport [movement] on a non-partisan basis, to prepare and disseminate regulations, and to lead political negotiations with the purpose of securing [approval and assistance] and promoting

²⁹Anselm Faust, Der Nationalsozialistische Studentenbund, Düsseldorf, 1973, I, 94-97. (Hereafter cited as Faust, NSDStB); Hans-Peter Bleuel and Hans Klinnert, Deutsche Studenten auf dem Wege ins Dritte Reich, Gütersloh, 1967, 118, 250f. (Hereafter cited as Bleuel and Klinnert, Deutsche Studenten.) Both Faust and Bleuel-Klinnert state that the Reichswehrministerium approved of the founding of the AWA. See also BA-MA, RH-8/v896, CHL TA 784/31 g.K. "Z" T2IIIA, 24 July 1931.

the military sport work [of the AWA]."³⁰ The most important student groups within the AWA were the National-Socialist German Student League, the Weapons Ring, the Wingolf, and the Catholic Student Association.³¹

During 1931-1932, the AWA established offices at every institution of higher learning in Germany. Office directors were either students or young professors. Military sport courses of either eight or twenty-one days duration, depending on the holiday schedule, were conducted at encampments during school vacations. The AWA maintained close ties with the GVA and the Stahlhelm. AWA courses, for example, were given at GVA facilities at Wünsdorf and at Stahlhelm facilities at Camp Lechfeld, Bavaria.³²

³⁰"...den gesetzlich erlaubten akademischen Wehrsport auf überparteilichen Grundlage aufzubauen, einheitliche Übungsvorschriften zu erlassen und die politischen Verhandlungen mit dem Ziel der Sicherung und Förderung der Arbeit zu führen." in Faust, NSDStB, II, 16. The non-partisan nature of the AWA is suspect; its founder and leader, Diplom Ing. Otto Schwab, a former front officer, was a member of the NSDAP and subsequently became the Chief of Staff of the Reich SA Hochschulamt in 1933. He apparently maintained close ties with the Reichswehr throughout the 1920s following his discharge from active duty, as he wrote several pamphlets, among them "Ingenieur und Soldat", for the Reichswehr.

³¹BA-MA, RH-8/v896, CHL TA 251/31 g.K. "Z", T2IIIA, 20 March 1931.

³²IfZG, Ma-619, AWA to Rektor of Universität München, 9 March 1933, Bl. 1612876; and BHStA, IV, Bestand Stahlhelm, Bd. 54.

The League of Front Soldiers, or the Stahlhelm, had shown an interest in military sport activities as early as 1923. Military sport training served a dual purpose for the Stahlhelm. First, it provided a vehicle for imparting values important to the Stahlhelm, values which had been previously imparted during the recruit training of the pre-1914 German Army. These values were comradeship, duty, discipline, and self-sacrifice.³³ The Reichswehr, of course, emphasized these values in its recruit training programs, but the small size of the Reichswehr meant that fewer young men received training in comparison to the pre-1914 Army. Second, military sport training kept alive, insofar as was possible, the concept of universal military training and service.³⁴

The initial Stahlhelm sport program (1919-1924) failed to satisfy Stahlhelm directors. The program, they felt, encouraged individual competition and achievement, which not only contradicted the Stahlhelm doctrine of the "front" as a leveling and equalizing influence, but also resulted in sport events being restricted to the most talented athletes, thus excluding most Stahlhelm members.³⁵

³³Der Bund der Frontsoldaten (herausgegeben von), Der Stahlhelm. Erinnerungen und Bilder aus den Jahren 1918-1933, 2 vols., 2d ed., Berlin, 1933, II, 89. (Hereafter cited as Stahlhelm.)

³⁴Stahlhelm Handbuch, 4th ed., quoted from Stahlhelm, I, 138; Rohe, Reichsbanner, 160.

³⁵Stahlhelm, II, 89ff.

Military sport, which emphasized group achievement in contrast to individual excellence, offered an acceptable alternative to the traditional sport program.³⁶ Not only did military sport encompass military training, but it provided a common activity in which most Stahlhelm members and members of the Stahlhelm-affiliated youth groups (Young Stahlhelm or Jungsta, and the Scharnhorst Youth) could participate.

Stahlhelm youth organizations had begun military sport-type courses as early as 1923. Most of this activity appears to have taken place in Northern Germany. A military sport unit, for example, was formed in Lüneburg in 1923 and Capt. (Ret.) von der Wense gave instruction in marksmanship, marching, and terrain studies to ca. 800 members of the Young Stahlhelm.³⁷ in the Hildesheim area. In 1926, a large field exercise with ca. 1000 participants, led by Col. (Ret.) Schulze, was held in Hildesheim. Over

³⁶Der Bund der Frontsoldaten (herausgegeben von), Der NSDFB (Stahlhelm): Geschichte, Wesen und Aufgabe des Frontsoldatenbundes, Berlin, 1935, 45. (Hereafter cited as NSDFB.)

³⁷The Young Stahlhelm was founded at the 5th Front Soldiers Assembly held in January, 1924, in response to a recognition of the need for a youth program. It trained its members militarily insofar as the Versailles Treaty permitted. In 1926, Stahlhelm directors permitted Young Stahlhelm members to transfer to the regular Stahlhelm after two years active membership in the Young Stahlhelm. NSDFB, 43ff; Stahlhelm, I, 48, 53, 64, 113f.

four hundred youth and regular Stahlhelm members turned out for the 1926 Hildesheim Sport Day, which culminated in a 15km march with full field equipment. The 1927 Göttingen Sport Day had ca. 1000 participants.³⁸

In December 1928, the central office of the Stahlhelm ordered each of its local organizations (Ortsgruppe) to organize military sport formations for the purpose of developing and preserving the practical, as opposed to theoretical, semi-military skills of its members. For Stahlhelm members under thirty years of age, according to the directive, joining this new formation was mandatory. For those over thirty, membership was optional. At the Stahlhelm National Headquarters in Magdeburg, a new section, Section Ib, supervised all military sport activity.³⁹

In addition to military sport activities conducted during special courses or military sport unit training,⁴⁰

³⁸LV [Landesverband] Niedersachsen, Fünfzehn Jahre Stahlhelm in Niedersachsen, Braunschweig, 1936, 9, 19, 26, 81-85, 106f., 126. (Hereafter cited as Stahlhelm-Niedersachsen.) Participation figures quoted above are, for the most part, from north central Germany, as this was the region of the Stahlhelm's greatest strength. Its support came from middle and small size cities, and the countryside or east, north, and middle Germany. See BHStA, I, MI, 71490, "Referat auf der Nachrichtenkonferenz in Dresden am 27.4.1928", Bl. 9.

³⁹IISG, Nachlaß Grzesinski, G 1514, letter Grzesinski to Otto Braun, PMdI, II 1420 b 5/1, 7 May 1929 with copy of the Stahlhelm Bundeszeitschrift Nr. 51, 16 December 1928.

⁴⁰See Stahlhelm, II, 92-96, for a detailed description of the daily routine in a Stahlhelm Wehrsportlager.

members of the Stahlhelm Labor Service received a minimum of two hours of military sport instruction daily. The Labor Service camps, begun in 1931, allegedly numbered over 1100 by the summer of 1933, with an enrollment capacity of ca. 70,000.⁴¹ Admittedly many of the participants in the labor service camps had previously had, or later received, military sport training, but a conservative estimate would indicate that at least 150,000 Young Stahlhelm members received their only exposure to military sport training in the labor service camps.

At the Front Soldiers' Assembly of 1931, Stahlhelm leaders ordered each Stahlhelm region to establish Defense Stahlhelm sections (Wehrstahlhelmabteilungen) composed of all physically qualified Stahlhelm members under 35 years of age. The sections were to be ready for action at all times and were to maintain a high state of proficiency, presumably through military sport activity. In northern Germany, at least, the Defense Sections were organized. In lower Saxony, two Wehrstahlhelm battalions led by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Kraut and Major (Ret.) Rodenbeck were formed in the Hildesheim area, while three battalions were organized into the "Heidegau" regiment, led by Capt. (Ret.) von

⁴¹Ibid. 128ff; and NSDFB, 36, 41f. The cumulative enrollment figure of the camps is not known. A much lower estimate, without evidence or citation, is given in Klaus Hornung, Der Jungdeutsche Orden, Düsseldorf, 1958, 118. (Hereafter cited as Hornung, Jungdo.)

der Wense. The Hannover region conducted military sport training for its Defense Sections at its Oershausen school. A Wehrstahlhelm regiment was raised from Hannover. Lüneburg Stahlhelm members raised a regiment of three battalions, and in lower Saxony military sport schools were established in Scheuen near Celle, Hildesheim, Nordstemmen-Gronau, and Bad Zwischenann.⁴²

In May 1932, Stahlhelm leader Franz Seldte revised the military sport guidelines of December 1928, and declared the support of the Stahlhelm for instituting mandatory military sport training for all young male Germans.⁴³ He further emphasized the Stahlhelm's commitment to this goal by elevating its military sport training section (Ib) to an Inspectorate on 1 July 1932. The Inspector assumed responsibility for training Stahlhelm military sport instructors and for insuring that they were paid if their services were utilized in a full-time capacity. The majority of these appear to have been recently retired or discharged Reichswehr personnel. Advice, lesson plans, and assistance were extended to the Stahlhelm regional commands by the federal Inspectorate. The remainder of 1932 (July to December) was

⁴²Stahlhelm-Niedersachsen, 85f, 99f, 113, 115, 127f, and 135ff.

⁴³Ibid., 114; Stahlhelm, I, 102, Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 224, 229.

designated by Seldte as a period of preparation and testing in order for as many members as possible to qualify for the Stahlhelm military sport badge. In addition to Stahlhelm-wide testing for the badge, large scale field exercises were conducted by Wehrstahlhelm units, including an exercise in the Braunschweig area with ca. 4000 participants.⁴⁴

The reason for the increased interest in military sport manifested by Seldte and other Stahlhelm leaders is not known. It may have represented an attempt to rival the nascent Government-sponsored military sport organization or Stahlhelm leaders may have increased their efforts at the urging of the Defense Ministry. At any rate, the Defense Ministry did not ignore the Stahlhelm military sport program. During the Volkssport Era (1924-1927), Reichswehr officers apparently gave some assistance to the Stahlhelm military sport units,⁴⁵ and although the Army showed little official overt interest in military sport from 1927 to 1930, 1931 saw a revival of Defense Ministry interest. A

⁴⁴BA, R-43 II/828, Notizen für eine Unterredung mit dem Herrn Reichswehrminister, Rk. 9047, 28 September 1932, Part I(6); Stahlhelm, I, 105f; Stahlhelm-Nieder-Sachsen, 23f; Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 230-238. In all likelihood, the Inspector for Wehrsport was Lt. (Ret.) Karl Görnemann, Stahlhelm Bundeswehrsportwart since June 1931, and director of the Jungsta Wehrsport activities since 1924. For evidence of increased Stahlhelm Wehrsport activity during the summer of 1932, see Neue Preußische Kreuzzeitung, passim for June, July, August, and September 1932.

⁴⁵Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 58f. Berghahn uses sources from the Deutsches Zentralarchiv, Potsdam, to demonstrate Reichswehr interest in Stahlhelm Wehrsport, 1924 to 1926.

series of briefings was arranged for former officers in the Stahlhelm by the Defense Ministry, and Col. von Schleicher extended financial assistance for Stahlhelm military sport activities to Capt. (Ret.) von Morozowicz, the leader of the Young Stahlhelm.⁴⁶ In the eastern border provinces the Stahlhelm was apparently permitted to use military and public facilities for its military sport activities.⁴⁷ At the 13th Stahlhelm Assembly, held in Berlin during September 1932, officers of the Defense Ministry attended for the first time in an official capacity.⁴⁸

Exact figures for the number of Stahlhelm military sport participants are not available. Berghahn states that in the fall 1933 transfer of the Young Stahlhelm to the Nazi Storm Troopers, several hundreds of thousands of young men changed uniforms. This is confirmed by the successor to the Stahlhelm, the National-Socialist Front

⁴⁶BA, Sam Sch/271, Stahlhelm Gau III, Ortsgruppe [Berlin] Zehlendorf, 856/31 G, to Maj.a.D. Siegfried Runge, 26 October 1931; BA-MA, Nachlaß Schleicher, N-42/20, Bl. 184ff, 197ff.

⁴⁷BA, R-43 II/828, Stahlhelm "Notizen", 28 September 1932. In Part I(1), the Stahlhelm Bundesvorstand requested "Überlassung im ganzen Reich, nicht nur in den Grenzgebieten, der Kasernenhöfe, Exerziersplätze, Schießstände, städtischen Turnhallen u. Exerziershäuser für Wehrsportausbildung...", which implies that permission to use military and public facilities in the border regions had been previously granted. (emphasis in original)

⁴⁸Stahlhelm, I, 129ff.

Soldiers' League (NSDFB), which stated that 314,000 Young Stahlhelm members were transferred,⁴⁹ a number three times the size of the then army.

Although the GVA, the Stahlhelm, and the SA were perhaps the most active military sport enthusiasts, they were by no means the only ones. Members of the Reichsbanner, Black-Red-Gold (Reichsbanner, Schwarz-Rot-Gold), a pro-Republic paramilitary association, engaged in military sport activities, as did various member groups of the German Gymnasts, the German Reich Committee for Physical Exercises, the Reich Committee of German Youth Organizations, numerous clubs in Bavaria, and Admiral (Ret.) von Trotha's Youth League.

The Reichsbanner, a paramilitary association of pro-Republic war veterans, was organized as a counter-weight to the Stahlhelm and other anti-Republican veterans groups. Commencing in 1925, local chapters of the Reichsbanner participated in military sport activities, emphasizing small-bore marksmanship, terrain sport exercises, hand-to-hand combat, marching, and close order drill. In 1926, the national headquarters of the Reichsbanner, located in Magdeburg, founded the League of Republican Small-Bore Marksman-ship Clubs, in response to requests from local Reichsbanner chapters, which were alarmed by the increase of military

⁴⁹Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 268; NSDFB, 47.

sport programs sponsored by their political opponents. Apparently Reichsbanner leaders were worried that anti-Republican elements were training forces to overthrow the Government.⁵⁰

The spectacular success of the NSDAP in the Reichstag election of 14 September 1930 appeared to substantiate Reichsbanner suspicions that an anti-Republic coup d'etat was in the offing. Reichsbanner leaders, at a meeting of their federal council, 20-21 September 1930, decided to organize an elite section to combat the SA. The Reichsbanner Protective Formations (Schufo) were organized within each Reichsbanner region, along with their own staff for training the new formations. Following the ouster of the Socialist Government of Prussia by a Federal Commissar on 20 July 1932, Reichsbanner officials concentrated all their efforts on military sport programs, feeling the Republic to be in imminent danger from an authoritarian takeover. Slogans such as "Military sport more than ever!", "Universal military service for freedom!" and "With every last man and penny for military sport!" characterized the intensity of the Reichsbanner commitment, a commitment made obsolete by the January 1933 forming of the Hitler Government.⁵¹

⁵⁰Rohe, Reichsbanner, 164, 166f.

⁵¹Ibid.

A shortage of trained instructors and leaders severely hampered the Reichsbanner effort to provide military sport training for the Protective Formations. Discharged and retired Reichswehr personnel showed little interest in working with the Reichsbanner, a phenomenon consistent with the anti-Republican attitude of most Reichswehr personnel. Defense Minister Groener also showed little interest in furthering Reichsbanner military sport training. Reichswehr apathy, or hostility, and the shortage of trained instructors, however, were somewhat overcome by Reichsbanner-GVA collaboration, and the Socialist Government of Prussia, prior to its 1932 ouster, arranged for men from the Prussian State Police to train Reichsbanner personnel.⁵²

Groener's successor as Defense Minister was Schleicher, who reversed Groener's position. Consistent with the Army Command's policy of involving every patriotic German who so desired in non-regular defense planning, Schleicher not only encouraged Reichsbanner members to participate in the Border Guard-East training, but also made available for Reichsbanner use the military firing ranges at Tegel.⁵³

Owing to the scattering and destruction of local Reichs-

⁵²BA, R-43 II/519, letter Vogt to Brüning, 4 February 1932; Rohe, Reichsbanner, 365-74, 441-444.

⁵³BA-MA, Nachlaß Bredow, N-97/1, Orientation report for Schleicher, undated, but initialled by Schleicher on 15 June 1932; Rohe, Reichsbanner, 365-74, 441-444.

banner records and archives following the Nazi consolidation of power, and the fact that a permanent central headquarters for the Protective Formations was never established, it is difficult to arrive at an estimate of the size of the Reichsbanner military sport program. The best estimate for the strength of the Protective Formations (which does not include pre-1930 military sport activities) is 400,000, of whom, by far, the greater part received military sport training, a not always enforced pre-requisite for enlistment in the Protective Formations.⁵⁴

The German Turners (Deutsche Turnerschaft), an organization of over one and one-half million members,⁵⁵ had, since 1922, stressed "defense-readiness" (Wehrhaftigkeit) as a goal for its members. The Turners did not view defense-readiness as an end in itself, but rather as a vehicle for the development of manly and nationalistic character traits. Defense-Readiness training, to them, formed the basis for later military training. By 1931, however, the

⁵⁴Rohe, Reichsbanner, 365-74. To prevent over-aging and to attempt to keep its membership young, the Reichsbanner created a youth section, the Jungkameraden, who were allowed to transfer to the Reichsbanner at age 21. In 1932, 60 to 70% of the men in the Protective Formations were under 30 years of age.

⁵⁵Jürgen Dieckert, Die Turnerjugendbewegung, Schorndorff bei Stuttgart, 1968, 142f. (Hereafter cited as Dieckert, Turnerjugendbewegung.) The Deutsche Turnerschaft was organized in 1862 and existed until 1933, when it was disbanded by the National Socialists. In 1925 there were 18 regional councils and 11,911 local chapters with a membership of 1,622,377. See also Fricke, Bürgerliche Parteien, I, 616f.

onset of the Depression and the growth of radical political activity had caused a politicization of German youth, which in the ranks of the Turners manifested itself in demands from racist elements that defense-readiness be transformed into concrete activity. The Turners' Youth Committee, meeting in Kassel in September 1931, called for the introduction of marksmanship training and field marches into the association's sport program. The directors of the Turners accepted these innovations. The more radical goals of the Bavarian Regional Council, which demanded the introduction of a special year-long program for eighteen year olds, of terrain studies, first aid, marksmanship, map reading, and rescue training were not adopted until the following year. In 1932 the Turner youth groups were militarized: uniforms with insignia of rank were introduced, as were military sport training courses and encampments.⁵⁶

In Bavaria, the Peoples' Improvement Section (Volks-ertüchtigungsabteilung) of the Bavarian Society for the Advancement of Physical Training, a state-sponsored organization funded by the Bavarian Ministry for Education and Culture, seems to have coordinated and supervised most military sport activity. The director of the Improvement Section, Lt. Col. (Ret.) August Hörl, had been active in the Deutscher Notbann in 1925. With Bavarian Government financial backing, Hörl's

⁵⁶Dieckert, Turnerjugendbewegung, 142f.

section sponsored military sport courses and underwrote health and accident insurance for course participants. The GVA, Stahlhelm, and local Bavarian clubs took advantage of the services of the Improvement Section, which, in 1931, for example, sponsored over 100 military sport courses.⁵⁷

The Bavarian and Reich Federation (Bund Bayern und Reich), the largest (ca. 55,000) and best armed of the Bavarian defense organizations of 1923, became active in the military sport movement in 1926. Despite some personnel defections following the Hitler Putsch of 1923, most members remained active and there were over 1200 local chapters in Bavaria in 1926. During that year the Bund founded and sponsored military sport groups and published its own military sport pamphlet, "A Primer for Practical Federation Work in the Area of Defense Fitness". Although the Bund remained distant from Epp's Notbann, in 1927 Bund leaders held a series of conferences with Hörl, which apparently resulted in financial assistance for Bund military sport activities from Hörl's Improvement Section. Bund leaders in Munich attended Lt. Col. Billman's [of Wünsdorf] lecture on German Volkssport about the time of their talks with Hörl, so they were aware of nation-wide currents in the

⁵⁷BHStA, IV, Bestand Stahlhelm, Bd. 54. It is possible, although evidence is by no means conclusive, that the Volkserziehungsabteilung developed from Epp's Deutscher Notbann.

movement.⁵⁸

Bund Oberland (Upper [Bavarian] Country Federation) also formed military sport clubs for its younger members and its youth group affiliates.⁵⁹

Vice-Admiral (Ret.) Adolf von Trotha, with financial support from the Navy, founded the Hanseatic Youth League in 1925. Officially organized as a nautical sport club, the real purpose of Trotha's League was to train interested young men as crew members for torpedo motor boats. The German Navy was not permitted such boats under the provisions of the Versailles Treaty, yet German civilian firms, with capital from secret defense funds, manufactured the boats, ostensibly as civilian recreation craft, and sold them to "patriotic" yacht clubs. Experiments conducted in Spain proved that the boats could easily be converted to a military configuration, and the Trotha sport school provided a nucleus of trained crew members for whatever contingencies might arise. In addition, prospective naval seaplane pilots were sent to the Trotha school prior to commencing their illegal flight training. The school facilities, located in a former hotel in Travemünde, were purchased with Defense Ministry funds and in 1933 the school was transferred to

⁵⁸BHStA, II, Bd. Bayern und Reich, 2/3, 2/4, and 2/5. See also Gordon, Beer Hall Putsch, 591-99. In 1929 Bünd Bayern und Reich affiliated with the Stahlhelm. BHStA, II, Bd. Bayern und Reich, 2/6.

⁵⁹BHStA, I, MI 71490, "Referat auf der Nachrichtenkonferenz in Dresden, am 27.4. 1928." Bl. 5.

the Navy and used to train submarine crews. Trotha was subsequently made an honorary Hitler Youth Leader for his services to the "national movement."⁶⁰

Most of the military sport organizations mentioned, which by no means exhausts the list, belonged to one or both of two, nation-wide athletic promotion groups, the German Reich Committee for Physical Exercises,⁶¹ and the Reich Committee of German Youth Groups.⁶² These agencies, in effect, lobbied for and channeled Government subsidies to various sport groups. While their relationship to the military sport movement is unclear, the two committees, by

⁶⁰IMT, XXXIV, Dok. 156-C, (Bearb. von Kapitän z. See Schlüsser), "Der Kampf der Marine gegen Versailles, 1919-1935", 554-557; Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, Nr. 496, 15 October 1940; Adolf von Trotha, Vizeadmiral a.D. (herausgegeben von B. von Bargaen), Admiral von Trotha: Persönliches, Briefe, Reden und Aufzeichnungen, Berlin, 1938, 12f. A corvette-Captain (Ret.) Fritz Albrecht directed a small (ca. 1000) naval military sport youth group, the "Marinejugend Vaterland". Its ties (if any) to the Trotha Organization are unknown. See Neue Preußische Kreuzzeitung, Nr. 198, 17 July 1932.

⁶¹Originally established in 1895 as the German Olympic Committee, the Deutscher Reichsausschuß für Leibesübungen in 1932 had 49 member groups, 27 affiliated university chapters, and representatives from 26 government agencies. Its total membership was ca. 5.5 million. See Fricke, Bürgerliche Parteien, I, 530-540.

⁶²Organized in 1919 to secure Government subvention for its members, the Reichsausschuß der deutschen Jugendverbände had 117 affiliated member groups with a combined membership of ca. 4.5 million. See Fricke, Bürgerliche Parteien, I, 481f; and Baldur von Schirach, Ich Glaubte an Hitler, Hamburg, 1967, 176ff. (Hereafter cited as Schirach, Ich Glaubte an Hitler.)

virtue of their traditions and size, contributed immensely to the standing and prestige of their directors, who were interested in military sport.⁶³ It is probably no coincidence that the zenith of Government cooperation with the military sport movement occurred during the winter of 1931-1932, the year of Vogt's election as director of the Reich Committee of German Youth Groups.

In summary, the transfer of Volkssport from the Defense Ministry to the Reich Ministry of the Interior in 1927 did not, as the generals had feared, result in a slow death for military sport. Government funds, perhaps on a smaller scale, continued to trickle to various military sport groups after 1927. Reichswehr officers were aware of and indirectly influenced developments within the military sport organizations.

Owing to a lack of evidence, only the roughest estimate of the number of military sport participants from 1927 to 1932 can be attempted. A very conservative estimate would be that 1.5 million young men received some type of training.⁶⁴ In practical terms, this meant a reservoir of

⁶³Vogt directed the Reich Committee of German Youth Groups after 1931. For the leaders of the German Reich Committee for Physical Exercises and their role in the Government-sponsored military sport organization, see Cpt. VI. pp. 152f.

⁶⁴This estimate is based on the following figures: GVA, 500,000 (footnote 18); Stahlhelm, 314,000 (footnote 49); SA, (See next chapter) 446,000 (BA, NS-23/124, OSAF I, 14.11.32

partially pre-trained men fifteen times the size of the then Reichswehr. While the quality of the military sport training doubtless varied immensely, the psychological value of such training far outweighed its deficiencies. Young men, for the most part belonging to the post-war generation, could now state, with justice and pride, that as a result of their training they now had a claim to defend their country, a right denied them by the Versailles Treaty. In addition to its potential as a source of recruits for mobilization, Reichswehr officers welcomed military sport for its service in keeping alive the concept of universal military service.

strength report for September 1932); Reichsbanner, 400,000 (footnote 93); and Deutsche Turnerschaft, 500,000 (Bernett, Leibeserziehungen, 177f.) This does not include members of the AWA, Trotha's Hansa League, or various Bavarian groups, as the figures are not available. If one discounts 30% of the total of 2.1 million military sport participants to compensate for duplicate training in the Grenzschutz-Ost, plural membership, and inactive members, one arrives at the estimate of 1.5 million.

C H A P T E R I V
THE SA AND THE MILITARY SPORT
MOVEMENT, 1924-1932

Of the two major, radical political parties in Germany after 1924, the Communists and the National Socialists, the Nazis alone made an effort to appeal to nationalist sentiments. From the genesis of the Nazi Party, the strident nationalism of its speakers attracted the attention of their competitors for the working class vote, the Communists. They discovered that their clientele, the proletariat, had a remarkably strong addiction to the bourgeois opiate of nationalism. Unable to match the flag-waving of the National Socialists owing to ideological grounds, the Communists instead dispatched thugs to disrupt and break up Nazi rallies and to terrorize both the audience and the speakers. The Nazis responded by organizing a guard force to insure that Communist hecklers were discouraged, normally by the most brutal of methods.¹ Following a particularly vicious melée in the

¹HA, f. 1548, Polizei Direktion München [PDM] VI/d, 410/27, Nachlage to 24 February 1927 report, Anlage 1; Ernst Bayer, Die SA. Geschichte, Arbeit, Zweck und Organisation der Sturmabteilung des Führers und Oberster SA-Führung, Berlin, 1938, 8. (Hereafter cited as Bayer, SA Geschichte) and Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, (trans. R. Mannheim), Sentry Edition, Boston, 1943, 502-506. (Hereafter cited as Hitler, Mein Kampf.)

Hofbräuhaus in Munich in November 1921, Hitler designated his hall guard the Storm Section of the National Socialist Party (commonly referred to by its German initials, SA, or Sturmabteilung). With obvious pride, Hitler noted the details of this action in his autobiography:

I [Hitler] went into the hall [where he was to give a speech] and surveyed the situation with my own eyes. Innumerable faces were turned towards me with sullen hatred, while again others, with mocking grimaces, let out cries capable of no two interpretations. ...A few angry shouts and a man suddenly jumped on a chair and roared into the hall 'Freedom!' At which signal the fighters for freedom began their work. In a few seconds the whole hall was filled with a roaring, screaming crowd, over which, like howitzer shells, flew innumerable beer mugs, and in-between the cracking of chair legs, the crashing of mugs, howling and screaming. For twenty minutes the hellish tumult lasted.... Your heart almost rejoiced at such a revival of old war experiences. The fight slowly ended, the provateurs being driven out.²

The SA soon acquired sufficient recruits to begin counterattacks on their communist foes and Hitler, in 1923, used the SA as the nucleus of a force in an attempt to overthrow the Republic. He had known that the odds did not favor a successful coup de main, yet possessed of a gambler's nature, and inspired by the example of Mussolini, he preferred to risk all or nothing. To a certain extent he had no choice. As the prophet of a new and revolutionary order, the time had come to either lead the upheaval

²Hitler, Mein Kampf, 502-506.

or to suffer discredit, scorn, and the reprobation of his followers, who could be subsequently expected to rally to other flags.³ Hitler's "March on Berlin" proved an unwise decision and succumbed to a show of force less than two miles from its origin, but the attempt to topple the Government by violent means introduced a fateful confusion concerning the mission of the SA which continued to plague SA-Party relations until 1934.

Hitler always regarded the SA as an auxiliary to the Party, responsible for Party Security and for carrying out assigned tasks of a political nature (e.g., propaganda marches, recruiting drives, leaflet distribution).⁴ On the other hand, many of the men in the SA, remembering the Munich Putsch, were convinced that their mission was essentially military and they made preparations for the oft-mentioned National Socialist revolution during which, they assumed, they would take the Government by assault. Although the abortive Putsch in Munich caused Reich and Bavarian Governments to ban the Party and the SA, a number of SA men appear to have participated, as a means of preparing for what they assumed to be the imminent counter-revolution, in the military sport programs of the Notbann

³Ibid., 553; Gordon, Beer Hall Putsch, 242ff.

⁴Hitler, Mein Kampf, 536f, 543, 546f.

or in similar activities elsewhere.⁵

During his term in prison, Hitler grappled with the problem of the SA and its future. Concluding that a forceable seizure of power had little chance for success, he decided to concentrate his efforts on gaining political power through essentially legal means. Within this framework the SA played a definite role. Its mission, wrote Hitler, was political, and "its training must not proceed from military criteria, but from the criteria of expediency for the party."⁶

Shortly after his release from jail, Hitler re-founded the Party and the SA. He did not reinstitute a

⁵In many instances, especially in Bavaria, the membership of the Notbann, Röhm's and Ludendorff's abortive Frontbann, and the re-organized (in February, 1925) SA was identical. Röhm and Notbann officials were highly interested in pre-military training. Initially accepting the command of the new SA, Röhm quit in April 1925, owing to disgust at political in-fighting. His Frontbann disintegrated; in areas where the SA was legal, most Frontbann members joined it. HA, f. 1636, Frontbann Oberkommando Ib 19C, 11 September 1924; f. 1549, PDM VI/d, 131, 30 May 1925, "Richtlinien für die Neuorganisation der SA der NSDAP", streng geheim, München, 24 May 1924; Ernst Röhm, Geschichte eines Hochverrätters, 5th ed., München, 1934, 323-327, 334-38, 340, 343. (Hereafter cited as Röhm, Hochverräter); Andreas Werner, SA und NSDAP: SA: Wehrverband, Parteitruppe, oder Revolutionsarmee? Studien zur Geschichte der SA und der NSDAP 1920-1933, Phil diss. Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1964, 199-209, 211-231, 239-50, 256f, 268-76, 280ff, 305-313. (Hereafter cited as Werner, SA und NSDAP); Gordon, Beer Hall Putsch, 565-571; Heinrich Bennecke, Hitler und die SA, München, 1962, 109-114. (Hereafter cited as Bennecke, Hitler und die SA.)

⁶Hitler, Mein Kampf, 546.

central SA headquarters, and he prohibited SA men from carrying or stockpiling weapons.⁷ These provisions appear to have stemmed from two concerns: first, that an armed, centrally directed SA could provide Government authorities with an excuse to proscribe the nascent movement; and second, a fear on Hitler's behalf that a militarized SA engaging in military politics would again attempt to force his hand by rashly precipitating a crisis with either the Reich or one of the state Governments.

Within two years, however, the Nazi Party leader reversed himself and appointed an over-all SA commander,⁸ Captain (Ret.) Franz von Pfeffer.⁹ Hitler's reasons for

⁷Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 1, 26 February 1925.

⁸The central SA headquarters for all Germany, the Supreme SA Headquarters (Oberste SA-Führung, or as it was more commonly called, OSAF) was located in München. The SS (Schutzstaffel, Hitler's bodyguard) and the Hitler Youth (HJ) were subordinate sections of the OSAF. Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 234, 29 October 1926; HA, f. 1548, PDM VI/d, 410/27, 13 November 1926, and report of the Reichsminister des Innern, 28 March 1927.

⁹19 February 1888-?. Pfeffer matriculated at Heidelberg, but left to join the army, saw service on the Western Front, 1914-1918, as a unit and General Staff Corps officer, and was wounded several times. He organized and led the "Freikorps Pfeffer" in the Baltic region and Upper Silesia, 1919-1920. He participated in the Kapp Putsch and the Ruhr resistance, where a French court-martial sentenced him to death in absentia. His first contact with the NSDAP came in 1924, and he was appointed Gauleiter of Westphalia and later of the Ruhr area. From 1926 to 1930 he was Oberster SA-Führer.

this action are unknown, but he may have concluded that a supreme SA commander could bring to a halt SA units engaging in military sport activities.¹⁰ He expressed his concern about the nature of SA training in a letter to Pfeffer. "The training of the SA", wrote Hitler, "is not oriented toward a military standpoint, but instead toward Party needs."¹¹ The new SA commander echoed his Führer's policies, adding that "the political leadership of the NSDAP directs what shall be done with the SA... [and] no SA [unit] can, in any manner whatsoever, maintain a relationship with the Reichswehr."¹² Miscreants and refractory individuals, explained both Hitler and Pfeffer, could expect prompt expulsion from the Party.¹³

These caveats notwithstanding, Lt. (Ret.) Edmund Heines¹⁴ conducted military sport activities with the

¹⁰HA, f. 1553, PDM VI/d 131, Nr. 1451, 22 July 1926; Bay. Staatsmin. d. Innern to PDM, 2023 Nr. 3, 19 November 1926. An exercise planned for the spring of 1926 was cancelled owing to bad weather. PDM VI/d, Lagebericht Nr. 49, 22 June 1926.

¹¹IffZG, Fa-107/1, SA Befehl [SABE] 1, 1 November 1926, Brief Adolf Hitlers an Hauptmann v. Pfeffer. "Die Ausbildung der SA hat nicht nach militärischen Gesichtspunkten, sondern nach parteizwecksmäßigen zu erfolgen."

¹²Ibid., SABE 2, 2 November 1926. "Die politische Leitung der NSDAP hat zu bestimmen, was mit der SA geschehen soll.... Keine SA darf mit der Reichswehr in irgendwelcher Beziehung stehen."

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴1897-1934. Joining the Army in 1914, he was commissioned in 1918, served in the Freikorps Oberland in 1919,

bicycle section "Roßbach" (a Munich SA unit) in the Rosenheim area in early May 1927, and several other SA units followed suit.¹⁵ These actions prompted a strong rejoinder from Hitler, who wrote that "any form of military fun and games is strictly forbidden. The SA is no defense organization. The military training of the nation is the task of the Reich Army, not the NSDAP."¹⁶ Heines was sacked, although the grounds for his dismissal were multifarious.¹⁷

then with the Freikorps Roßbach in the Baltic, and later in Upper Silesia and the Ruhr. He participated in the Hitler Putsch, and later received a 15 year sentence for participating in the Feme murders but was amnestied. Heines joined the reconstituted NSDAP in 1925 along with many ex-Roßbach men. Expelled from the Party for numerous peccadillos, Hitler re-instated him in 1929. Heines later held a number of important Party and SA posts, culminating as SA leader of Silesia, where his activities terrorized and scandalized the region. A blatant homosexual, he was discovered en flagrante by Hitler at Wiessee the morning of the purge of the SA, 30 June 1934. He was shot that morning.

¹⁵HA, f. 1553, PDM Lagebericht 1°, Nr. 56, 6 May 1927; PDM files 571 and 576 for reports on military training by SA "sport" units, 30 April-1 May and 11-12 June 1927, respectively; report of Gendarmeriestation Deining to Bezirksamt Wolfratshausen, Nr. 69, 5 May 1927.

¹⁶IfZG, FA-107/1, GRUSA [Grundsätzliche Anordnung] II, 3 May 1927. "Strengstens untersagt ist jede Art von militärischer Spielerei. Die SA ist kein Wehrverband. Die militärische Ausbildung der Nation ist Aufgabe des Reichsheeres und nicht der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei."

¹⁷Heines apparently had his hands in the Party cash-box. When confronted by Hitler, Heines retorted that Hitler was a reactionary who had surrounded himself with "Bonzen und Bremser." Calling together the Munich SA, Hitler denounced Heines as a mutineer, adding "daß er [Hitler] sich von einem kaum 25. jährigen Jungen nicht verschreiben lasse was

Pfeffer, whose own interests inclined toward a SA independent of Party control, attempted to enforce Hitler's guidelines. The SA leader reacted strongly to an article in the 10 November 1928 NSDAP newspaper, the Völkischer Beobachter, which printed pictures showing SA men running obstacle courses and negotiating barbed wire entanglements. He demanded the names of the men engaged in the "forbidden exercises".¹⁸ Although Pfeffer dismissed as "patently fabricated Jewish swindel-news" reports published in the Wolff's telegraphic Bureau and the Berliner Tagblatt alleging that SA men conducted military exercises near Berlin,¹⁹ Hitler used these reports to remind SA men of his caveat against cooperating with the Army. In particular, the Nazi leader was against their participation in the Border Guard-East, a secret border defense force organized in the eastern border regions and trained by the Reichswehr with the approval of the Reich and Prussian authorities.²⁰ Lashing out at Nazis who had ignored his ban

Aktivismus sei." Informing his listeners of Heines' expulsion from the Party, Hitler ended his two hour harangue with a review of his life's work and stated that his only wish was to have the swastika flag for his burial shroud. HA, 1549, PDM Lagebericht N/57, 9 June 1927.

¹⁸Völkischer Beobachter, 30 November 1928.

¹⁹Ibid., 2-3 December 1928. "glatt erfundene jüdische Schwindelnachrichten."

²⁰For information on the Border Guard, see Gaines Post Jr., The Civil-Military Fabric of Weimar Foreign Policy, Princeton, 1973, 176-184, 318f. (Hereafter cited as Post,

against military related activities, he denounced

Party Comrades, who participate in any military exercises, regardless of whether or not weapons are involved, violate the express prohibition of the Party leadership. The National Socialist, and above all the SA and SS man, has no cause to raise one finger [to help] the present Government, which has no understanding of what honor means to us and which has only perpetuated the misery of our people.²¹

In threatening to expel SA men who cooperated with the Army, Hitler was not, in accordance with his own logic, being unpatriotic. SA-Reichswehr joint undertakings of any sort contained not only the potential for diverting SA men from their political tasks, but such undertakings also posed the possibility that SA men might come to identify the Army's interests as paramount to those of the Nazi Party. From Hitler's perspective both these developments were undesirable. Moreover, should a defenseless Germany

Civil-Military.), Walter Görlitz, History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945, (trans. B. Battershaw), New York, 1953, 259f. (Hereafter cited as Görlitz, General Staff.), Rudolf Absolon, Die Wehrmacht im Dritten Reich, 3 vols., Boppard am Rhein, 1969, I, 35f. (Hereafter cited as Absolon, Wehrmacht.) and Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 160.

²¹völkischer Beobachter, 5 December 1928. "Parteigenossen, die an irgendwelchen militärischen Übungen teilnehmen, ganz gleich, ob diese bewaffneter oder nicht bewaffneter Natur sind, verstossen gegen das ausdrückliche Verbot der Parteileitung. Der Nationalsozialist und in erster Linie der SA- und SS-Mann hat keine Veranlassung, für den heutigen Staat, der kein Verständnis für unsere Ehrauffassung besitzt und der das Unglück unseres Volkes nur verewigt hat, auch nur einen Finger zu rühren."

be attacked, a revolutionary situation could develop, hastening the Nazi triumph.

Pfeffer found Hitler's insistence that "the SA is a means to an end"²² unacceptable. The SA leader's own inclinations led to an increasingly active and independent SA, and he eventually resigned his command over the issue of the domination of the SA by the Party's political leaders.²³ His resignation by no means resolved the issue of SA independence vis-à-vis the NSDAP and the question of the primacy of the political mission of the SA was temporarily established only after two mutinies and a subsequent purge of the Berlin SA.²⁴

The greatest immediate problem facing the SA following Pfeffer's resignation was not the question of its mission, but rather the quality of its leaders. As a

²²IfZG, Fa-107/1, SABE 2, 2 November 1926. "Die SA ist Mittel zum Zweck."

²³IfZG, Fa-107/1, Bl. 57 for the official, public letter of resignation. A confidential Pfeffer letter to SA leaders, 29 August 1930, is also in this file, Bl. 56. Hitler assumed personal command of the SA on 3 September 1930. Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 200, 3 September 1930.

²⁴For material on the Berlin SA Mutiny (Sept. 1930) and the Stennes Putsch (April 1931), see HA, f. 83, 325, 1550, and 1551; Bennecke, Hitler und die SA, 148; and Johann K.V. von Engelbrechten, Eine Braune Armee Entsteht: Die Geschichte der Berlin-Brandenburger SA, München, 1937, 33-41. (Hereafter cited as Engelbrechten, Braune Armee.) Also, Werner, SA und NSDAP, 360-364.

consequence of the rapid growth of the SA,²⁵ leaders were often quite young and most middle and lower level leaders had neither SA nor military training suitable for their SA positions.²⁶ Efforts of former military officers in the SA to insist on a rigorous leader selection and training program met with ridicule and violent opposition from the "old fighters", the pre-1930 Party stalwarts. Typical in this respect was the experience of Col. (Ret.) Hans-Georg "Trotsky" Hofmann.²⁷ In a speech to SA leaders dur-

²⁵From ca. 100,000 in 1930 (IfZG, Fa-2, Bl. 71; HA, f. 1553, PDM 717, report of 29-30 November 1930 SA leaders conference) to over one-half million in September 1932 (BA, NS-23/124, OSAF I, 14 November 1932).

²⁶IfZG, Fa-107/1, PDM report on SA-Führerertagung, 15-16 September 1931; for some idea of the ages of the SA leaders, see the statistical sections of the reports of the SA Reich Leaders' School (RFS) in HA, f. 312, RFS 593/31, 4.8.31; RFS 926/31, 5.9.31; RFS 1024/31, 15.9.31; and RFS 1460/31M, 6.11.31. Of the senior SA leaders who attended classes 1, 2, 3 and 5 (the classes for which reports survive), only 6.7% were over 35 years of age. 19% of the class members were between ages 31-35, 36% were between ages 26-30, and 25.5% were between ages 21-25. Thus an astonishing 61.5% of senior SA leaders attending the RFS in the fall of 1931 were thirty years of age or younger. These men, for the most part, were too young to have served in the war and although some may have received a small amount of military training through the Freikorps or Zeitfreiwillige programs, most had no formal military or leadership training. SA leaders were aware of this problem. See IfZG, Fa-107/1, PDM report on 15-16 September 1931 SA-Führerertagung; and HA, f. 1553, Lagebericht Nr. 23, Lapo Berlin, IA, 1 December 1930.

²⁷1873-1942. Retired from the Reichswehr in 1926, he served as SA Gruppenführer of Gruppe Bayern, then Gruppe Mittelland (1931-1934) and as Staatssekretär for the Reichsstatthalter of Bavaria, General von Epp.

ing a September 1931 SA conference, he encouraged them to interest themselves in the Army-sponsored Border Guard and to take advantage of the training associated with it. He was rudely interrupted during his speech and scornfully reminded by some of his audience that the duties of the SA were political. He responded by launching into an unrestrained tirade, emphasizing that it was public knowledge that the SA leaders were unqualified and ignorant. According to one astounded recipient of "Trotzky's" philippic, it was evident that he did not really understand the Nazi movement, and afterwards a dazed Hitler remarked that "he [Trotzky] would have to be shipped out."²⁸

In an effort to improve the quality of SA leaders, Police Capt. (Ret.) Walter Stennes,²⁹ the leader of the Berlin SA from 1926 to 1931, founded a school to train Berlin area SA leaders in the fall of 1930. Classroom instruction was held at the "Wiener Garten" restaurant in

²⁸IfZG, Fa-107/1, PDM report on SA leaders conference, 15 September 1931 (Pol. Präs. Berlin, I 7. 42.02/24.9). "Dieser [Hofmann] muß ausgeschift werden!"

²⁹Stennes, Walter, Police Captain (Ret.) A front officer during the First World War, Stennes later served with the Freikorps Pfeffer in the Baltic region and eventually found his way to the Prussian Landespolizei (1921?) from which he retired as a Captain in 1926. Pfeffer appointed Stennes as OSAF-Ost, Berlin, in 1926, a post which he held until his expulsion from the party and the SA in 1931 after leading a revolt of the Berlin SA. He was opposed to the legal course of the party and the primacy of its political sections. Following incarceration and torture by the Gestapo in 1933, he was exiled from Germany and found employment as a military advisor to Chiang Kai-shek.

Berlin-Kreuzberg, and practical training, including military sport instruction, was conducted on weekends at Grundmühle, a village north of Berlin. In May 1931, the school facilities were re-organized into a two week resident course and the school name was changed to the Sport Leaders' School. Enrollment was ca. 150 students per course, and although the main emphasis of the instruction focused on leadership training, military sport instruction was included.³⁰ Two similar schools were established in Silesia during 1931, with a combined enrollment of ca. 450 students.³¹

Capt. (Ret.) Ernst Röhm,³² Pfeffer's successor to command of the SA, was aware of SA training deficiencies, and despite a perfunctory order to the SA to refrain from

³⁰HA, f. 1553, Lagebericht Nr. 23, Lapo Berlin, IA, 1 December 1930; Engelbrechten, Braune Armee, 245.

³¹Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 288, 11 October 1931.

³²1883-1934. Joining the Bavarian Army in 1906, Röhm served in a number of command and staff positions during the war. Accepted into the Reichswehr as a General Staff Corps officer, his duties as Bavarian Division (7) liaison officer to various paramilitary units led to his increasing involvement in racist-radical politics, which resulted in his premature retirement from the Army in the fall of 1923. He participated in the Hitler Putsch, seizing the headquarters of the Bavarian Division. Found guilty of high treason, but receiving a suspended sentence, his unsuccessful efforts to organize the Frontbann (see note 5, this chapter) were followed by a sojourn in Bolivia as a military advisor, a post from which he was providentially recalled to Germany in the fall of 1930 by Hitler to take over the SA. He served as Chief of Staff (in effect, commander) of the SA unit until his execution in 1934.

offering its services to the Reichswehr in the event of a Polish attack,³³ he at once set about contacting Defense Ministry officers concerning a role for the SA in the Border Guard-East. In March 1931, he reached an agreement with Schleicher by which SA men, as private individuals, would be allowed to participate in the Border Guard.³⁴

In negotiating this mutually advantageous agreement, both Röhm and Schleicher apparently exceeded their authority. Schleicher's approval for individual SA men, but not SA units, to participate in the Border Guard was consistent with both Army policy and Reichswehr experience vis-à-vis the paramilitary organizations,³⁵ but the legality of permitting SA men to participate was questionable. On 2 Janu-

³³HA, f. 1554B, SA Befehl, 13 January 1931.

³⁴Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 118f.

³⁵The Reichswehr was of the opinion that any patriotic German citizen living within the threatened eastern border regions should be allowed to participate in the Grenzschutz. See BA-MA, Nachlaß Schleicher, N-42/25, Groener letter to Reichskanzler Brüning, RWM W1a, - September 1931; RH-8 v896, proposed agenda for Ib officers conference, 24-25 November 1931 and the subsequent minutes of that meeting, CHL TA 1207/31, betr. Ic Besprechung am 24.-25. November 1931; and Müller, Das wahre Vaterland, 322ff. The Reichswehr, in 1921, had unsuccessfully attempted to incorporate paramilitary groups into the Grenzschutz, an experiment which left a poor after-taste with the Army Command. During a Military District-Commanding Generals Conference, 25 October 1930, Schleicher stated, "Die Erfahrung hat beweisen, daß die 'Verbände' als solche zur Mitarbeit im 'Grenzschutz' und 'Landesschutz' gänzlich unbrauchbar sind.... Also, jeder einzelne nationale Mann soll für Landesschutz willkommen sein, 'Verbände' sind als unbrauchbar abzulehnen." IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Bl. 157.

ary 1931 the Defense Ministry had secretly announced that it would no longer fire civilian employees found to be members of the Nazi Party, while simultaneously it cautioned soldiers and employees that the issue of the legality of the Nazi Party was still under litigation and therefore unresolved.³⁶ The Prussian Government angrily protested the Schleicher-Röhm agreement,³⁷ forcing Defense Minister Groener to refer the matter to the Reich Cabinet, which eventually resolved the issue in favor of the Nazis.³⁸

The Röhm-Schleicher Agreement contradicted Hitler's orders to the SA to refuse collaboration with the "system", yet is improbable that Hitler did not know of Röhm's activities, and in all likelihood, he probably approved of them. Accutely sensitive to the currents within his movement, and aware of the psychological importance of the Border Guard to the inhabitants of the eastern regions, Hitler appears to have concluded that his adamant refusal to allow SA men to participate in the Border Guard posed a

³⁶BA-MA, H-24/5, RMW 639.30, g. WIa, Berlin, 2 January 1931.

³⁷Ibid., Nachlaß Schleicher, N-42/25, Groener letter to Brüning, September 1931; Severing, Lebensweg, II, 321ff, 326f.

³⁸BA-MA, Nachlaß Schleicher, N-42/25, Groener to Brüning, September 1931. On 29 January 1932, Groener permitted former members of any political party, except the Communist, to enlist in the Reichswehr. See Berliner Börsenzeitung, Nr. 65, 9 February 1932, quoted in Ursachen und Folgen, VII, 561ff.

far greater risk to the unity of the Party than did any Reichswehr-SA fraternization. Whatever training the SA received from Border Guard-East authorities or the Reichswehr would only benefit the SA and would help to alleviate the shortage of trained leaders. Should difficulties with Government authorities arise, Hitler could always fall back on his 1928 order and disclaim any responsibility for the acts of his subordinates.³⁹

In light of Reichswehr efforts to allow members of the paramilitary groups but not the groups themselves, to participate in Border Guard-East training, there is no

³⁹For example, Hitler publicly repudiated the Boxheimer Documents (a draconic Nazi contingency plan for the consolidation of power in Hesse involving the arming of the SA) as the private work of dilettantes, and he issued a public warning to the SA to beware of provocateurs who urged illegal actions under the guise of a desire for activity and ordered a halt, under penalty of expulsion from post and party, to "...alle Bestrebungen und Stilübungen aber, die illegale Handlungen zur Voraussetzungen oder zum Ziele haben und dadurch die Partei schädigen und gefährden," HA, f. 1872, OSAF 725/31, 9 December 1931. Despite public disavowal of the documents, the NSDAP promptly hired the author of the Boxheimer Documents, Dr Werner Best, who had been released from his civil service post. See also Severing, Lebensweg, II, 311f; Bullock, Hitler, 202f; and Vogel-sang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 141, 146f. Manfred von Killinger, a Dresden SA leader, wrote to inform Hitler that his men were going to join the Grenzschutz regardless of the position taken by the party and it would therefore be best, he suggested, to approve of Grenzschutz participation, thus giving at least the appearance that the SA was in command of the situation. BDC, Personalakt von Killinger, letter Killinger to Hitler, n.d. [1932]. Hitler's reply is not known, but SA collaboration with the Reichswehr did continue. See BDC, Personalakt F-W. Krüger, letter Krüger to Röhm, 17 August 1932.

reason to believe that SA men received training different from other Border Guard recruits. Training courses for the Border Guard duplicated military sport training in all important aspects. The recruits received instruction in drill, physical conditioning, marksmanship, encampment and entrenchment techniques, and methods of cover and concealment.⁴⁰

Reichswehr-SA ties were, as to be expected, closest in the eastern military districts, I (E. Prussia), III (Brandenburg-Berlin-Silesia), and IV (Saxony), owing to the Polish threat and the existence of the Border Guard-East in these districts. Training courses for SA recruits in the Border Guard were held throughout 1931 and 1932, although actual Border Guard units (composed mostly of Stahlhelm members) appear to have been established only in East Prussia prior to 1932.⁴¹ Records indicating the

⁴⁰BA-MA, RH-8/v896, CHL TA 600/31 g.K. T4 Id "Z", 1 July 1931; CHL TA 628/31 g.K. T4 Id, 17 September 1931; WKVII/734, copy of CHL TA 100/32 g.K. T4 Id, 29 January 1929; RH-8/v896, CHL TA 570/32 g.K. T2IIIA, 25 July 1932, mentions that terrain sport training was the means of training reserves for the Grenzschutz and enclosed for commanders a copy of "Richtlinien für die Ausbildung im Geländesport", a booklet prepared by the GVA and the Defense and Interior Ministries.

⁴¹BDC, Personalakt von Killinger, letter Killinger to Hitler, spring 1932; Personalakt Krüger, letter Krüger to Röhm, 17 August 1932; IfZG, F-56, letter of General (Ret.) Kurt Weckmann to General (Ret.) Hermann Foertsch, 19 May 1952. Weckman was assigned to Grenzschutz duties in Pomerania; and BA, Nachlaß Krüger, Aktenbeschlagnahme im Abschnitt die [SA] Gruppe-Ost, [April] 1932.

the extent of SA participation in the Border Guard have not survived but there is evidence showing that SA leaders and men did receive some training from military authorities.⁴²

At least one incident of SA-Reichswehr training collaboration was brought to public attention. The German Peoples' Sport Association (Deutscher Volkssportverein), a front organization for the Berlin SA, was discovered using the facilities of the Reichswehr training area of Döberitz. Although the leftist political press was outraged, the Reich Government merely suspended permission for the Sport Association to use Döberitz pending an investigation,⁴³ which appears to have never been completed.

In addition to the military sport training which SA men received in the Border Guard-East, extensive military sport and semi-military training programs were conducted by SA units throughout the Reich.⁴⁴ SA units in the Berlin-

⁴²BA, NS-23/124, OSAF Qu 2509/32, 16 September 1932, claims that over 60% of SA leaders in the Berlin-Brandenburg area attended Army sponsored military sport training at Döberitz.

⁴³IfZG, Fa-88/337, HJ Stabsleitung to Referat VI 1/32, 26 August 1932 circular to HJ Gebiets- und Bannführer; Braun, Weimar zu Hitler, 150; Engelbrechten, Braune Armee, 165f., 209; Schützle, Reichswehr wider Nation, 128; and Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 159-162.

⁴⁴HA, f. 1553, Gendarmeriestation Herrsching to Bezirksamt Starnberg [Bavaria] 172a, 29 September 1930; Bayerischer Kurier, Nr. 338, 11 December 1930, reported a large SA field exercise near Breslau; HA, f. 1553, PDM VI/d, PND 717, SA exercise near Munich, 7 January 1931; Münchener Post,

Brandenburg region even organized and trained signal, medical, security, and combat engineer sections.⁴⁵ SA regional headquarters issued military sport guidelines to subordinate units and required them to establish mandatory military sport courses.⁴⁶ An apparently unsuccessful effort was made by the SA in northern Bavaria to hire recently discharged Reichswehr officers and non-commissioned officers as instructors for military sport courses.⁴⁷

Nr. 8, 12 January 1931, reported SA marksmanship practice near Munich which was confirmed by Munich police, HA, f. 1553, PDM VI/d, 21 February 1931; ibid., PDM VI/d, PND 749, SA military exercise near Ehersburg [Munich], 29-30 August 1931; ibid., Polizei Direktion Nürnberg-Fürth, Nr. 196/31, 25 October 1931, noted a large SA field exercise near Schweinfurt and Bayreuth; Münchener Post, Nr. 259, 7 November 1931, reported numerous SA training exercises in Silesia and Saxony; HA, f. 1553, PDM VI/d, PND 757, 21 December 1931, gave a report of an SA exercise north of Munich; ibid., f. 317, PDM to Bay. Staatsmin. d. Innern, 40122Ia, 22 December 1931, stated that a May, 1931 SA field exercise involved the "taking" of opponents after a village was "captured"; SA Mann, Nr. 8, February 1932, showed Danzig SA men practicing hand grenade throwing from trenches and negotiating barbed wire obstacles; HA, f. 1553, PDM VI/d, 939/32, 4 May 1932, reported SA field training exercises near Kempton; ibid., PDM VI/d, PND 788, 9 September 1932 reported that Munich SA units had conducted a night passage of lines near Dachau; ibid., PDM VI/N, morning report of 14 October 1932, stated that a SA field exercise led by General (Ret.) Ritter von Epp [the former Notbann commander] was planned for the immediate future and would involve all Munich SA units; Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 285, 11 October 1932, reported a SA Wehrsport exercise of SA Gruppe Südwest [Wüttemberg] at which Röhm was present.

⁴⁵BA, NS-23/123, OSAF 7367/31, Viertelsjahrebericht, III, 8 December 1931.

⁴⁶HA, f. 1554, PDM to Polizei Direktion Würzburg, 1624/32, VIV, 17 June 1932, reference SA Gruppe Mittelland "Richtlinien", 23.9.31; ibid., SA Gruppe Mittelland, Nr. 233/31, 16 January 1932.

⁴⁷HA, f. 1554, Wehrkreis VII/7th I.D. 30a/R Ic geh., 6 October 1932. 1880 geheim

During the summer of 1931, Röhm founded the Reich Leader School in Munich. During the three week course, students received 42 hours of military sport training as well as a further 10 hours of land navigation (compass) training.⁴⁸

Lower level (squad and platoon) leaders received their initial training at SA Leader Preparatory Schools, established by Röhm in 1931. By the fall of 1932, there were at least sixteen of these schools through the Reich and Austria. Courses lasted two to three weeks with a minimum enrollment of 35 and a maximum enrollment of 60 students per course. Of the forty-nine hours of instruction presented weekly, ten were devoted to drill, 17 to terrain and military sports, and 5 to marksmanship.⁴⁹

In 1932, Röhm created a special staff section for military sport and other training activities, the Chief

⁴⁸The Reichsführerschule, directed by Major (Ret.) Kurt Kühme, was founded 1 June 1931. Average enrollment was ca. 60-80 students per course. HA, f. 1548, PDM VI/d, "Akten betr. RFS", 14.10.31; PDM to Bay. Staatsmin. D. Intern, 229/32, 11.2.32; ibid., f. 312, RFS to OSAF, 1ter Lehrgangsbericht, 591/31, 4.8.31; RFS to OSAF, 2ter Lehrgangsbericht, 926/31, 5.9.31. Prior to coming to Munich in May 1931, Kühme lived in Wünsdorf, and, in all likelihood, had ties with the military sport school there. See HA, f. 1565, letter Kühme to Hptm.a. D. Schreyer, Braunes Haus, 22 March 1931.

⁴⁹BA, NS-23/124; Chef des Ausbildungsstabes und Inspekteur der Schulen, A, Nr. 3380/32, 17 November 1932. Röhm wanted to establish a Führervorschule in every SA Untergruppe.

of the Training Staff and Inspector of Schools.⁵⁰ Brigadier General (Ret.) Franz Ritter von Hörauf⁵¹ was appointed to this position. He also supervised non-military sporting activities, which Röhm encouraged in order to promote a high level of physical fitness.⁵²

In the fall of 1932, Röhm launched an ambitious military sport training program and ordered his SA leaders to begin to train their units, commencing with programs in the smallest units and advancing progressively to the largest formations.⁵³ It is doubtful that much was accomplished by this program, because SA priorities underwent a drastic change following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933.

In addition to the actual military sport activities

⁵⁰BA, NS-23/123, OSAF Qu 1509/32, 23 June 1932; Fa-90/1, OSAF Ch. 1565/32, 1 July 1932, "Dienstsanweisung für den Chef des Ausbildungsstabes und Inspekteur der Schulen."

⁵¹He joined the Bavarian Army in 1896 and was in the 10th Infantry Regiment which Röhm joined in 1906. In 1912 Hörauf entered the Kriegsakademie in Berlin and was appointed to the General Staff Corps in 1914, and served with distinction in various Bavarian Army units throughout the First World War. He was ennobled for bravery (Max Joseph Orden) and served with the Freikorps Epp in 1919. He joined the NSDAP in 1930, after a year in the Stahlhelm, and was appointed an SA Gruppenführer and assigned as Chef des Führungsstabes until his assignment as Chef des Ausbildungsstabes in 1932.

⁵²HA, f. 1553, OSAF I, Nr. 6197/31, 15 October 1931.

⁵³Ibid., PDM VI/d, Auszug aus dem Morgenrapport des Referat VI/N, 14 October 1932.

conducted by the SA, several National Socialist pamphleteers worked to increase public awareness of the benefits of military sport as a substitute for the defunct conscription. Col. (Ret.) Friedrich Haselmayr,⁵⁴ founded the Work-Group for Defense Improvement in 1930. This organization published six pamphlets, apparently at public expense, between 1930 and 1932, on various defense related subjects. The six pamphlets and their authors were:

"Germany's Right to Defense" (Haselmayr); "Germany's Fateful Hours" (Haselmayr); "Polish War Threats" (H. von Falkenberg of the Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung); "Naval Brochure" (Friedrich Fecht); "Air War is Imminent" (Großkreuz); and "Pre-Military Defense Training" (Fecht).⁵⁵

The Fecht pamphlet, "Pre-Military Defense Training", is worth paraphrasing because the outlines of the program Fecht proposed were later adopted by Hitler. Fecht began with the usual nationalist condemnation of the "Dictate of

⁵⁴Retired from the Reichswehr in 1928 as a Colonel, Haselmayr joined the NSDAP and entered the University of Munich, where he was elected to the student government as an NSDStB representative. He left the University in 1930 and founded the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für deutsche Wehrverstärkung. In September 1932 he joined the NSDAP Wehrpolitisches Amt, headed by Epp, the former Notbann leader. In 1935 Haselmayr received an honorary promotion to Brigadier General. Recalled to active service in 1939, he was retired in 1943 as a Generalleutnant.

⁵⁵IfZG, Zgs. 62, Generalleutnant a.D. Friedrich Haselmayr, Bl. 6f. He claimed he had Government support and that his most influential friends were in the Foreign Ministry.

Versailles", and although he acknowledged that pre-military training was banned by the Treaty, he called upon every German to repudiate and ignore this shameful prohibition. The experiences of the First World War proved, he wrote, that mass, conscripted armies were essential, yet modern weaponry was so advanced that a lengthy training period was required to gain proficiency in even the most basic of weapons. No nation, he explained, could afford to maintain, let alone properly train, the hordes of recruits necessary for a future war of materiel; therefore the logical task was to reduce training time to the minimum. Fecht proposed pre-military training as the best means by which the term of military service could be reduced. This suggestion was especially applicable to Germany, and indeed, he claimed, its only alternative owing to the military restrictions imposed by the Allies.

To be effective, wrote Fecht, pre-military training had to be mandatory and universal, and only the state could afford such a program. Pre-military training could, he explained, be most easily conducted in three phases. The first phase, physical training, would be instituted for school children from 8 to 13 years of age, and conducted, he noted, during the school day, with Saturday afternoons reserved for Boy Scout training. Terrain sport training, said Fecht, would be required of 14 to 17 year olds in the second phase. Terrain sport encampments would be held dur-

ing school vacations and, he explained, students would progress from physical conditioning to small-bore marksmanship, drill and marching, and terrain utilization techniques. The third phase, weapons training, would be required of 18 year olds who would then begin their active service upon completion of the weapons training phase.⁵⁶

It is not possible to say if Fecht's pamphlet is entirely original, for he appears to have developed ideas, albeit in greater detail, proposed a year earlier by Col. (Ret.) Konstantin Hierl,⁵⁷ in his book, German Defense Policy (Deutsche Wehrpolitik). He hoped that schools would help prepare young men from 14 to 20 years of age for their military service by means of conducting a military sport program, while simultaneously identifying and training potential leaders. Military service, he wrote, should follow immediately upon completion of schooling.⁵⁸

There is little evidence by which to estimate the

⁵⁶Friedrich Fecht, "Vormilitärische Wehrerziehung", München, n.d. [1930], passim.

⁵⁷1875-1948. Hierl retired from the Reichswehr in 1924, prematurely, owing to irregularities in his personal life. He claimed that he was forced out owing to his connections with National-Socialism. In 1926 he led the Tanenbergbund für Süddeutschland, a Ludendorff organization. Hierl became Organisationsleiter II for the NSDAP in 1929 and served as a labor service and military consultant to Hitler. In 1933 he became Staatssekretär for Labor Service in the Labor Ministry.

⁵⁸Konstantin Hierl, Deutsche Wehrpolitik, München, 1929, 28-31.

influence, if any, of Hierl's or Fecht's pamphlets on the German public. What is more important, however, is that prior to the Hitler Government, National Socialist leaders were giving some consideration to the concept and potential value of a pre-military training program, a concept which they developed fully after 1933.

In reviewing Hitler's response to the problems posed by the burgeoning military sport movement and the Border Guard, one is struck by the outward consistency of his attitude. He did not deviate from his insistence that the political activities of the SA constituted its raison d'etre, and for as long as possible he tried to prevent non-political SA activities. By 1931 such a course was no longer possible, yet the change in tack was never official, but surreptitious. Rather than risk defections from the SA by men who felt the Border Guard preserved their way of life, Hitler overlooked violations of his non-compromise policy. He relaxed his attitude toward military sport activities, which enabled Röhm to create a military sport training section within the SA, a partial remedy for the dearth of qualified SA leaders. Nazi leaders, confident of their eventual political success, looked toward military sport, as did the Army, as a means of subverting the Versailles Treaty.

C H A P T E R V
GROENER, MILITARY SPORT,
AND THE SA BAN

The clandestine support for military sport promised by the Reich Government in 1927 failed to materialize in any appreciable amounts. It is uncertain if the DNVP Reich Interior Minister Keudell made available funds to military sport enthusiasts, but his successor, Socialist (SPD) Carl Severing who served from 1928 to 1929, used the extensive ministerial discretionary authority as to the disposition of sport subsidies to deny funds to organizations espousing conservative or radical political philosophies. "The assumption, naturally," he wrote, "in all cases involving the distribution of money [to sporting organizations] was that the official line [of the Republic] was at the same time supported [by these groups]."¹ As interpreted by Severing, the condition of endorsing the "official line" tended to exclude racist, anti-Republican

¹Severing, Lebensweg, II, 202ff. "Voraussetzung in allen Fällen, daß mit der Hergabe von Geldern auch der Staatsgedanke gepflegt wurde." Severing's hostile attitude toward Volkssport was compounded by budget reductions, apparently related to the onset of the Depression. Prior to 1929, RM 1.5 million was allocated for sport subsidies, which by 1931 had fallen to RM 750,000. BA, R-43 II/519, RWM WId, Nr. 3669/30, Anlage 2 [excerpt from 1931 Reich budget].

organizations, such as the Stalhelm and the SA.

Since the majority of military sport associations either enjoyed close ties with or were sponsored by conservative and racist political organizations, Severing's definition effective crippled the hopes of the Defense Ministry for indirect Government subsidization of the military sport movement.² Initially, the absence of military sport movement constituted more of a nuisance than a problem for the Defense Ministry, but the completion in 1929 of a new mobilization plan dictated a more active role for the Army vis-à-vis the organizations involved in military sport.

In 1929 the General Staff adopted a mobilization plan incorporating several changes from the existing mobilization schedule which had been approved in 1926. Like its predecessor, the 1929 plan called for the expansion of the Reichswehr in units of seven (from 7 to 14 infantry divisions, then 21, etc.). The major difference between the two plans was that the 1929 mobilization schedule assumed a standing Army strength of 300,000 men

²BA, R-43, II/519, Groener to Reichskanzlei, 18 October 1930, Bl. 2; IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, "Aufzeichnungen des Generals Curt Liebmann", Befehlshaberbesprechung, 25 October 1930. Liebmann's notes indicate the chagrin of the Heeresleitung over the lack of support from the Reich Interior Ministry: "Die Innenministerien haben in diesem Punkt [support for Volkssport] das RWM betrogen! Die 'Sportvereine' wurden 'seinerzeit' nur unter die Bedingung an die Zivilbehörden abgegeben, daß sie im Geiste der Wehrhaftmachung weiter geführt werden. Dies geschieht tatsächlich nicht." Bl. 157.

while the 1926 plan accepted the Versailles Treaty strength of 100,000 men. The expansion plan attached to the 1929 mobilization scheme called for no less than a thorough reorganization of the Reichswehr. Proposing a gradual tripling over a five year period of the number of soldiers, commencing in 1933, the expansion plan envisioned a shortening of the actual term of military service. Instead of the mandatory twelve year enlistment, most soldiers would spend only a year or two with the colors, followed by an indefinite number of years in an inactive status, subject to recall in the event of a national emergency.³

The General Staff left the task of convincing the Allies to accept the change in Treaty strength to the Foreign Ministry. With unrealistic optimism, however, Defense Ministry officers hoped for Allied concurrence no later than April 1933, the time for which they scheduled the initiation of the expansion plan. While awaiting Allied approval, the Defense Ministry began, in 1930, to procure supplies and

³BA-MA, II H/135-2; II H/597; and RH-896. See Hans-Jürgen Rautenberg, Deutsche Abrüstungspolitik vom Beginn der Genfer Abrüstungskonferenz bis zur Wiedereinführung der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht, 1932-1935, Phil. Diss, Bonn, 1975, 212-219. (Hereafter cited as Rautenberg, Rüstungspolitik.) Vincenz Müller, Schleicher's assistant, dates the first mobilization plan to 1928, while Field Marshal Erich Von Manstein, then a Lt.Col. in the Operations (T-1) Section of the General Staff, dates the 21 division plan from 1929. In all likelihood Manstein considered the 1926 plan as a first, rough draft. See Müller, Das wahre Vaterland, 318ff; and Manstein, Aus einem Soldatenleben, Bonn, 1958, 111-115. (Hereafter cited as Manstein, Soldatenleben.)

equipment for the anticipated influx of new soldiers.⁴

Should the Army have to mobilize, the Defense Ministry planned to implement immediately the expansion of the army to 300,000 men and to follow the scheme outlined in the 1929 mobilization plan. The expansion plan simply called for the Army to triple in size, with new units forming around the nucleus of Reichswehr units. This meant, for example, that a Reichswehr regiment of three battalions would, with the influx of new recruits, become a division of three regiments, with the former regiment commander assuming command of the new division and the former battalion commanders becoming regiment commanders.

The actual mobilization scheme envisioned in the 1929 plan resembled, in all major points, its 1926 predecessor. In the event of the outbreak of hostilities or an order from the Reich President to mobilize, the 23 regiment size units of the Border Guard-East would protect the eastern border regions while the Reichswehr mobilized in the fortified areas some 50km behind the actual border. The Border Guard would conduct delaying tactics and gradually fall back to the fortified areas under enemy pressure, trading space for time, until the mobilized Reichswehr of

⁴BA-MA, Wi F 5/499, CHL TA 957/30 g.K., 30 September 1932; Post, Civil-Military, 197; Rautenberg, Rüstungspolitik, 212-219; Wohlfeil, Reichswehr und Republik, 210.

twenty-one infantry divisions was prepared to take the field.⁵ This mobilization format assumed an attack from the east (Poland); the military situation in the west was apparently regarded as hopeless and no serious efforts were made with to cope with the possibility of a French attack.

The shortage of trained personnel to fill the ranks of the mobilized Reichswehr constituted the weakest point of the mobilization scheme. Defense Minister Groener estimated that the Army needed from five to eight days in which to mobilize and expand from seven to twenty-one infantry divisions.⁶ On the other hand, studies conducted by the General Staff during 1931 and 1932 demonstrated that at least seven and preferably fourteen days were required in which to train recruits to perform even the most elementary military skills.⁷ In other words, in a scenario which assumed optimum conditions and the existence of a

⁵Post, Civil-Military, 198ff. Cf. Carsten, Reichswehr, 273, who incorrectly states that the forces to supplement the 7 infantry divisions would come from the Border Guard.

⁶Reichswehrminister to CHL, CML, PF 34072, 16 April 1930, cited in Post, Civil-Military, 198.

⁷BA-MA, RH-8/896, CHL TA 600/31 g.K. "Z" T4Id, 1 July 1931; CHL TA 628/31 g.K. "Z" T4Id, 17 September 1931; WK VII/734 CHL TA 100/32 g.k. T4Id, 29 January 1932; H-24/6, Anlage 11 of CHL TA 660/32 g.K. T4Id, 15 September 1932; IfZG, Zgs. 152, Generalleutnant a.D. Otto Stapf, then assigned to section T2, Organization of the General Staff, Bl. 6.

trained reserve, the Border Guard had to delay the Poles for a minimum of five days, while stark reality required a poorly trained and equipped, under-strength Border Guard to contain within a thirty mile zone over a front of several hundred miles for up to two weeks an advancing and well-equipped Polish force. The most experienced and reliable shock troops of the First World War would have been unequal to such a task.

The inevitable solution to the reserve problem was either some form of secret and illegal military training or pre-military training, that is, training which would considerably shorten the time needed to train recruits once mobilized and which would not run afoul of the Versailles limitations. The patent illegality of creating a military reserve force, as well as the difficulty in disguising or keeping secret such a program, ruled out a massive, secret reserve training scheme. On the other hand, a vast pre-military training program and the apparatus already existed: the numerous military sport organizations and associations, which by 1932, had trained an estimated 1.5 million men.⁸ It would be a relatively simple matter for the Army to issue guidelines to the various military sport groups in order to insure uniform, militarily useful training. In the event of mobilization, personnel who had

⁸See Chapter III, note 64.

completed military sport training could be conscripted to fill the ranks of the mobilized Army. Moreover, voluntary military sport training did not necessarily or clearly constitute a violation of the Versailles Treaty.

General Groener intimated his acceptance of such a solution to the reserve problem as early as March 1930. In a conversation with Chancellor Heinrich Brüning,⁹ the Defense Minister stated that establishing a state physical and military fitness program for young men was the one remaining goal of his life. This program, he said, would serve as the preparatory step to replacing the professional-mercenary Reichswehr with a peoples' army.¹⁰

Thinking initially of his state-sponsored military sport program for youths as a solution to a military exigency, Groener quickly discerned a potential political profit from the project. Military sport would act, he hoped, as an antidote to the cancer of fanatical political extremism, metastasizing among the nation's youth and threatening the body politic.

The Defense Minister apprehensively watched the growing political radicalization of Germany's youth. Considerable numbers of the post-war generation, alienated by

⁹1885-1970. A front officer in the First World War and a Center Party Reichstag Deputy, he served as Reich Chancellor from March 1930 to May 1932.

¹⁰Heinrich Brüning, Memorien, 1918-1934, Stuttgart, 159-160. Hereafter cited as Brüning, Memorien.

an unresponsive, unpopular Government and a social system that in the current economic crisis could offer neither employment nor hope, accepted the promising rhetoric of the extremist, anti-Republican movements.¹¹ By 1929 National Socialists made their earliest and most spectacular breakthrough in the youth movement: starting at the Universities of Erlangen and Greifswald, Nazi students rapidly gained control of the student governments at most institutions of higher learning.¹²

To a certain extent, the infatuation of the students and the younger generation in general could be ascribed to the normal inclination of the young toward rebellion and

¹¹In 1930, ca. 30% of NSDAP membership in Bavaria were between 21 and 30 years of age, with 30% more between 31 and 40 years of age. In 1933, the 21 to 30 group accounted for ca. 40%, with ca. 28% between ages 31 and 40. Thus two-thirds of party membership came from the war (31-40) and post-war (21-30) generations. These figures are from the Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP, Parteistatistik, I, Berlin, 1935, 202-204, quoted in Geoffrey Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power. The Nazi Movement in Bavaria 1923-1933, New York, 1973, 205-206. (Hereafter cited as Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power.) These figures are comparable to those of the SA leaders given in chapter IV, footnote 26. In contrast see Richard Hunt, German Social Democracy, New Haven, 1964, 106, who states that more than one-half the members of the Social Democratic Party were over forty years of age. See also the characterization of the Nazi electoral success in 1930 by Reichswehr officers as an inexorable youth movement in Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1933, (ed. Woodward, Butler, and Lambert), 2d series, London, 1950, vol. I, 512, note 2; as well as Friedrich Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, (trans. S. B. Fay,) Cambridge, Mass., 1950, 44-45. (Hereafter cited as Meinecke, The German Catastrophe.)

¹²Karl Dietrich Bracher, The German Dictatorship, (trans. J. Steinberg), New York, 1974, 164ff; and Klinnert und Bleuel, Deutsche Studenten, passim.

novelty. What made this otherwise perennial attraction of youth and radicalism especially deplorable to Groener was the absence of the earlier means for moderating the exuberance and idealism of youth, the conscripted armed forces, the "school of the nation". Inducting an impressive percentage (50%) of eligible youths, the pre-1914 Army had served as a vehicle for inculcating the civic values of discipline, responsibility, obedience and loyalty.¹³ In addition, the Army had been the embodiment and defender of the existing social and political order. Not only had military service provided a useful outlet for the surplus energies of young men, but it was a sobering experience conferring a certain respectability and civic status. Groener envisioned his state sponsored military sport program becoming a substitute "school of the nation". The task was immense. Not only would he have to subordinate the idealistic instincts of the nation's youth to the defense of institutions they hated, but he would have to demonstrate that the Republic had values worth preserving that merited their allegiance.

¹³On the concept of the "Army as the school of the nation", see the famous military publicist, Friedrich von Bernhardi, Germany and the Next War, (trans. A. H. Powles), New York, 1914, 116, 206, 244f, 248; General (Ret.) Max van den Bergh, Das Deutsche Heer vor dem Weltkrieg: Eine Darstellung und Würdigung, Berlin, 1934, 53f, 56; and the exhaustive monograph by Richard Höhn, Die Armee als Erziehungsschule der Nation, Bad Harzburg, 1963, passim.

He addressed himself to this problem in a letter of 1 August 1930 to Reich Minister of the Interior Joseph Wirth. Expressing his concern that the Reich Government's policy of responding to the symptoms instead of treating the cause of student unrest merely exacerbated the problem, he explained that banning student paramilitary groups in the name of the Versailles treaty would associate the Government with enforcing that treaty. Such action, he said, could only increase the unpopularity of the Government and further radicalize the students. The Government must be very careful, he added, that in doing away with student play-soldiering, it did not destroy the will and desire of youth to serve the state. In closing, Groener warned that proscriptions would not suffice, but rather:

... an educational effort [is] necessary, which has to be jointly directed by the state and the educators. Only through such [an effort] can the dual goals of the Government vis-à-vis the [radical] movement be realized: the prevention of actions inimical to [our] foreign policy and showing youngsters a way to forgo radicalism.¹⁴

¹⁴BA-MA, RH-8/896, RWM to RMdI, 1 August 1930. "Eine Erziehungsarbeit [ist] notwendig, die gemeinsam von Staat und Lehrerschaft geleistet werden muß. Nur durch sie kann das doppelte Ziel der Regierung gegenüber der Bewegung erreicht werden: die Unterbindung aussenpolitisch gefährlichen Handlungen und das Herausführen der Jugend aus dem Lager des Radikalismus." Bl. 4-5.

In a secret letter written several months later to Chancellor Brüning, Groener sketched the outline of his state-sponsored military sport project. Claiming that the Government policy of proscribing organizations interested in military sport thwarted the natural desire of the nation's youth for defending their country (Wehrhaftigkeit), he explained that continuing this policy "... without at the same time giving positive inducements..."¹⁵ to the military sport organizations would only serve to embitter and alienate young Germans. Already the suspicion existed, he added, that the Government used the Versailles Treaty as a police measure against the paramilitary associations of its political opponents, a theme which the demagogues continued to elaborate to the masses with great success.¹⁶

The Defense Minister then suggested establishing a physical training program. It was of critical importance, he wrote, because the Versailles Treaty prohibited Germany from raising a military reserve. However, he noted, the Treaty did not proscribe a voluntary, nation-wide physical training organization that would enable the German Government to bring all its young men to prime physical condition

¹⁵BA, R-43 II/519, Groener to Reichskanzlei, Nr. 3669/30, WId, geheim, 18 October 1930. "...ohne gleichzeitig positive Anregungen zu geben..."

¹⁶Ibid.

prior to their actual military service. It was for this purpose, explained the Defense Minister less than candidly, that the Reichswehr in 1924 had begun the Volkssport program, which, he added, the Reich Interior Ministry had subsequently subverted into subsidies for sports such as tennis and rugby.¹⁷ Not only did the Government fail to direct its sport subventions into projects he considered important to the nation, but, raged Groener, it did not even demand any service in exchange for its subsidies. He concluded by stating that he strongly recommended that the Government establish a youth physical fitness training program and requested that Brüning refer the matter to the Reich Cabinet, noting that his proposal involved the jurisdiction of the Reich Ministry of the Interior. He appended a twelve page "Summary of Military Youth Training Abroad", apparently to illustrate how other countries expended their sport subsidies and to intimate what the Defense Ministry felt was a project deserving Government support.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid. Groener enclosed, as exhibit 2 to his report, a copy of the Reich budget relating to sport subsidies for fiscal year 1929. The names of Socialist and Socialist-oriented groups were underlined in an apparent attempt either to indicate disgust that a party beridden with pacifists would receive funds supposedly ear-marked for defense purposes or to emphasize his predecessor's (Severing) "impartial" disbursements.

¹⁸Ibid., Anlage 1, "Zusammenstellung über die militärische Ausbildung im Auslande."

Within a week after submitting his report, Groener told Brüning that until his proposed project was approved, the Reich Ministry of the Interior should be required to obtain the approval of the Defense Ministry prior to awarding sport subsidies. He claimed that the generosity of the Interior Ministry had gotten out of hand and he hoped that once again the Defense Ministry could exercise some control over sport subsidies.¹⁹

At the end of January 1931, Groener asked the Reich Cabinet to reconsider his youth fitness training project, but this time he abandoned his proposal to review Interior Ministry subsidies. Instead, he suggested that their sport subventions be merely "regulated", which he interpreted as meaning the award of sport funds only to groups pursuing activities useful to the armed forces. The Defense Minister also wished to issue guidelines in cooperation with the Interior Ministry regulating military sport training. Groener noted that his suggestions could, in all likelihood, be carried out at no expense to the Government.²⁰

On the 4th of March 1931, General Schleicher forwarded to the Chancellory a twenty page, top secret report titled

¹⁹IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Befehlshaberbesprechung, 30 October 1930.

²⁰BA, R-43 II/519, Vermerk, Betr. Wehrhaftigkeit der Jugend, Rk. 8732°, 21 January 1931. On the margin of the report is written, "Herr Reichskanzler ist einverstanden."

"Defense-Readiness of Youth", in which he further elaborated Groener's concept of a youth fitness training program. The subtitle of the report, "Construction of a Useful Reserve for National Defense" exposed the direct military nature of the project.²¹ Schleicher explained that the Army had become interested in military sport training because Germany no longer had the opportunity to train a military reserve force. Consequently, he added, mobilization measures depended, for the most part, on a ready supply of untrained volunteers. A physical training program with military overtones involving the nation's youth would help to alleviate the reserve shortage, as well as to provide some activity for the thousands of unemployed youths, who, according to Schleicher, were daily becoming more susceptible to radical oratory. A military fitness training program would, he explained, provide young men with an alternative to the paramilitary organizations of the political parties and perhaps win the loyalty of some of the program's participants for the Republic.²²

Schleicher then reviewed the status of military training conducted by the Reichswehr for civilians. In the eastern border regions, he wrote, Border Guard members

²¹Ibid., Schleicher to Oberregierungsrat Planck, 4 March 1931, with enclosure RWM 36/31 g.K., WId streng geheim!, "Wehrhaftmachung der Jugend".

²²BA, R-43 II/519, "Wehrhaftmachung der Jugend", Bl. 1.

received military and terrain sport instruction. In addition, he explained, a minimal amount of actual training with weapons was conducted, but, he hastened to add, such training was only experimental. The Army did not conduct, he noted, any training in the demilitarized areas along the Rhine Valley, but it did provide some classroom instruction in other parts of the Reich. The General emphasized that the Army cooperated fully with local civilian authorities concerning its training courses for non-military personnel. Participants for these courses, he stressed, were selected on an "above-party" basis and no paramilitary groups participated as such, although, he readily acknowledged, individual members of those groups were allowed to enroll.²³

Turning to finances, the General noted that the Defense Ministry hoped to work with existing military sport groups, thus avoiding personnel and administrative costs associated with the creation of a new agency. Groener, according to his assistant, wanted to award Government subsidies only to those groups which pursued activities of

²³Ibid., Bl. 10. There were two advantages which accompanied an "above-party" approach. First, the Army avoided accusations of partisanship while minimizing the exposure of its men to political involvement. Second, by dealing with individuals rather than groups, the Army weakened the cohesion of the groups, a phenomenon noticed by Hitler. See chapter I, 14f.

interest and merit to the armed forces. The Reich Government, he enunciated, should issue guidelines to those organizations awarded sport subsidies, clearly defining its standards and expectations, and, of equal importance, stating what it did not want.²⁴

As a condition of awarding subsidies, explained the General, the Defense Ministry would demand evidence that military sport organizations met Government imposed standards. In all likelihood, he added, this evidence would take the form of requiring that a certain percentage of students from a military sport organization pass a Government-sponsored and supervised test. Along with the subsidies the Defense Ministry would issue lesson plans and guidelines to prevent, he noted, military sport enthusiasts from becoming involved in "foolish soldiering games" which might involve infractions of the Versailles Treaty.²⁵

The Defense Ministry proposal for a youth fitness program failed to receive immediate attention from the Reich Cabinet, apparently because the Defense Minister and the Minister of the Interior could not agree on the organization of the sport program. Groener wanted to supervise and control the participating military sport groups through the

²⁴BA, R-43 II/519, "Wehrhaftmachung", Bl. 13-14.

²⁵Ibid., Bl. 17. "Einem Verband, der törichte Soldatenspielerlei betreibt, kann die Ausbildungsplan als Richtlinie für seine weitere Arbeit angegeben werden."

awarding of subsidies, namely giving assistance only to those organizations adhering to Defense Ministry guidelines. Regardless of the subsidizing agency, either the Defense or Interior Ministry, ultimate control of the program would rest with the Defense Minister, who would determine the standards for awarding assistance.²⁶

On the other hand, the Reich Minister of the Interior wanted to create an intermediate supervisory agency, under his control, which would watch over the youth fitness program. The head of this agency would be appointed by and responsible to the Minister of the Interior. Assisted by a committee of Government experts and representatives of the military sport organizations, the supervisory agency would allocate subsidies, issue guidelines and directives, and prevent political partisanship in the administration of the program.²⁷ These differences between the two Ministries had not been resolved when the first Brüning Government collapsed in October 1931.

Following Brüning's shifting of cabinet posts, Groener emerged as the acting head of the Reich Interior Ministry in addition to retaining the Defense Ministry. Evidence

²⁶BA, R-43 II/519, Vermerk des Staatssekretär [Pünder] in der Reichskanzlei, Rk. 5609, 6 June 1931.

²⁷Ibid., letter of Generalmajor a.D. L. Vogt to Reichskanzler, Rk. 5609, 29 May 1931; Pünder Memorandum to Staatssekretär [des Reichspräsidenten Hindenburg], 8 August 1931.

indicates that he did not seek the extra post, but he appears to have demonstrated no reluctance to assuming the additional burdens. In fact, he may have welcomed the additional post as an opportunity which would enable him to implement his military sport training program. He appears to have had an understanding with Brüning that he could use his new post to hasten progress toward implementing his military sport program. Both men hoped to see it become a mandatory school subject.²⁸

In a newspaper interview, published shortly after his appointment to the Reich Ministry of the Interior, Groener stated that one of the most important tasks facing the Government in the coming months was to effect a diminution of the physical and moral misery of the country's unemployed youth. The state, he claimed, could not alleviate this suffering by itself; it was imperative for all youth-oriented clubs and fashions to assist the Reich Government.

²⁸IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, remarks of General Hammerstein, 21 May 1932; Captain Noeldchen (Schleicher's adjutant) on Meißner's book in Werner Conze's "Zum Sturz Brünings", Viertelsjahrhefte für Zeitgeschichte, I, 1953, 273. (Hereafter cited as Conze, "Sturz Brünings"; Severing, Lebensweg, II, 336; and Eugen Mayer, Skizzen aus dem Leben der Weimarer Republik, Berlin, 1962, 128f. (Hereafter cited as Mayer, Skizzen.) Mayer became the "Obmann" of the Reich Ministry of the Interior, a position created by Groener. Mayer's duties included facilitating Groener's projects, above all the military sport project, "ein Lieblingsthema des Ministers."

He then added:

My most noble task as Reich Minister of the Interior will be to support, insofar as possible, all efforts and attempts to get the young men off the street, and teach them discipline and order, to improve them physically, and to make them willing to defend their convictions.... Youth needs ideals! They should have the freedom to live for those ideals as long as they are not inimical to the Government, but instead contribute to Germany's future.²⁹

Groener's hopes for a speedy resolution of the organizational difficulties between the two Ministries regarding his fitness organization were frustrated when the Reich Finance Minister refused to release the necessary funds until after the Reich presidential elections, scheduled for March 10th, 1932.³⁰ The Defense Minister also

²⁹Frankfurter Zeitung, Nr. 782, 2d morning edition, 20 October 1931. "Es wird meine vornehmste Aufgabe als Reichsinnenminister sein, alle Bemühungen und Versuche, die gemacht werden, um die Jugend von der Straße wegzubringen, sie zu Zucht und Ordnung zu erziehen, sie körperlich zu ertüchtigen und in ihrer geistigen Haltung wehrhaft zu machen, so weit wie möglich zu unterstützen.... Die Jugend braucht Ideale! Sie soll die Freiheit haben, für sie zu leben, wenn sie nicht gegen den Staat gerichtet sind, sondern auf Deutschlands Zukunft." (emphasis in original) Cf. Mayer, Skizzen, 134, "Eine Sache, die dem Minister sehr am Herzen lag ... war die Entpolitisierung der Jugend."

³⁰BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/145, Oehme Fragebogen, 31 December 1932. Groener stated that Reichsfinanzminister Dietrich wanted to wait until after the March Reich Presidential elections, for if Hindenburg lost, "... die Gelder nur den Nazis zu gute kämen." This is a strange argument, its logical extension being the suspension of the entire Reich budget until after the presidential election! Perhaps Groener misinterpreted Dietrich, who wanted to wait until

made little progress in ending the dispute between the two ministries concerning the organizational difficulties arising from the youth fitness program.³¹

Owing perhaps to impatience with an overly cautious Finance Ministry and disgust at inter-departmental squabbling, Groener approached the Stahlhelm in the hopes that it would assume a leading role in his military sport league. From a military standpoint, the Stahlhelm was the most reliable of the large paramilitary organizations, and Groener asked Stahlhelm leaders Seldte and Duesterberg,³² on 18 December 1931, to direct his military sport program. Expressing interest, the Stahlhelm leaders refused to commit their organization without the approval of its directors. Some

after the election when the political atmosphere would be calmer, a thesis which is corroborated by Hammerstein's statement to the division commanders on 27 February 1932: "Finanz [ministerium] bereit, Summe bereit zu stellen. Dietrich möchte die S[ache] aber nicht einstellen, ehe er in d. Entwicklung der pol[itische] Verhältnisse klarer sieht." See Thilo Vogelsang, "Neue Dokumente zur Geschichte der Reichswehr", Viertelsjahrhefte für Zeitgeschichte, (2), 1954, 422. Befehlhaberbesprechung am 27.2.32.

³¹IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Besprechung des Chefs der Heeresleitung auf der Führerreise, 21 May 1932, Bl. 182.

³²Lt. Col. Retired. He was the Deputy Commander of the Stahlhelm (Zweiter Bundesführer). An ardent nationalist, he was the unsuccessful candidate of the DNVP and the political Right in the first Reich Presidential election of 1932. The Nazis hounded him from the Stahlhelm after discovering that his grandfather had converted from Judaism.

Stahlhelm leaders protested the proposed undertaking, but before the directors met, Groener withdrew his offer.³³

Like some of the Stahlhelm leaders, Groener had second thoughts. At a Reichswehr commanders conference in January 1932, he stressed that although the Army wanted to attract and nurture the "good elements" in the paramilitary organizations, it could not become associated with any one group in particular. Schleicher then outlined to the officers Groener's plans for the military sport organization, explaining that participating groups would have considerable freedom, yet the Defense Ministry, by allocating funds to only those groups which followed its directives, would exercise ultimate control. The paramilitary organizations, he crudely added, would soon learn who paid them and for what purposes, and would accordingly restrict their activities to military sport instead of politics. The General then announced that recently retired Lieutenant General Edwin von Stülpnagel³⁴ had been selected to head the

³³Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 194-195. Berghahn does not specify the nature of the opposition. See also Meinecke, The German Catastrophe, 67.

³⁴1876-1933. General der Infanterie a.D. Decorated with the Pour le mérite medal during the First World War, his last post had been commander of Military District IV (Saxony) and the 4th Infantry Division, from which he retired in October 1931.

putative military sport organization.³⁵

Within three weeks Groener again changed his mind and informed the generals that the military sport organization would be run by the Reich Ministry of the Interior.³⁶ Although the reasons for his reversal are unknown, he may have feared that direct administration of the military sport organization by the Defense Ministry would compromise Brüning's efforts to improve Germany's military position

³⁵Groener's notes for this conference have survived. See BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/152, Notizen für Führerbesprechung beim RWM, 11 January 1932. Groener wrote: "Das Gute aus den Verbänden an uns heranziehen, jedoch nicht, wie Italien Wehrmacht in Geflogenschaft politisch eingestellt Miliz bringen." This statement is confirmed by General Liebmann, who reports: "Groener: 'Scharf betonen: Nicht Höheres als Wehrmacht! Das Gut der Verbände wollen wir erhalten und pflegen, aber nicht etwa Anhängsel von irgendwelchen Verbänden werden.'" See IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Bl. 170.

³⁶IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, letter of Liebmann (Commanding General, Wk V) to Infanterie- und Artillerieführer V, 8 February 1932. Bl. 171. It is possible that Groener may have adopted the Interior Ministry's organization as early as the 11-12 January Commanders' Conference as Liebmann's letter does not give the date of Groener's change of mind and Liebmann may have been informing his subordinates of an important fact which he had forgotten in his earlier report to them. His letter reads: "Zur Organisation des Wehrsports ergänzende Bemerkung: Wehrsport Organisation wird unter Reichsminister des Innern aufgezogen." It is likely, however, that Liebmann's letter reflects a turn-about in Groener's position, as it was normal practice for the division chief of staff to accompany the commander to the conferences and it is improbable that both men would have omitted an announcement of such importance.

at the imminent Geneva Disarmament Conference.³⁷ In addition, promotion and subvention of sport activities had traditionally been a function of the Interior Ministry, a function which General Hammerstein,³⁸ the Chief of the Army Command, implied that Ministry of the Interior officials were reluctant to relinquish.³⁹

The excesses committed by the SA during the first inconclusive presidential election campaign⁴⁰ appalled the governments of several of the states and their interior

³⁷Brüning hoped to secure a much needed triumph by winning League of Nations recognition of German sovereignty in relation to its defense posture. He called for general disarmament as stipulated in Article 53 of the Versailles Treaty, but hoped instead that his suggestion would be refused and that Germany would be allowed gradually to increase its defense forces. Not only would such a success have allowed the Reichswehr to implement its expansion plan, but it would have been a major tour de force for Brüning's sagging government. See IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Befehlshaberbesprechung, 11-12 January 1932, Bl. 167-168; Bracher, Auflösung, 483-84; Craig, Politics, 441-46; Vogel-sang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 180-184; Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis, 228-230.

³⁸Hammerstein-Equord, Kurt Freiherr von (1876-1943). Hammerstein had served in the same regiment (3rd Guard Infantry) as Schleicher and Hindenburg's son prior to the First World War. Sympathetic to the Republic, Hammerstein was the Chief of the Army Command from 1930 to January, 1934, and retired a Generaloberst.

³⁹IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Befehlshaberbesprechung mit dem Chef der Heeresleitung auf der Führer-reise, 21 May 1932, 31. 182.

⁴⁰The Prussian Government claimed that the Nazis had mobilized the SA on election day and were planning a Putsch, prevented only by the intervention of the Prussian police. See HA, f. 328, "Eine Erklärung des Preußischen Innenministers gegen die NSDAP, 17.3.32"; Albert Grzesinski, Inside Germany,

ministers demanded that the Reich Government take some action against the SA.⁴¹ Their entreaty placed Groener in an exceptionally difficult position. On the one hand, responsible for public security as Reich Minister of the Interior, he could hardly ignore their pleas; on the other hand, his solution to the problem of political extremism, his military sport organization for young men, would be jeopardized by Government action against the SA. Moreover, as Defense Minister his constitutional responsibility to defend the nation was intimately linked to the military sport program, which formed the nucleus of the Army's expansion plan.

Groener attempted to convince the Interior Ministers of Prussia, Baden, Saxony, Württemberg, Hesse and Bavaria, during a meeting on 5 April 1932, that disbanding the SA without providing an alternate outlet for the idealism of its members would solve nothing.⁴² The problem of the SA

New York, 1933, 252; and the Frankfurter Zeitung, Nr. 254-6, 5 April 1932. In a letter of 18 March to Groener, Röhm denied Severing's charges of treason, claiming that the SA had been alerted merely to defend itself against possible marxist uprisings which would be supported by the marxist-dominated Prussian police. Röhm submitted reports from his units concerning their activities on 13 March. See HA, f. 328, letter Röhm to Groener, 18 March 1932. Röhm's original mobilization order to the SA, OSAF I Nr. 673/32, 2 March 1932, which supports his refutation of Severing, can be seen in HA, f. 307.

⁴¹Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 161-165.

⁴²Ibid., Dok. 21, "Niederschrift des Regierungsrats von Lengießer über die Besprechung der Innenminister der Länder, 5.4.32", 445-449. Bracher incorrectly claims that Groener was committed to banning the SA long before 5 April. See Bracher, Auflösung, 483ff.

was serious, he acknowledged, but

Many thousands of men of the best convictions are among them [the SA], who should not be rejected by the Government. These people have to be given the opportunity to side with the Government.... One has to attract the best elements to the Government and meaningfully involve them.⁴³

Prussian Minister of the Interior Severing promptly objected to Groener's implication that the SA men were patriots, citing as evidence to the contrary Hitler's recent order prohibiting SA men from participating in the Border Guard-East, even in the event of a Polish attack.⁴⁴

Apparently Groener, like so many of his countrymen, had proven susceptible to the siren song of nationalism sung by the Nazis and was willing to overlook the more reprehensible elements of their program. At any rate, he lamely attempted to explain the excesses of the SA as the manifestations of impatient and frustrated youngsters. Implying that further violence would accompany a ban of the SA unless its members were provided with some useful, altern-

⁴³Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, "Niederschrift". "Viele Tausend Menschen von bester Gesinnung seien unter ihnen [SA], die nicht vom Staate abgestossen werden sollten. Diesen Leuten müsse die Möglichkeit gegeben werden, daß sie zum Staate kommen.... Man müsse die guten Elementen an den Staat heranziehen und positiv für den Staat einstellen." pp. 448-9. Carsten's unfair criticism of Groener's actions makes no mention of Groener's Wehrsport project plans. See Reichswehr and Politics, 340.

⁴⁴Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, "Niederschrift", 449.

ative activity, the Defense Minister revealed his plans to establish a military sport organization. Participation, he explained, would be opened to members of all the paramilitary organizations, not just the SA.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, he gave no indication that he planned any immediate action, prompting the state interior ministers to state that if the Reich failed to act to curb the SA, they would not be so remiss.⁴⁶

Faced with this ultimatum, he reconsidered his position concerning the SA and overnight changed his mind. On the following day, 6 April, he revealed to General Schleicher his plan to disband the SA following the second Reich presidential election on 10 April.⁴⁷ The Defense

⁴⁵Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, "Niederschrift", 445ff; see also Groener's memorandum "Chronologische Darstellung der Vorkommisse, die zur meinem Rücktritt als Reichswehr- und Reichsinnenminister geführt haben" in BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/145, Bl. 1.

⁴⁶Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, "Niederschrift", 449. In at least one instance this was not an idle threat. At a secret meeting (7 April) in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, Severing promised to disband the SA in Prussia shortly after the 10 April election. The SA knew at once of this meeting. See BA, Nachlaß Krüger/20, Aktenvermerk, 7.4.32. Incredibly, the party leadership received no word of the ban until 11 April. See Goebbels, Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei, Berlin, 1934, 65f. (Hereafter cited as Goebbels, Kaiserhof.)

⁴⁷BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/145, "Chronologische Darstellung", Bl. 1; Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 168ff, states that Severing's publication on 5 April of compromising SA material may have contributed to Schleicher's initial support of Groener's proposed ban. Supposedly Schleicher was upset that Hitler had ordered the SA not to assist the Border Guard in the event of Polish attack. Schleicher's support of

Minister explained his volte face in a letter to Brüning, writing that any unilateral prohibition of the SA by the state governments would be interpreted as an admission of the impotence of the Government. He added that he was convinced that Prussia and Bavaria were preparing to ban the SA following the election. Recommending a pre-emptive action by the Reich against the SA as imperative, he further added that it was intolerable for any government to permit a political party to have its own army.⁴⁸

Groener's action against the SA cannot be dismissed as a haphazard and impromptu reaction to immediate pressure

the SA ban for this reason would be unlikely, as the SA role in the Border Guard was at best minimal, and Hitler's order (reflecting the official NSDAP position) was hardly novel and could have been attributed to campaign rhetoric. It is possible that Groener's attitude took Schleicher by surprise (cf IfZG, Zgs 217, General der Art. a.D. Erich Frhr. von dem Busche-Ippenburg, Bl. 53. Busche was the head of the Army Personnel Office). Schleicher may have even been momentarily convinced by Groener's argument, but after reflection, returned to his original position. See IfZG, Zgs. 248, Holtzendorff, Bl. 30, and Groener-Geyer (Groener's daughter) in BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/ .

⁴⁸BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/152, letter Groener to Brüning, 13 April 1932. In an updated memorandum, written after 13 April, Groener instructed his press aide to make public that "... der einzige Grund für die Auflösung der SA die Gefahr für die Staatsautorität war." Brüning, Memoiren, 538, 542-44, states that Groener was convinced that unless the SA were disbanded, it would prove to be a stumbling block for Brüning's disarmament talks at Geneva. See also Mayer, Skizzen, 137.

generated by the state governments. Groener claimed later that he knew of the political hazards involved in recommending that the Reich Government proscribe the SA.⁴⁹ Although he had in the past warned of the dangers of outlawing political paramilitary organizations without providing an alternate outlet for the energies of their rank and file, he apparently felt that with the organizational difficulties of his own military sport organization resolved, he could offer it as a substitute to the SA.⁵⁰

Generals Schleicher and Hammerstein initially went along with Groener's proposal to ban the SA,⁵¹ but after

⁴⁹BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/112, letter Groener to Dr. Richard Bahr, editor of the Braunschweigerische Landeszeitung, 22 May 1932.

⁵⁰Apparently confident that the military sport organization would be quickly established, Groener released the "Richtlinien für die Ausbildung im Geländesport" during the spring of 1932. See BA, R-43 II/519, letter Vogt to Reichskanzlei, 4 February 1932; and BHStA, I, MK 13832, RMdI to Länder, IA 1414/13.9 II, 24 October 1932. See also Cpt. III, pp. 21. In all likelihood Groener issued the "Richtlinien" immediately prior to the SA ban, hoping that the release of the "Richtlinien" would be interpreted by the military sport groups as a statement of the Government's intention to sponsor a comprehensive military sport program.

⁵¹For the official Reichswehr version see IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Besprechung mit dem Chef des Heeresleitung auf der Führerreise, 21 May 1932, Bl. 183. For contradictory, but more accurate versions, see BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/145, letter Groener to Chief Editor Bücher of Münchner Neuesten Nachrichten, 5 August 1932; and N-46/152, Hermann Pünder (Staatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei, "Neiderschrift über die Besprechung in der Reichskanzlei über den Verbot der SA", 30 May 1932, Bl. 1-3.

reflection they faltered in their support. Schleicher suggested instead forcing Hitler to exercise greater control over the SA by issuing him an ultimatum. In the event he refused to accept it, the onus for disbanding the SA would fall on the Nazi leader rather than on the Reich Government.⁵² Brüning and Groener both rejected this idea, and persuaded Hindenburg to sign the decree outlawing the SA.⁵³

Although the divergence of opinion between Groener and the Army Command did not at first appear to be of great significance,⁵⁴ Schleicher's and Hammerstein's opposition remained firm and the gap between the Defense Minister and his generals could not be bridged. The political Right, hostile to Groener since 1918, successfully utilized the split between him and the Army Command to undermine Hindenburg's confidence in the Defense Minister and to drive him

⁵²BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/145, Groener to Bücher, 5 August 1932, Bl. 1-3; N-46/152, Pünder Niederschrift, Bl. 5-7; Brüning, Memoiren, 537-39.

⁵³BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/145, Groener to Bücher, 5 August 1932, Bl. 5-7; N-46/152, Pünder Niederschrift, Bl. 5-7; Brüning, Memoiren, 540-544.

⁵⁴"Auch habe ich [Groener] nicht den Eindruck gewonnen, als ob Schleicher grundsätzlich seine Meinung [Schleicher's initial approval of the SA Verbot] geändert hätte." BA-MA, Nachlaß Groener, N-46/145, "Chronologische Darstellung", Bl. 4. When first informed on 15 April by Schleicher that there was unrest in the Reichswehr over the SA ban, Groener merely replied that it was the Army's duty to obey its leaders, not to question them. See ibid., Bl. 13.

and Brüning from office by the end of May.⁵⁵ Franz von Papen⁵⁶ and the "presidential" cabinet succeeded Brüning and Papen rescinded the SA ban on 16 June in return for the acquiescence of the Nazis in the Reichstag to the existence of his government.⁵⁷

Ironically, it appears that Schleicher's and Hammerstein's opposition to the SA ban originated from an apparently sincere conviction that the ban threatened Groener's military sport project, a program which promised to help alleviate Germany's youth problem, while simultaneously improving its defense posture. The Army Command's official position regarding the SA ban was that Groener's dual ministerial responsibilities had compromised the political impartiality of the Reichswehr by indirectly involving it, through the person of Groener, in domestic,

⁵⁵Bracher, Auflösung, 490-99; Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 344-48; Craig, Politics, 430, 448-53; Vogel-sang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 173-80, 184-202; Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis, 236-244.

⁵⁶A former career Army officer who had served with Hindenburg in the First World War, Papen left the service in 1919 and became active in Center Party political circles, serving in both the Prussian Lantag and the Reichstag. A relatively unknown politician, his own party abandoned him after his role in Brüning's downfall became public. Sponsored by Schleicher, Papen served as Chancellor from June to December 1932.

⁵⁷Franz von Papen, Die Wahrheit einer Gasse, München, 1952, 161-3; Goebbels, Kaiserhof, 77, 81-84; Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 189-191, 215-221.

partisan politics. According to Hammerstein, the "action [against] the SA was purely domestic and partisan. The impartiality of the armed forces was injured, as the [Defense] Minister has to be impartial."⁵⁸ The Chief of the Army Command admitted that he had supported Groener's assignment to the Ministry of the Interior "... because it already had been clear that the dismantling of the [para]military organizations [was] necessary. [This dismantling was] possible only if there was something else to offer."⁵⁹ That "something else" was Groener's military sport program, the planning for which was unfortunately incomplete at the time of the SA ban. Schleicher and Hammerstein felt that Groener's action against the SA was not only inopportune, but also politically motivated.⁶⁰ It damaged the Army's reputation for political neutrality as well as the plans for a non-

⁵⁸IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Besprechung mit dem Chef der Heeresleitung auf der Fährreise, 21 May 1932, Bl. 183. "Aktion SA war rein innen- und parteipolitisch. Überparteilichkeit der Wehrmacht war verletzt, auch Minister muß überparteilich sein."

⁵⁹Ibid., Bl. 182f. "... weil schon damals klar, daß Abbau der militärischen Organisationen nötig. Nur möglich, wenn etwas anders zu bieten." Carsten ignores this statement, which does not corroborate his thesis, namely that Hammerstein's alleged concern for the impartiality of the Reichswehr was a pretext for opposing Groener, who was blocking the "taming" of the Nazis. See Carsten, Reichswehr and Republic, 340, 343.

⁶⁰BA-MA, Nachlaß Schleicher, N-42/22, letter Schleicher to Brüning, 18 June 1932.

partisan sport organization.⁶¹

Schleicher's critics have questioned his opposition to Groener and the SA ban, maintaining that he followed a devious course, attempting to exploit the Nazi movement for the benefit of the Reichswehr. Groener's campaign against the SA, in this interpretation, became an attack on Schleicher's plans. The General therefore maneuvered Brüning and Groener from office and replaced them with the pliant Franz von Papen.⁶²

In fairness to Schleicher, it should be pointed out that the policy of exploiting the Nazis or any other political movement was not restricted to the Army Command but enjoyed the tacit acquiescence of the Government. Since 1924 the Army had attempted, directly or indirectly, to benefit from the pre-military training conducted by military sport enthusiasts. Groener hoped to continue that policy by exploiting the patriotic sentiments awakened in

⁶¹IfZG, Zgs. 248 (II), Generalmajor a.D. Hans-Henning von Holtzendorff, Bl. 28. Holtzendorff, in 1932, was a Reichswehr civilian employee and economic consultant to Schleicher; 7 February 1949 interview of Dr. Adam von Carlowitz, Schleicher's legal advisor, by Dr. von zur Mühlen in Conze, "Sturz Brünings", 270-271, and Holtzendorff's comments on same, ibid., 272-3. See also Müller, Das wahre Vaterland, 349, Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 175; and Bracher, Auflösung, 495-99.

⁶²Bracher, Auflösung, 276-81; Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 343, 348-50; Craig, Politics, 428, 453-55; Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 185; Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis, 226.

the young by the Nazis.⁶³ Schleicher and Hammerstein turned against Groener after they concluded that his apparently precipitious action against the SA threatened to alienate the political Right and thus destroy Reichswehr plans to recruit supporters for the military sport program from all interested groups, regardless of their political doctrine. Schleicher continued this policy in a more even-handed manner after Groener resigned.⁶⁴ Unaffected by his predecessor's mistrust and hostility to the Socialist Reichsbanner, Schleicher encouraged it to become active in the Border Guard and the proposed military sport program.⁶⁵

⁶³Craig, who did not utilize the documents of the Reichskanzlei, states that Groener, as a soldier and cabinet member, was firmly convinced from the beginning of 1931 of the necessity of eliminating the SA. Craig does not mention that Groener saw "valuable elements" in the SA and hoped to attract these elements. Thus Craig, like Wheeler-Bennett, makes the mistake of interpreting Groener's military sport organization as a sop to the critics of the SA Verbot. See Craig, Politics, 440-442, and Wheeler-Bennett, Nemesis, 229f. According to this interpretation, Schleicher's opposition to the SA Verbot appears to be a policy of opportunism rather than one of continuity.

⁶⁴See, for example, Schleicher's article in Illustrierte Zeitung (partly reproduced in Neue Preußische Kreuzzeitung, 206, 26 July 1932) in which he wrote that "...der Staat zum aktiven Träger des Wehrgedankens werden muß, daß der Staat die Ertüchtigung der Jugend, im vaterländischen Geist und körperlicher Leistungsfähigkeit nicht den Parteien und Verbänden überlassen könne. Der Staat darf aber 'in der heutigen Lage unseres Vaterlandes keine Hand zurückstoßen, die ihm im Dienst dieser Idee geboten wird.'". (emphasis in original)

⁶⁵BA-MA, Nachlaß Bredow, N-97/1, 15 June 1932. Groener's hostility to the Reichsbanner, as well as his inactivity vis-à-vis the growing SA menace, contributed to growing SPD

It would also be unfair to characterize military leaders as either blind to the Weimar Republic's political difficulties or myopic in presenting only military solutions to complex social problems. Although their proffered solution (a youth military fitness program) to counteract the growing alienation of the young had immediate and obvious benefits for the armed forces, Groener and Schleicher attempted to grapple with what they regarded as the gravest problem of the Weimar Republic: its failure to inspire confidence. The Republic, according to the Defense Minister and his assistant, had simply lost the support of a majority of the population, especially the younger generation from which the nation's future leaders would come. Characteristic of many Germans who had reached maturity prior to 1914, the Army leaders were convinced that the Army, the "school of the nation", represented the best means of inculcating civic virtues and for developing citizenship.⁶⁶

dissatisfaction with the Brüning Government. See Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 161. The Socialists had supported Hindenburg's re-election and their toleration in the Reichstag was essential for the survival of the Brüning Cabinet. Apparently angered at Groener's attitude towards the Reichsbanner, they offered no help to Groener when he came under violent attack. Schleicher did not repeat Groener's mistake.

⁶⁶In a letter to Reichswehr Commanders, 22 January 1932, Groener stated that one immutable value during the current crisis was "...die Staatsidee. Die Wehrmacht ist ihr notwendiger und sinnfälligster Ausdruck." BA-MA, Nachlaß Stülpnagel, N-5/23, RWM B Nr. 295, WIII, 22 January 1930. One should not assume the concept of the army as school of the nation to be regressive; Hitler later adopted it for the benefit of the SA. See also Schleicher's radio address of 26 July 1932 in BA-MA, Nachlaß Schleicher, N-42/22.

Prevented by the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty from a return to the Army as the school of the nation, Groener and Schleicher had favored a comprehensive, state-sponsored youth program, of which the military sport organization was to be but one phase, aimed at capturing the loyalty and enthusiasm of the nation's youth.⁶⁷ In a secret letter to Chancellor von Papen, Schleicher wrote that "teaching the coming generation to advocate the ideology of the Government is unquestionably one of the most important pre-requisites of a national recovery and of an autonomous conduct of state."⁶⁸ Admitting that he viewed

⁶⁷IfZG, Zgs. 37, General der Infanterie a.D. Hermann Foertsch, Bl. 30-31. Foertsch, assigned to the Ministeramt in 1933, states that Schleicher was very concerned with a solution to Germany's social problems, and "In diesem Zusammenhang sah er [Schleicher] auch das Problem der Jugend, die er in einer staatlichen Organisation ("Staatsjugend") erfaßt sehen wollte, um sie den reinen Parteieinflüssen zu entziehen; seine Pläne bezüglich der Vermehrung des Heeres auf 300,000 Mann entsprangen daher u.a. auch der Absicht, diese Jugend von der Strassen wegzubringen." Bl. 30-31. See also IfZG, Ed-1/1-2. Liebmann Notizen, Commanders' Conference, undated notes, December 1932, Bl. 186; Zgs. 1709, Maj.a.D. Dr. Wolfgang Huwe, letter of Oberst a.D. Arnim, Bl. 36; and Eugen Ott, Botschafter and Oberstlt.a.D., "Ein Bild des Generals Kurt von Schleicher", Politische Studien, 110, June 1959, 367. Ott, then a section chief of Schleicher's Ministeramt, was Schleicher's choice to be Chief of Staff in a proposed Youth Ministry. For Schleicher's Youth Program, see Kreuzzeitung, Nr. 351, 17 December 1932.

⁶⁸Schleicher to Papen, RWM Nr. 486/32 g.WV, 17 October 1932 (from DZA-Potsdam, RMdI, Bd. 25674, photo copy in Schützle, Reichswehr wider Nation, appendix). "Die Erziehung der heranwachsenden Jugend zu tätiger Staatsgesinnung ist zweifellos eine der wichtigsten Voraussetzungen nationaler Gesundheit und unabhängiger Staatsführung." Bl. 13.

the proposed youth program from a military standpoint, he added that it was a "... guarantee of the national defense by means of healthy, able and committed young men."⁶⁹

In retrospect, the divergence between Groener and the Army Command was one of tactics, not strategy. Both parties were troubled by the impossible task of the armed forces, namely to protect, with insufficient forces, a system of government which a considerable number of Germans, especially younger ones, rejected. A state-sponsored military sport program appeared to be the best solution for augmenting the Army with trained manpower and for instilling among the young confidence in the Republic. The tragedy causing Groener's hounding from office was bureaucratic obstructionism which delayed the military sport program for two invaluable years. Available evidence does not indicate the extent to which Groener was responsible for failing to break through bureaucratic chicanery. Evidence does show that the Defense Minister, exasperated with obstructionism, spiritually and physically exhausted, his health shattered, and under vitriolic personal and political attack, succumbed to the intense pressure of the state governments and agreed to execute a hasty, ill-conceived action against the SA. This action destroyed not

⁶⁹Ibid., Bl. 14. "...Sicherstellung der Landesverteidigung durch eine gesunde, leistungsfähige und einsatzbereite junge Mannschaften."

only his own political future but that of the Republic as well. Convinced that Groener's actions against the SA were premature, Schleicher confronted the choices of either remaining loyal to Groener and perishing politically with him, or of disassociating himself from his former mentor in order to present the vital military sport organization at a more opportune time. He chose the latter course.

C H A P T E R VI

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

THE REICHSKURATORIUM FÜR JUGEND- ERTÜCHTIGUNG

Despite his preoccupation during the crisis caused by the SA ban, General Groener found time to initiate the steps to establish his youth, or military sport project. Because the fiscal year had already begun (1 April to 31 March) and he had not requested an appropriation, he approached Reich Finance Minister Dietrich late in April to see if he could unearth and shepherd funds for the youth sport project. Dietrich appears to have assured Groener in early May that he could help¹ and within a week the Defense Minister submitted to the Reich Council (Reichsrat) a detailed budget for his project. He asked for an appropriation of RM 1.5 million, which would allow him to begin

¹Köhler, Arbeitsdienst, 219. According to Schützle, Reichswehr wider Nation, 187, who quotes from DZA-RMdI, Bd. 25676, Bl. 2f, Groener requested funding authorization in April. His rationale: "Als Folge der ungewöhnlichen großen Arbeitslosigkeit ist eine wachsende Verwahrlosung der Jugend eingetreten. Es sind Maßnahmen erforderlich durch körperliche Ertüchtigung der Jugend dieser für den Staat bedrohlichen Entwicklung Einhalt zu gebieten und dadurch zugleich die Voraussetzung für eine gesunde geistige Einstellung der Jugend zu Volk und Staat zu sichern." Except for a short chapter in Köhler's Arbeitsdienst, there is no substantive treatment of the Reichskuratorium. Köhler's chapter is incomplete; he did not use material from the Bavarian archives or the Bundesmilitärarchiv.

operating the military sport program from July until the end of the fiscal year in March 1933.² A special outlay would then no longer be required, as the expenses for the sport program would be listed in the operating budget of Reich Ministry of the Interior.

The Reich Council did not consider Groener's request until the end of June,³ apparently adopting an attitude of "wait and see", following his resignation and subsequently that of the Brüning Government. The new Papen Regime adopted a similar dilatory attitude toward the military sport project. To a certain extent, this attitude may have reflected Schleicher's policy; as the new Defense Minister he continued the former policy, momentarily abandoned by Groener, of an "above party" approach to the military sport project. He could take little action until the Government concluded a rapprochement with the offended political Right, which was mollified with the lifting of the ban on the SA on the 16th of June. Moreover, the General did not want to repeat Groener's mistake of acting too hastily, namely proscribing the SA before the military sport program

²BHStA, I, MK 13828, letter of Bay. Stellvertretende Bevollmächtigter zum Reichsrat to Bay. Staatsmin. des Äussern, Nr. 613, 12 May 1932; letter Bay. Stellvertretende Bevollmächtigter zum Reichsrat to Bay. Staatsmin. für Kultus und Unterricht, 13 May 1932.

³Deutscher Reichsanziager und Preußischer Staatsanziager, Nr. 150, 29 June 1932.

was ready for operation. When the leaders of several of the state governments asked Papen about the status of the military sport project during a conference on June 12th, he laconically replied "that in general, all of these [para] military organizations will be placed under some sort of control [exercised] by the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Conferences concerning the implementation of this control are not completed, nor has the Reich President been informed of any of the details."⁴

Improvisation and delay subsequently characterized the establishment of the military sport organization. During the summer of 1932, for example, the name of the organization underwent several changes⁵ and the start of the first instructor training course was twice postponed.⁶ In at least

⁴IfZG, Ma 87, Niederschrift über die am Sonntag, 12. Juni [1932] Besprechung. "Im übrigen würden alle diesen Organisationen unter eine Kontrolle des Reichsministeriums des Innern gestellt werden. Die Besprechungen über die Durchführung dieser Kontrolle sind noch nicht abgeschlossen, es ist auch dem Herrn Reichspräsidenten noch kein Vortrag über die Einzelheiten gehalten worden." Bl. 91.

⁵BA-MA, Nachlaß Bredow, N-97/1, "Kurze Orientierung", 6 July; 4 August 1932.

⁶BHStA, I, MF 67303, letter of Wehrkreis VII, 929/32 g./A. to Bay. Staatsmin. des Finanzen/Äusserns/Kultus und Unterricht, 3 August 1932; IfZG, Fa 88/337, JH Stabsleitung Ref. VI 16/31, 14 September 1932; and letter of Stülpnagel to RMdI, 7 November 1932, DZA-Potsdam, RMdI, Bd. 25676 (reproduced in Schützle, Reichswehr wider Nation, appendix, p. 5.).

one instance a regional director was appointed only after the program was to have been functioning.⁷ The makeshift arrangements and failures to meet schedules suggest either that Groener's concept experienced considerable modification⁸ or that planning for the program had not been as advanced as Groener had indicated in January.⁹

The new Reich Minister of the Interior, Baron von Gayl, apparently felt that the money committed to the military sport project could be better spent elsewhere, namely for a volunteer labor service. Schleicher, during a cabinet meeting on June 18th, emphatically spoke against Gayl's suggestion that the Government establish a labor service, stating that although the concept appeared promising, finding the necessary extra funds would, he thought,

⁷BHStA, MK 13828, Hörl, Nr. 1723, to Bay. Staatsmin. für Kultus und Unterricht, 26 September 1932; MK 13847, Bay. Staatsmin. für Kultus und Unterricht, Ref. VII 36161, to Hörl, 28 September 1932.

⁸See the letter of Bavarian Representative to the Reich Council Imhoff, in BHStA, I, MK 13828, to the Bay. Staatsmin. für Kultus und Unterricht, 7 July 1932. Former Staatssekretär Hermann Pünder later wrote that "... im Kabinett habe er [Schleicher] manchmal Krach mit den Minister von Neurath und von Gayl.", indicating that there were difficulties between Gayl and Schleicher. See Pünder's Politik in der Reichskanzlei, 141.

⁹At the Commanding Generals' Conference of 11-12 January 1932, Schleicher stated that "Organisation für Wehrsport ziemlich weit vorgeschritten." IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Bl. 169.

prove difficult. In any event, insisted the Defense Minister, military sport and its budget had to be kept separate from any labor service projects. Gayl had no answer for Schleicher.¹⁰

It is possible, but unlikely, that military planning contributed to the delay in organizing the military sport program. The disarmament conferences at Geneva had not been successful from Germany's viewpoint,¹¹ and the Foreign Office as well as the Defense Ministry may have delayed the implementation of the military sport program pending further progress at Geneva. Army leaders, however, decided on 14 July to begin preparations for implementing their 21 division expansion plan (of which military sport was an integral part) regardless of the outcome at Geneva,¹² and it would hardly appear coincidental that at this time the Reichswehr commenced extensive assistance to General Edwin von Stülpnagel and his staff. On the other hand, military assistance to the military sport program might have been related to the

¹⁰IfZG, Ma 88, 18 June 1932 Reichskabinettsprotokoll, Bl. D790242.

¹¹Brüning, Memoiren, 556-565.

¹²BA-MA, II H/27, CHL TA 562/32 g.K. T2III, 14 July 1932; II H/228, CHL TA 549/32 g.K. T2IIIB, 15 July 1932. This order called for preparation for a 15% personnel expansion, commencing 1 April 1933. See also Rautenberg, Rüstungspolitik, 212-219. The Disarmament Committee adjourned on 23 July without making any changes favorable to Germany. See Heiden, Der Führer, 476.

approval of the program's budget by the Reich Council on 29 June.¹³ In all likelihood, the decision of the General Staff to implement its expansion plan did not precipitate the military sport project, but merely added a sense of urgency that had been absent since Groener's resignation.

It is also possible that the temporary modus vivendi of the Reich Government with Hitler concerning his acquiescence of the Papen Regime may have lulled Government officials into a false sense of security in respect to the threat posed by the National Socialists. In the eight week election campaign (ending 31 July) for the Reichstag, the actions of the SA, especially the carnage at Altona ending in nineteen deaths,¹⁴ gave every indication that the Nazis still constituted a menace and dispelled any illusions concerning Hitler's acceptance of the Papen Government. In light of the excesses committed by the SA, and especially after the spectacular Nazi electoral success on 31 July,¹⁵ Schleicher may

¹³Deutscher Reichsanzeiger und Preussischer Staatsanzeiger, Nr. 150, 29 June 1932.

¹⁴Heiden, Der Führer, 467ff; Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power, 281ff; Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny, rev. ed., New York, 1962, 213ff; and Joachim Fest, Hitler, (trans. R. and C. Winston), New York, 1974, 338ff.

¹⁵The Nazis, now the strongest party in the Reichstag, more than doubled their representation, winning 230 seats as compared to their 1930 showing of 107 seats. See appendix C of Fritz Stern (ed.), The Path to Dictatorship 1918-1933. Essays by Ten German Scholars, (trans. J. Conway), New York, 1966, 206f. A voting pattern analysis is given in Bracher, Auflösung, part II, chapter X.

have decided that the situation demanded an acceleration of the pace at which he had progressed toward setting up the military sport program.

Whatever the reason for the delay, the Defense and Interior Ministries subsequently worked closely with one another during July and August in an effort to organize the military sport program.¹⁶ The Defense Ministry furloughed 50 captains and lieutenants, for three months, to serve as military sport instructors, and the Army Administrative Office (Heeresverwaltungsamt) provided surplus uniforms and equipment to General von Stülpnagel. Army General Staff officers were ordered to work closely with him.¹⁷

Reichswehr interest in the Stülpnagel Organization was clearly expressed in a memorandum entitled "Military Requirements of an Organization for the Physical Improvement of German Youth", which was published as an appendix to the furlough directive. According to the Army, Stülp-

¹⁶On 6 July General Bredow [Schleicher's successor in the Ministeramt] forwarded to Schleicher a report (unfortunately missing from the Nachlaß) outlining Stülpnagel's progress, and on 4 August Schleicher received a draft copy (also missing) of "Satzungen des Reichskuratoriums für Geländesport" requesting his approval. See BA-MA, Nachlaß Bredow, N-97/1, 6 July 1932 and 4 August 1932. See also Keitel, Verbrecher, 50, letter of Keitel to his father, 10 July 1932.

¹⁷BA-MA, RH-8/896, CHL TA 570/32 g.K. T2IIIA, 25 July 1932. The order did not specify the dates of the furlough, which, in all likelihood, began about 1 October, the scheduled course commencement date.

nagel's ultimate goal was the "physical improvement and pre-military training of all male Germans between the ages of 6 and 21."¹⁸ As a more practical and immediate objective, the Army wanted him to provide terrain sport training for "... the reserve for the Border Guard, the Army, and the Navy, [and for youth] between the ages of 16 and 21."¹⁹ In encouraging General von Stülpnagel to train a reserve, the General Staff stated that his training courses should encompass "infantry basic (recruit) training without arms..."²⁰ the exact content of which was detailed in the pamphlet "Guidelines of the Reich Ministry of the Interior for Training in Terrain Sport."²¹

By early September work on the military sport organi-

¹⁸Ibid., appendix "Militärische Forderungen an eine Organisation zur Ertüchtigung der deutschen Jugend". § 1. "Endziel: Körperliche Ertüchtigung und vormilitärische Ausbildung der gesamten männlichen deutschen Jugend im Alter von 6.-21. Jahren" (emphasis in original).

¹⁹Ibid., "b. Ziel für die nächste Zeit: Geländesportlich Vorbildung des Ersatzes für Grenzschutz, Heer und Marine, im Alter von 16.-21. Jahren". (emphasis in original).

²⁰BA-MA, RH-8/896, CHL TA 570/32 g.K. T2IIIA, 25 July 1932. "Ausbildungsziel: Infanteristische Grund (Rekruten Ausbildung ohne Waffen..." (emphasis in original).

²¹Ibid., This booklet, prepared by the Reich Ministry of the Interior, can be seen in BHStA, I, MK 13828. This booklet was drawn up in consultation with General Vogt of the GVA and the Defense Ministry. See BA, R-43 II/519, Vogt to Reichskanzlei, 4 February 1932; and IfZG, Ed-67/19, enclosure to v. Witzleben letter to Siemens' Director v. Winterfeldt, 6 January 1933.

zation had progressed sufficiently²² to allow the Government to announce publicly the existence of Stülpnagel's Organization. The Reich Cabinet, meeting on 12 September, approved a presidential decree which established a "Reich Board of Trustees for Youth Physical Fitness Improvement (Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung)". After affirming the importance of physical fitness for national defense, the Cabinet:

Upon request of the Reich Minister of the Interior, resolves ... that all measures in this area [youth fitness] are to be effected in close cooperation between the Defense Minister and the Minister of the Interior. The Reich Minister of the Interior is specifically required to secure the agreement of the Defense Minister prior to approving changes in the articles of the Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung and the Association for the Promotion of Terrain Sport. In the event of a change in the position of the Executive Presidency of the Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung, the Reich Minister of the Interior, in agreement with the Defense Minister, will nominate [a replacement] to the Reich President.²³

²²For examples of Reich-Länder cooperation, see BHStA, I, MF 67303, Wehrkreis VII, b Nr. 929/32 2/A, vertraulich, to Bay. Staatsmin. des Finanzen, 3 August 1932; correspondence between the Bavarian Ministry of Finance and Augsburg (Lechfeld) and Würzburg (Hammelberg) of 9 August, 12 August, and 26 September; see also MK 13828, Hörl to Ministerialrat Jahn, 13 August, and the correspondence between Hörl and the Bay. Staatsmin. für Kultus und Unterricht in MK 13847.

²³IfZG, Ma-88, Reichskabinettsprotokoll, 12 September 1932, "Punkt 5; Außerhalb der Tagesordnung: Berufung eines Reichskuratoriums für Jugendertüchtigung," Bl. D790674f. "Auf Antrag des Herrn Reichsministers des Innern beschließt ... , daß alle Maßnahmen auf diesem Gebiete im engen Einver-

Neither the dominant role of the Defense Ministry nor the military purpose of the Reichskuratorium appeared in Hindenburg's public decree of 13 September which formally established the Reichskuratorium. Hindenburg instead carefully stressed the supervisory function of the Reichskuratorium; it merely reflected, he said, the desire of the Reich Government to rationalize the numerous youth physical fitness programs and to direct a unified and concerted effort by all organizations interested in the physical welfare of German youth. The Reich Minister of the Interior, he stated, would serve as chairman of the Reichskuratorium, assisted by General (Ret.) Edwin von Stülpnagel, who had the title of Executive President. In concluding the decree, Hindenburg directed Gayl to appoint to the board of the Reichskuratorium persons both qualified and experienced in youth affairs.²⁴

nehmen zwischen dem Reichminister des Innern und dem Reichswehrminister zu treffen sind. Insbesondere ist der Reichsminister des Innern verpflichtet, sich der Zustimmung des Reichswehrminister zu versichern, ehe an den Satzungen des Reichskuratoriums für Jugendertüchtigung und des Vereins zur Förderung des Geländesports eine Änderung vorgenommen wird. Bei einem etwaigen Wechsel in der Stelle des geschäftsführenden Präsidenten des Reichskuratoriums für Jugendertüchtigung wird der Reichsminister des Innern dem Herrn Reichspräsidenten einen Vorschlag nur mit Zustimmung des Reichswehrministers machen." Bl. D790674f. Throughout the remainder of this dissertation, Reichskuratorium will be employed in lieu of the complete title.

²⁴ BA, R-43 II/519; BHStA, I, MK 13828, letter of Reichpräsident von Hindenburg to RMdI, IA 1414/13.9, Berlin, 13 September 1932.

Composed of a board of thirty-three members,²⁵ the Reichskuratorium had four functions: (1) to train and certify military sport instructors, (2) to develop and encourage a cooperative relationship among all military sport organizations, (3) to supervise the operations of the Government-sponsored terrain sport schools [in reality military sport schools], and (4) to recommend and supervise the awarding of Government subsidies to groups active in the military sport movement.²⁶ In an apparent effort to insure close ties at all levels between the military sport organizations and the Reichskuratorium, Stülpnagel established twelve regional offices, which were also to act as contact points between the civilian military sport organizations and the Government military sport schools.²⁷ Regional office

²⁵Bayerische Staatszeitung, Nr. 249, 26 October 1932. Of the 33 member board, three members were representatives of the Reich government; 11 were Länder representatives; 13 represented the military sport groups; and the remaining 6 had no affiliation.

²⁶Stülpnagel outlined the functions of his organization in a letter apparently sent in early September to all military sport organizations. The SA response, with excerpts from Stülpnagel's letter, has survived. See BA, NS-23/124, OSAF Qu Nr. 2509/32, 16 September 1932.

²⁷Regional offices were located in the following cities: Königsberg, Stettin, Berlin, Breslau, Dresden, Madgeburg, Stuttgart, Kassel, Münster, Kiel, Hannover, and München. See letter of Stülpnagel to RMdI, 7 November 1932 (from DZA-Potsdam, Bd. 25676, reproduced in Shützle, Reichswehr wider Nation, appendix, p. 5.).

directors chosen by Stülpnagel, were, for the most part, retired military officers.²⁸

In practice, the Reichskuratorium functioned mainly as a reviewing agency for authorizing funds for Stülpnagel's military sport schools.²⁹ It also determined which military sport groups were eligible for Government subvention and for participation in the Stülpnagel program, although the criteria for selection have apparently not survived.³⁰ At its first meeting, on 3 October 1932, the Reichskuratorium certified eighteen military sport organizations as eligible to participate,³¹ and decided that rather than sending its

²⁸ BA-MA, Nachlaß Bredow, N-97/2, "Kurze Orientierung", 17 September 1932.

²⁹ Letter of Stülpnagel to RMdI, 7 November 1932 (from DZA-Potsdam, Bd. 25676, reproduced in Schützle, Reichswehr wider Nation, appendix, p. 5.); and BHStA, I, MF 67303, Nr. 54479/32, contract between Bavaria and the Verein zur Förderung des Geländesports, 26 October 1932. For an example of Reichskuratorium subvention of a Wehrsport group (SA), see BA, Nachlaß Krüger/22, letters Grupperführer z.b.V. IVa to OSAF, 1 March 1933; 8 April 1933; and 12 June 1933. The Reichskuratorium awarded the SA RM 157,500 from January to June 1933.

³⁰ It is probable that the criteria for eligibility to participate in the Border Guard were used for the Reichskuratorium. Border Guard eligibility was defined as "... jeder waffenfähiger Deutsche...soweit er wehrwillig und staatsbejahend eingestellt ist." BA-MA, II H/292, CHL TA 816/32 g.K. T2IIIA/T4III, 1 December 1932.

³¹ BHStA, I, MK 13832, RMdI to Landesregierungen, IA 1414/8.10, Berlin, 22 October 1932. The following Wehrsportverbände were allowed to participate: Stahlhelm (including Jungsta); SA and HJ; Reichsbanner, Kyffhäuser and Kyffhäuserjugend; Reichsjunglandbund; DHV (Deutsch Nationale Handlungsgehilfenverband); Jungdeutscherorden; Jungsturm; DOB

own instructors to these groups to teach military sport, it would be easier for Stülpnagel's staff to train and certify personnel selected by the groups who would then conduct their own programs.³² At their second meeting,³³ on 27 October, Reichskuratorium members inspected a proposed military sport school site near Berlin and admitted several more military sport organizations to the Reichskuratorium.³⁴

(Deutscheroffiziersbund); Reichsausschuß für Leibeserziehungen (Deutsche Turnerschaft); AWA (Akademisch-Wissenschaftliches Arbeitsamt); Institut für Leibesübungen an den deutschen Hochschulen; GVA; Freischar junger Nation; Bismarckjugend; Reichsverband vaterländischer Arbeiter; Reichskuratorium für Reit- und Fahrschulen; and the Kleinkaliberschützenverbände.

³² BHStA, I, MK 13828, "Niederschrift" of a conference on Geländesport, VII/35975, 4 October 1932. Stülpnagel was already committed to this decision since early September. See BA, NS-23/124, OSAF Qu Nr. 2509/32, 16 September 1932.

³³ According to Köhler, Arbeitsdienst, 221, the Reichskuratorium planned to meet twice annually, the first meeting taking place on 27 October 1932. A letter of the RMdI to the Landesregierungen of 22 October (BHStA, I, MK 13832, RMdI to Landesregierungen, IA 1414/8.10, 22 October 1932) states that the first Reichskuratorium meeting was held 3 October.

³⁴ BHStA, I, MK 13832, RMdI to Landesregierungen, IA 1414/24.10, 7 November 1932. Admitted were the: Eichenkreuz; Jugendbund im Gewerkschaftsbund der Angestellten (GDA); Wehrwolf; and Deutsche Jugendkraft. The Bayernwacht and Pfalz-wacht were admitted in December. See BA, R-43 II/519, RMdI to Ministerialrat von Lex, MdR, 1414a/12.12, 24 December 1932. The Communist Party and its affiliated organizations were banned from the Reichskuratorium. See also Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 97-100.

It is not certain if Interior Minister Gayl ever appointed the full complement of thirty-three members to the board of the Reichskuratorium. At the end of October 1932, he had named only ten: Defense Minister (Ret.) Geßler, State Secretary (Ret.) Dr. Theodor Leewald,³⁵ former Reich Minister for Food and Agriculture Dr. Heinrich Haslinde,³⁶ State Minister (Ret.) Dr. Alexander Dominicus,³⁷ Dr. Carl Diem,³⁸ the famous surgeon Dr. Ferdinand Sauerbruch,³⁹ Reich Commissioner for Voluntary Labor Service Dr. Fried-

³⁵ 1860-1947. Lewald, Staatssekretär in the Reich Interior Ministry, 1919-21, was a founder of the Hochschule für Leibesübungen in 1920. Director of the Deutscher Reichsausschuß für Leibesübungen (the successor to the pre-war German Olympic Committee) from 1919-1933, he maintained close ties with the Reichswehr and the Volkssport movement. He served on the International Olympic Committee from 1924 to 1939, and was its director after 1933. He was also the director of the German Olympic Committee.

³⁶ 1881-?. Regierungspräsident in Münster from 1922 to 1927, Haslinde was Reichminister für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft during 1926. He was associated with the Center Party.

³⁷ 1873-1945. Mayor of Berlin-Schöneburg from 1911 to 1920, he served as Prussian Minister of the Interior in 1921. From 1921 to 1933 he was a board member of the Deutscher Reichsausschuß für Leibesübungen and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Deutsche Turnerschaft, and was director of that organization from 1929 to 1933.

³⁸ 1882-1962. Diem was General Secretary of the Deutscher Reichsausschuß für Leibesübungen, 1913-1933, and General Secretary of the International Olympic Committee, 1936-39.

³⁹ 1875-1951. The most famous surgeon of his time in Germany, he was the Ordinarius of the Berlin Charité Hospital and medical school. He also had a distinguished career in both world wars as a military surgeon.

rich Syrup,⁴⁰ President of the Catholic Young Mens' League Father Ludwig Wolker,⁴¹ Captain (Ret.) Elhard von Morozowicz⁴² of the Stahlhelm, and Lieutenant (Ret.) Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger⁴³ of the SA. The first seven members were appointed by Gayl as representatives of the Reich; the

⁴⁰ 1881-1945. From 1920 to 1927, Syrup was President of the Reichsarbeitsverwaltung, and in 1927 became President of the Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung. He served as Reichskommissar für den Freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst, 1932-1933, and as Reichsarbeitsminister in the Schleicher Cabinet.

⁴¹ 1887-?. Generalpräses of the Katholischen Jungmännerverband, Wolker was also a director of the Reichsaus-schuß des deutschen Jugendverbände (along with General Vogt).

⁴² 1893-1934. A landowner from Brandenburg, he served as leader of the Stahlhelm region Brandenburg and as Reichsführer des Jungstahlhelms. Appointed to the OSAF in 1933, he was killed the following February in an auto accident.

⁴³ 1894-1945. A graduate of Lichterfelde Cadet school and son of a regimental commander, Krüger was commissioned in the Prussian army in 1914. He served all four years of the war on the front, was wounded three times, and was highly decorated. Following the war and service in several Freikorps (Iron Torpedoboat Flotilla and the Freikorps Lützow), he resigned in March 1920. From 1924 to 1928 he was the Director and Vorstandsmitglieder of the Berlin Müllabfuhr AG. He joined the NSDAP in 1929 (Nr. 171,199) and the SS in 1931 (Nr. 6123). Transferring to the SA in April 1931, he remained in it as Gruppenführer-Ost, Gruppenführer z.b.V., and Chef des Ausbildungswesens der SA, until 1934, when he became the head of the Organisation Krüger (Chef AW). In June 1935, following the disbanding of the Chef AW, Krüger rejoined the SS as Obergruppenführer, serving as HSSPF-Ost (Poland) from 1939 to 1943. He became commander of the 6th SS Gebirgsdivision in 1944 and then commander of the Vth SS Mountain Army Corps. He is reported to have died in 1945, either in action or by his own hand.

latter three represented military sport organizations.⁴⁴

The Reich Government attempted to insure the political impartiality of the Reichskuratorium, as an examination of the list of approved organizations indicates. It also attempted to encourage the trade unions, with their vast membership, to participate, an attempt not altogether unsuccessful.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the infrequency of the Reichskuratorium meetings and the inter-locking directorships held by Stülpnagel tended to lessen the influence of the Reichskuratorium.

Stülpnagel, in addition to his duties as executive president of the Reichskuratorium, directed the "Association for the Promotion of Terrain Sport", an organization which Hindenburg founded along with the Reichskuratorium.⁴⁶ Organized as a legal entity (a corporation) distinct from the Reich Ministry of the Interior in order to free it from

⁴⁴ Bayerische Staatszeitung, Nr. 248, 26 October 1932.

⁴⁵ On 16 January 1933, the Reichskuratorium invited the Allgemeiner Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbund to participate, an offer which was accepted, but which the Nazi takeover rendered obsolete. See Schützle, Reichswehr wider Nation, 203.

⁴⁶ BHStA, I, MK 13832, letter RMdI to Landesregierungen, 1414/13.9, Berlin, 15 September 1932. "Stülpnagel Organization" is employed for the sake of simplicity rather than the more cumbersome full title. Many scholars (e.g., Vogelsang, Köhler, Bracher, Carsten) have either been unaware of, or have ignored the difference between the Reichskuratorium and the Stülpnagel Organization. While in practice the difference may have been blurred, the two organizations were quite separate in theory.

administrative details, the purpose of the Terrain Sport Association was to organize and operate the sixteen military (terrain) sport schools sponsored by the Reichskuratorium.⁴⁷

The Terrain Sport Association, like the Reichskuratorium, had a board of directors. The board, chaired by General von Stülpnagel, was composed of Senior Counselors Max Adam⁴⁸ and Hans Erbe,⁴⁹ Counselor (Ret.) Richard Jahn,⁵⁰ Capt. (Ret.) Hans-Henning von Holtzendorff,⁵¹ and Majors

⁴⁷ Ibid., and letter of RMdI to Landesregierungen, IA 1414/17.1 III, 3 February 1933. The sixteen schools were located in: Arys, Lokstedter Lager, Burg Stargard, Wünsdorf, Döberitz, Neuhammer, Altengrabow, Königsbruck, Ohrdruf, Gänseweg-Münsingen, Oershausen, Scheuen, Munsterlager, Lechfeld, Hammelburg, and Kiel-Friedrichsort. See Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 286-87. Stülpnagel originally planned for 18 schools. Compare the above list to OSAF Qu Nr. 1509/32, 16 September 1932 in BA, NS-23/124.

⁴⁸ Oberregierungsrat in the Reich Ministry of the Interior (?).

⁴⁹ Oberegierungsrat in the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Erbe was responsible for supervising the activities of the Reichskuratorium.

⁵⁰ Regierungsrat (Ret.) Jahn was the administrative chief (Verwaltungschef) of the Reichskuratorium and later assumed the same position in the Chef des Ausbildungswesens der SA.

⁵¹ Holtzendorff served under Schleicher and Groener during the First World War, but left the Army as a captain to administer family estates. In 1928 Schleicher hired him as an economic advisor to the Reichswehrminister. Holtzendorff re-entered the Army in 1933 and was a Brigadier General at the end of the Second World War.

(Ret.) Hans Walter von Olberg⁵² and Herbert Scultetus.⁵³ Olberg and Scultetus were also executive vice-presidents of the Terrain Sport Association.⁵⁴ The majority of the Association's instructor and staff personnel were former officers and non-commissioned officers selected by Stülpnagel.⁵⁵

In a letter sent in early September to all military sport organizations, Stülpnagel outlined the goals and plans of his new organization. Its function, he explained, was to train and certify military instructors from the participating military sport organizations. Although the organizations could nominate whomever they wished to attend

⁵² A former AWA instructor at Wünsdorf, with close ties to the GVA (Vogt), Olberg was the Press Chief in the Stahlhelm Bundesleitung and operated the Wehrsport program of the Stahlhelm Student Group, Langemarck.

⁵³ Little is known of the background of this man. He later apparently served in some capacity as a liaison officer between the Army General Staff (T-4, Training) and the Chef des Ausbildungswesens der SA.

⁵⁴ BHStA, I, MK 13832, letter RMdI to Landesregierungen, IA 1414/13.9 and 1414/17.1 III, 15 September 1932 and 3 February, respectively.

⁵⁵ BHStA, I, MK 13832, Minutes of a Conference on Terrain Sport Schools, Kultusministerium, VII 35975, 4 October 1932; BA, R-36/2013, Deutscher Gemeindetag, "Vermerk", 27 February 1933; Absolon, Wehrmacht im Dritten Reich, I, 98f., states that according to CHL PA 1017/34, PI (W), 29 January 1934, service with the Reichskuratorium was credited as military service for re-activated officers.

the instructor training, he noted that enrollment in the Association's schools would be computed on a percentage basis: the number of students from any military sport organization would be determined from the number of members in that organization in comparison to the total of all military sport participants in the region in which the organization was located.⁵⁶ The courses, explained Stülpnagel, would last three weeks, commencing 1 November.⁵⁷ The regional Reichskuratorium branch office would make the actual student allocations from lists submitted by local military sport organizations, and, he added, would arrange transportation to and from the schools and assume all expenses. All students, he insisted, would be screened prior to admission to insure that they had some prior sport and marksmanship training. In closing his letter, the General enunciated his policy that political activity within the camps and schools of the Association would not be tolerated and would result in the immediate dismissal of the perpetrator.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ BA, NS-23/124, OSAF Qu Nr. 2509/32, 16 September 1932, "Merkblatt".

⁵⁷ IfZG, Fa 88/337, HJ Stabsleitung, Ref VI 16/31, 14 September 1932.

⁵⁸ BA, NS-23/124, OSAF Qu Nr. 2509/32, 16 September 1932, "Merkblatt".

Defense Ministry and Army Command planning for implementing the 21 division expansion program progressed along with the organization of the Reichskuratorium. The Disarmament Conferences at Geneva had been fruitless from the perspective of Germany, and as early as September 1932, the Reich Government began to consider going ahead with its expansion plan on 1 April 1933 regardless of the outcome of the talks at Geneva.⁵⁹ On 7 November Defense Minister von Schleicher ordered the General Staff to issue the orders authorizing the Army to increase its personnel strength by 14%. The Army, he wrote, would enlist the extra recruits the following April in anticipation of the later expansion to 21 divisions.⁶⁰

The General Staff at once took advantage of the Reichskuratorium training program: recruits for the expanded Reichswehr were expected, insofar as possible, to have completed a Reichskuratorium pre-military training course or a similar course conducted by Reichskuratorium certified instructors.⁶¹ The same requirement was extended, three weeks

⁵⁹ BA-MA, Nachlaß Bredow, N-97/1, letter Bredow to Freiherr von Richtofen, 12 September 1932. Germany's theoretical right to re-arm was recognized on 10 December, 1932. See Bracher, Auflösung, 631.

⁶⁰ BA-MA, II H/139, CHL TA 737/32, g.K.T2IIIB, 7 November 1932.

⁶¹ Ibid.

later, to prospective Border Guard recruits.⁶² The Reich Government underscored the importance of the Reichskuratorium contribution to the defense effort by approving Minister Gayl's request⁶³ that Reich officials be given furloughs to attend the Terrain Sport Association courses.⁶⁴

Although the Reich Government enthusiastically endorsed Stülpnagel's courses, the reaction to the Reichskuratorium by the military sport organizations and their political sponsors varied. The radical political parties predictably condemned the Reichskuratorium in theory but not in practice, while the conservative organizations and parties supported it. A surprising acceptance came from the Socialists, although their enthusiasm soon waned as their traditional pacifism and hostility toward the Reichswehr re-appeared.

Stahlhelm leaders, strongly committed to an extensive military sport program of their own,⁶⁵ had initially been

⁶² Ibid., II H/292, CHL TA 816/32, g.K. T2IIIA/T4 III, 1 December 1932.

⁶³ BA, R-43 II/519, letter RMdI IA 1414/15.10, to Staatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei, 12 November 1932 (Rk. Nr. 11227).

⁶⁴ Heeresverordnungsblatt, 1933, para. 55, 15 February 1933.

⁶⁵ Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 229, 233f. For the expanded Stahlhelm Wehrsport program, see Chapter III, pp. 64ff, and BA, R-43 II/828, Rk. 9047, Notizen für eine Unterredung mit dem Herrn Reichswehrminister, 26 September 1932.

skeptical of Papen and Schleicher and had not expressed any feelings toward either the Reichskuratorium or the Terrain Sport Association during the genesis of these organizations. By the fall of 1932, however, Seldte and Duesterberg had reversed their attitude toward Papen, realizing that he better represented their interests than Schleicher, with whom their relations had been strained.⁶⁶ Following the Reichstag vote of no-confidence of 12 September 1932 in his Government, Papen attempted to gain the support of the Stahlhelm and the Nationalist Party (DNVP) by offering Seldte a vice-chancellorship as well as control of the Reichskuratorium and the Voluntary Labor Service.⁶⁷ Before anything concrete developed from this offer, Schleicher became Chancellor (6 December 1932) and re-asserted the Army's long standing policy of neutrality vis-à-vis the military sport organizations, a neutrality which excluded the Stahlhelm or any organization from assuming control of the Reichskuratorium.

In spite of their mistrust of Schleicher, Seldte and Duesterberg did not discourage Stahlhelm members from attending the Stülpnagel schools. In practice the Stahlhelm may

⁶⁶Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 233-37.

⁶⁷Ibid., 238. Seldte's interest in gaining control of the Reichskuratorium and the Voluntary Labor Service may have originated from Papen's overtures, but at any rate, the interest became an *idée fixée*. See Reichsminister Hugenberg's letter to Seldte, 17 April 1933, in BA, R-43 II/143, "Zuständigkeitsfragen".

have received more than its fair share of enrollment allocations. Total attendance for the first Terrain Sport Association three week instructor course (7-28 November) was 2150 men, of whom 549 or 26% were from the Stahlhelm.⁶⁸ This appears to be a higher percentage than that to which the Stahlhelm was entitled; its relative strength in the military sport movement was only 20%. It is possible that the extra Stahlhelm participants were enrolled to fill the quota of the Reichsbanner, which sent students to Stülpnagel's schools only in Bavaria.⁶⁹

Although the National Socialists did not expressly condemn the Reichskuratorium, their reception was distinctly cold:

An invention of the Papen Regime, to be viewed with suspicion.... How can anyone conceive of bringing together for a common task Nazi and let us say Marxist organiza-

⁶⁸ The figures are from Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 286, who lists enrollment by group. The document from which Vogelsang quotes, Anlage 4 of a letter of Stülpnagel to the RMdI, 7 November 1932, is reproduced in the appendix of Schützle, Reichswehr wider Nation.

⁶⁹ Using the estimates of 1.5 million military sport participants (Chapter III/64) and 314,000 Wehrstahlhelm members (Chapter III/49), the Stahlhelm percentage of the movement is 20. It is possible that the 6% variance can also be explained by the defection of many Wehrstahlhelm members to the Nazis after January 1933, as the Stahlhelm estimate dates from July 1933. For Reichsbanner participation in the two Stülpnagel schools in Bavaria, see BHStA, I, MK 13828, Abt. "Volksertüchtigung" der bay. Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Leibesübungen, Nr. 275G., 31 October 1932.

tions, as Government circles are thinking of doing, only Messers. Paper and Gayl know.⁷⁰

Brushing aside the reservations of the Party leaders, the ever-practical Röhm promptly informed his SA commanders that the "request of the [Reichskuratorium] branch offices regarding [SA] attendance at the instructor training courses would be met as closely as possible."⁷¹ After acknowledging the unpalatable conditions (e.g., a ban on all political activity by students during the training courses, communal camp arrangements mixing Nazis with Marxists) attendant to participation, he ordered complete compliance with Stülpnagel's regulations, adding that the benefits arising from the training exceeded any momentary disadvantages.⁷²

The SA leaders appear to have obeyed Röhm's orders requiring maximum SA participation and strict adherence to

⁷⁰A front page article in the Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 260 (Reichsausgabe), 16 September 1932, denounced the Reichskuratorium as "eine Neugründung der Regierung Papen, gegen die Mißtrauen geboten ist.... Wie man es sich allerdings in den Kreisen der Regierung vorstellt, etwa marxistische und nationalsozialistische Organisation 'zu gemeinsamer Arbeit zusammenzufassen' bleibt das Geheimnis der Herren Papen und Gayl."

⁷¹BA, NS-23/124, OSAF Qu Nr. 2509/32, 16 September 1932. "Der Aufforderung der Zweigstellen zwecks Teilnahme an den Lehrkursen muß in möglichst hohen Zahl nachgekommen werden." (emphasis in original)

⁷²Ibid.

Reichskuratorium regulations.⁷³ SA attendance at the first instructor training course was 714 of 2150 students, or 33%, the largest of any group and consistent with the strength of the SA in relation to the military sport movement.⁷⁴ In comparison to the Stahlhelm and the Reichsbanner, the SA had an immense advantage vis-à-vis the Stülpnagel attendance formula: most SA men were under the maximum age of 26 set by Stülpnagel, while the bulk of the men in the Stahlhelm and the Reichsbanner exceeded that age.

In appointing Gruppenführer z.b.V. (zur besonderen Verwendung) Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger as SA Liaison Officer

⁷³The SA, for example, asked that its members be permitted to wear their uniforms while in transit to and from Reichskuratorium courses as well as in the students' free time. The Reichskuratorium replied that it would permit, though discourage, the wearing of paramilitary group uniforms for students in transit, but would not allow students to wear paramilitary uniforms, except in extraordinary circumstances, during leisure time. BHStA, I, MK 13832, Reichskuratorium to all branch offices, 14 February 1933. The Bavarian Government promptly protested the wearing of any uniforms. See ibid., letter Bay. Staatsmin. für Kultus und Unterricht, Nr. VII 6847 ZA, to RMdI, 18 February 1933.

⁷⁴Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 286. Röhm ordered his SA commanders to include SS and older HJ members in their strength calculations. See BA-NS-23/124, OSAF Qu Nr. 2509/32, 16 September 1932. As of September 1932, SA strength was 446,442, with 26,998 Motor-SA, 24,405 SS, and 24,859 SA recruits, a total of 522,304. See ibid., OSAF I, 14 November 1932. Carsten, unaware of Stülpnagel's percentage enrollment formula, attributes incorrectly the large SA participation to a favorable Reichswehr attitude. See his Reichswehr and Politics, 354f.

to the Reichskuratorium and the Terrain Sport Association, Röhm, in effect, placed him in charge of all SA relations with the military sport program sponsored by the Government, although the SA Chief of Staff reserved "basic policy" decisions for himself.⁷⁵ Krüger's special task was to establish personal contact with the leaders and staff of the Reichskuratorium branch offices as well as the Terrain Sport Association. Röhm further authorized Krüger to contact directly in behalf of the SA the appropriate Government agency on questions concerning the Reichskuratorium, the Border Guard, and the Volunteer Labor Service.⁷⁶

The Terrain Sport Association eclipsed General Vogt's GVA (Geländesport-Verbände-Arbeitsebene) and, in effect, rendered it superfluous. Stülpnagel's attendance formula proved disastrous for the GVA. Several of the groups which had belonged to the GVA withdrew,⁷⁷ apparently

⁷⁵ BA, NS-23/124, OSAF Qu Nr. 2509/32, 16 September 1932; *ibid.*, Sam. Sch/409, OSAF Qu Nr. 3388/32, 20 November 1932, "Dienstsanweisung für den Gruppenstab z.b.V. in Berlin"; BDC, Personalakt Krüger, OSAF II Nr. 2791/32, Röhm to RmdI, 4 October 1932.

⁷⁶ BA, Sam Sch/409, OSAF Qu Nr. 3388/32, 20 November 1932, "Dienstsanweisung".

⁷⁷ These were the Kyffhäuserbund, Junglandbund, Reichsverband vaterländischen Arbeiter, DHV, and the Freischar Junger Nation. Compare this list to Chapter III/17. It appears that at one time or another, most major Wehrsport groups belonged to the GVA. For Stahlhelm involvement in the Bund Jungdeutschland (the predecessor to the GVA) see IfZG, Ed-67/19, "Satzungen des Bund Jungdeutschland e.V." For Reichsbanner-GVA cooperation, see BA, R-43 II/519, letter Vogt to

convinced that their enrollment quota in Stülpnagel's schools would be greater if they applied individually. Although itself admitted to the Reichskuratorium, Vogt's organization was apparently a fraction of its former size, and he quickly concluded an agreement with Stülpnagel which allowed him to concentrate his energies on training youngsters under 26 years of age, i.e., those too young to qualify for the Reichskuratorium. Following this pact, Vogt disbanded the GVA and founded, on the 24th of November, the German Youth Service (Deutscher Jugenddienst), which in 1933 was absorbed into the Hitler Youth.⁷⁸

Initially the Reichskuratorium subsidies and the free training provided by the schools of the Terrain Sport Association appeared attractive to the Reichsbanner, which also conducted its own extensive military sport program. Reichsbanner Commander Karl Höltermann persuaded SPD leaders that participation in the Reichskuratorium allowed Socialists, for the first time, a chance to work indirectly with the Army, an opportunity which he categorized as having great potential.⁷⁹ The Reichsbanner joined the Reichskura-

Brüning, 4 February 1932. A Hitler Youth circular of August 1932 indicates that the SA and the HJ, in all likelihood using the cover of the "Deutscher Volkssportverein" (Chapter IV/94.) had once belonged to the GVA. See IfZG, Fa 88/337, HJ Stabsleitung Ref. VI, 1/32, 26 August 1932, Bl. 168.

⁷⁸ IfZG, Ed-67/19, letter Witzleben to Winterfeldt, 6 January 1933, Bl. 138.

⁷⁹ Rohe, Reichsbanner, 449ff.

torium in October and sent its members, apparently only in Bavaria, to at least the first and second instructor training courses.⁸⁰ By December, however, official Reichsbanner-Reichskuratorium cooperation had ended. Socialist Party leaders, convinced that the Reichskuratorium was the first step toward the re-introduction of conscription, ordered all Reichsbanner participation in the Reichskuratorium and Terrain Sport Association ended.⁸¹ It is not clear if Höltermann, who had tearfully argued in favor of continuing ties with the Reichskuratorium, actually ordered a complete halt to all Reichsbanner-Reichskuratorium activity.⁸² In

⁸⁰ BHStA, I, MK 13832, RMdI to Landesregierungen, IA 1414/8.10, 22 October 1932; letter Hörl, Abt. Volkserziehung, Nr. 275G and 591G, to Bay. Staatsmin. für Kultus und Unterricht, 31 October and 8 December 1932.

⁸¹ Rohe, Reichsbanner, 449ff; Absolon, Wehrmacht im Dritten Reich, I, 97ff; Vorwärts, Jahrgang 49, Nr. 435, 15 September 1932; Nr. 515, 1 November 1932; and Nr. 578, 8 December 1932.

⁸² Reichsbanner members did participate at least in Bavaria in the second course (conducted during December), although the SPD directive to cease participation may have been issued too late to affect this course. See BHStA, I, MK 13832, letters Hörl to Bay. Staatsmin. für Kultus und Unterricht, Nrs. 591G and 743G (BHStA, I, MK 13828), 8 and 23 December, respectively. A letter from the Reichskuratorium of 16 February 1933 states that for political reasons the Reichsbanner may not be allowed to participate in the fourth course (26 February-18 March 1933), which implies that the Reichsbanner participated in the third course (22 January-11 February 1933). See ibid., Reichskuratorium to Zweigstellen, 16 February 1933. This letter is signed by Major Model, an officer then assigned to the Training Section (T-4) of the General Staff (Rangliste, 1932, p.3.). According to fellow Truppenamt officer and later General der Waffen-SS Felix Steiner, Model was responsible for military

any event, following the National-Socialist take-over of the Weimar Republic (30 January 1933), Reichsbanner participation became a moot issue, as various state governments, followed by the Reich, outlawed the Socialist organization.⁸³

The Communist Party, whose paramilitary organization, the Red Front Fighters' League, was banned from the Reichskuratorium, apparently at the whim of the Papen Government, responded with a Reichstag motion calling for the dissolution of the Reichskuratorium. Communist Reichstag Deputy Torgler and twenty others requested the motion on 17 November 1932, a proposal which apparently died in committee.⁸⁴

The political effectiveness of the Reichskuratorium does not readily lend itself to assessment. While it is easy to criticize politicians for their lack of enthusiasm for the one program which promised to lessen the alienation of Germany's youth, it must be remembered that the Army, at least initially, had presented the Reichskuratorium as a

liaison with the Reichskuratorium. See Felix Steiner, Von Clausewitz bis Bulganin, Bielefeld, 1956, 112ff. (Hereafter cited as Steiner, Clausewitz bis Bulganin.)

⁸³ Rohe, Reichsbanner, 459-470.

⁸⁴ RTV, Torgler (KPD), 17 December 1932, vol. 456, Antrag Nr. 258. There is no record of this motion ever leaving committee.

solution to a military problem, not a political one. This presented grave difficulties for the Socialists, who found it difficult to countenance what amounted to a violation of the spirit of the Versailles Treaty. Ever suspicious of the Defense Ministry, they missed a major opportunity to demonstrate good will and to participate meaningfully in the national defense effort. Their vacillation and reluctance to commit themselves openly to an alliance--even one of convenience--with the Defense Ministry doubtless increased the mistrust of the officer corps for the Party, to say nothing of alienating considerable numbers of patriotic, republican workers. The Stahlhelm, with more than its usual ineptitude, failed to seize the opportunity to take control of the military sport project on two occasions, and foolishly entered, for all intents and purposes, into a rivalry with the Reichskuratorium. Their distrust and suspicion of General Schleicher were manipulated by Papen and the venal Seldte into a mesalliance with the Nazis.

Ironically, the SA profited the most from the Reichskuratorium. With their uncanny ability to use the institutions of the Republic for their own benefit, i.e., to undermine it, the Nazis cynically encouraged the Weimar Republic to train their brown battalions. The Government, of course, welcomed the participation of the Nazis, regardless of motivation, hoping that their exposure to responsible military and political activity would deradicalize most of the SA men.

Just how long Hitler would have permitted SA participation had the Government succeeded in its aims must remain an unanswered question, as must the question of his successfully carrying out that prohibition.

In assessing the military contribution of the Reichskuratorium, one must conclude that it (and its successor, the Chef des Ausbildungswesens der SA) was highly successful. On the other hand, it was established too late to accomplish its twin political goals of depoliticizing the youth of Germany and providing an alternate "school of the nation". Commencing operations in the last months of the Weimar Republic, the Reichskuratorium was simply a matter of too little, too late.

Its potential, however, as a substitute school of the nation did not escape the Nazis. Already thinking of universal military sport training for the youth of Germany,⁸⁵ the Reichskuratorium provided a ready-made base from which to expand. Such an area of activity, moreover, appealed to Röhm and Krüger, the SA liaison officer to the Reichskuratorium, as an ideal task for the SA once the Party came to power.

⁸⁵ See Chapter VII, 179ff.; and Hitler, Mein Kampf, 279f, 408-414.

C H A P T E R V I I

RELUCTANT SURRENDER:

THE TRANSFER OF PRE-MILITARY

TRAINING TO THE SA

The advent of the Hitler regime paved the way for the eventual take-over of the Reichskuratorium by the SA. The political potential of the Reichskuratorium had not escaped the National Socialists, who no longer found indoctrination objectionable when aimed at supporting their new Government. There was, moreover, no question that Hitler planned to continue military sport training. In his book he had written that the Nazi state:

... will have to look on post school physical training ... as a state function, ... through state institutions. This education in its broad outlines can serve as a preparation for future military service. The Army will not have to teach the young men the fundamentals of the most elementary drill book as hitherto, and it will not get recruits of the present type; no, it will only have to transform a young man who has already received flawless physical preparation into a soldier.¹

Yet despite Hitler's interest in military sport, two factors prevented the SA from immediately assuming the duties of the Reichskuratorium. First, the attitude of the Army toward the SA was problematical, and until the Army

¹Hitler, Mein Kampf, 413f, 279ff, 408-411.

approached the SA Hitler could ill-afford to antagonize the soldiers. Second, the SA had a number of demanding and important duties during the first months of the Nazi regime. These duties included, for example, the usual propaganda marches, leaflet distribution, and assembly protection, as well as the assigning of SA men to serve as auxiliary police. Not until the Nazi Regime was finally anchored would Röhm be able to devote his full attention to the future of the Reichskuratorium and the SA military sport program.

The National Socialists met with a mixed reaction from the Army. While many Reichswehr officers were sympathetic to certain elements of the Nazi world-view, e.g., its nationalism, anti-liberal and anti-democratic outlook, and hierarchical organization, its very nature as a political party compelled most officers to avoid any public association with the Nazis.² Seeckt's doctrine of the politically impartial Army remained dogma to most soldiers. This conviction the Nazis, despite strenuous efforts, never completely undermined.

Field and general grade officers, by and large,

²Manfred Messerschmidt, Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat: Zeit der Indoktrination, Hamburg, 1969, 2-3, 17. (Hereafter cited as Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS); and Klaus-Jürgen Müller, Das Heer und Hitler: Armee und Nationalsozialistisches Regime, Stuttgart, 1969, 29-33. (Hereafter cited as Müller, Heer und Hitler).

exercised more restraint toward National Socialism than did their younger counterparts, the company grade officers. The activism and radicalism of the Nazis had little appeal to the older officers, whose age and experience had taught them to be suspicious of instant solutions. The more perceptive officers probably realized that even a policy of political neutrality was bankrupt: should the Nazis succeed in solving Germany's problems and becoming the first political party to win the loyalty of a majority of Germans, it would be extremely difficult to retain the political impartiality of the Reichswehr. Nonetheless, most senior officers tolerated what they perceived to be a triumph of conservative, national forces, and hoped that the Nazis would demonstrate responsibility in their new position.³

Younger officers, on the other hand, showed more enthusiasm for the new government than did their superiors. Many younger officers saw the combination of the leader principle, the concern for the common welfare, and the strong nationalism espoused by Hitler and his followers as the answer to Germany's internal unrest and weak international position. Hitler carefully nurtured this enthusiasm by appealing to the idealism and self-interest of his audience. Casting off the shackles of Versailles meant military ex-

³Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 310; Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS, 2f., 6f.

pansion, which implied more rapid promotions, always an issue of concern to the junior officers.⁴

Of crucial importance in determining the relationship of the Reichswehr to the Nazi state were the appointments of Lieutenant General Werner von Blomberg,⁵ Commanding General of Military District I (East Prussia), and his chief of staff, Colonel Walter von Reichenau,⁶ as Defense Minister and Chief of the Ministry Office (Ministeramt), respectively. While the circumstances of Blomberg's appointment are still unclear,⁷ his tour of duty in East

⁴IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, n.d. [Spring] 1932, Bl. 173f.; Zgs. 326, General a.D. Eccard Freiherr von Gablenz, Bl. 23; Bracher, Machtergreifung, 738-43; Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 396; Müller, Heer und Hitler, 29-33, 38f.

⁵(1878-1946), Generalfeldmarschall. He entered the army in 1897, completed the General Staff school in 1907, and held a number of General Staff positions during the First World War, and afterwards. He was Chief of the Truppenamt (General Staff) from 1927 to 1930, but was transferred to E. Prussia following difficulties with the Reichstag. He appeared to suffer a nervous breakdown in May 1932, following the death of his wife, and was temporarily assigned as Chief of the Military Delegation to the Geneva Disarmament Conferences, an undemanding position, from which it was expected he would retire.

⁶(1884-1942), Generalfeldmarschall. Entering the army in 1903, Reichenau was graduated from the General Staff school during the First World War. After the war he held a number of command and staff positions culminating with his appointment as Blomberg's chief of staff in 1931. A progressive and energetic military figure, he commanded a number of armies during the Second World War, but died of a heart attack while commanding Army Group South in Russia.

⁷IfZG, Zgs. 37, Foertsch, Bl. 56; Zgs. 182, Generalfeldmarschall Maximilian Frieherr von Weichs, Bl. 4; Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS, 5; Müller, Heer und Hitler, 49f.; and Vogel-sang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 375, 386f.

Prussia since 1930 had kept him from public involvement in or connection with politics, a condition highly desirable to both Hindenburg and Hitler. Considering the National Socialist and German Nationalist cabinet coalition to be the most favorable political solution to the instability of the Republic, Blomberg naively expected the politicians to restrict themselves to non-military activities, allowing him and his staff the necessary time and resources to concentrate on military affairs.⁸

Blomberg's laissez faire attitude toward politics was not shared by his assistant, von Reichenau. Introduced to leading Nazis as early as 1931 by Ludwig Müller, then Chaplain of Military District I, Reichenau maintained close and public ties to the Nazi Party. Meeting with Hitler on several occasions, he became an avid supporter of National Socialism.⁹ Impressed with the dynamism and mass appeal of the Nazi movement, Reichenau felt that solidarity with National Socialism could only benefit the Army and himself in

⁸BA-MA, Nachlaß Stülpnagel, N-5/27, 75 Jahre, 309; Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 394f.; Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS, 19; Müller, Heer und Hitler, 49-52; Vogelsang, RW-Staat-NSDAP, 375.

⁹See, for example, Reichenau's letter of 7 April 1932 to Schleicher, BA-MA, Nachlaß Schleicher, N-42/25; IfZG, Zgs. 105, General d. Art. a.D. Horst von Mellenthin, Bl. 27f.; Müller, Heer und Hitler, 52-6; and Robert J. O'Neill, The German Army and the Nazi Party, London, 1968, 19. (Hereafter cited as O'Neil, German Army).

the long run.¹⁰ Personally impatient, energetic, and ambitious, he was a progressive military thinker who favored efforts to increase Army mobility. His colleagues considered him a trifle eccentric on account of his preference for civilian clothes, his anglophilia, and his distressing habit of accompanying lunches with two liters of Moselle wine.¹¹

Reichenau's position as Chief of the Ministry Office, which acted as a liaison between the Reichswehr and the Government, assumed a greater importance on account of the peculiar circumstances surrounding General von Hammerstein, the Chief of the Army Command. Hammerstein, clearly identified with the disgraced Schleicher, had become an outspoken opponent of the Nazis and he had offered to resign when Hitler became Chancellor. Although Hindenburg did not immediately accept the resignation, feeling perhaps that a change of the entire military command might undermine confidence in the new government, Hammerstein knew that his tenure of office was insecure. Never a very energetic person, he abandoned himself to his favorite pastime, hunting.¹²

¹⁰IfZG, Zgs. 105, Mellenthin, Bl. 27f.; Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS, 4f.; Müller, Heer und Hitler, 53-6.

¹¹IfZG, Zgs. 37, Foertsch, Bl. 56-64; BA-MA, Nachlaß Generaloberst a.D. Ludwig Beck, N-28/3, "Fritsch Aufzeichnung, 2 January 1938; and Steiner, Clausewitz bis Bulganin, 100.

¹²IfZG, Zgs. 37, Foertsch, Bl. 56ff; Zgs. 105, Mellenthin, Bl. 8; Zgs. 217, Bussche-Ippenburg, Bl. 22; Manstein, Soldatenleben, 108; Bracher, Machtergreifung, 733f; Müller, Heer und Hitler, 59ff; and O'Neill, German Army, 19f, 23.

In what amounted to the almost complete absence of the Chief of the Army Command, Reichenau's Ministry Office became the central point of contact between the Army Command and Blomberg, with all important matters passing through Reichenau's hands. In addition, his outspoken support and sympathy for the National Socialist movement, unique among the senior military officers, allowed him access to Hitler.

In spite of the many different attitudes toward the Nazis expressed by Army officers, there was one issue on which all agreed: that the armed forces of the state were and would remain the sole agency of national defense.¹³ This issue arose from the fact that for the first time in German history a chancellor had his own army, the SA. Despite its role in his electoral victories, Hitler had apparently not given much thought to the future of his political soldiers once he gained power. Although their deployment as auxiliary police during the spring of 1933¹⁴ relieved him of the necessity for an immediate decision, the ultimate

¹³Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS, 20; Karl Martin Graß, Edgar Jung, Papenkreis und Röhmkrise, 1933-34, phil. diss., Heidelberg, 1967, 98. (Hereafter cited as Graß, Röhmkrise.)

¹⁴BHStA, IV, Stahlhelm, Bd. 78, "Durchführungsbestimmungen zum Erlaß vom 22.2.1933, betr. Hilfspolizei"; Hans Buchheim, "SA-Hilfspolizei, SA-Feldpolizei und Feldjägerkorps und die Beamtenliche Stellung Ihrer Angehörigen" in Gutachten des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte, München, 1958, 335-40. Röhm did, on one occasion, attempt to prevent SA Hilfspolizei from engaging in revenge and vendettas. See Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 55, 24 February 1933; and Hans Bernd Gisevius, To the

disposition of the SA and its relation to the armed forces were to prove an issue of major concern.

Whatever his doubts concerning the future of the SA, Hitler had none regarding the Reichswehr. Meeting with leading generals and admirals at Hammerstein's apartment three days after becoming chancellor, he reassured them that the armed forces would remain non-political, adding that the coming struggle for the consolidation of the Nazi state was not their task, but that of his party organizations. There would be, he noted, no merger of the SA and the Reichswehr. Outlining a program sure to win their approval, he explained that he planned to orient his domestic policy toward improving the disastrous economic conditions, crushing pacifism, and eliminating Marxism, while simultaneously directing his efforts in foreign policy to breaking the shackles of the Versailles Treaty. Such a program, he acknowledged, presented grave difficulties, requiring the conscription of the nation's youth in various state service projects, and of course, the eventual re-introduction of universal military service. It would be the Government's function, he added, to insure that youth was not poisoned by Marxism and pacifism. Concluding his two hour harangue, he emphasized that the most dangerous period would be that

Bitter End, (trans. R. and C. Winston), Boston, 1947, 50f., 58, 103ff.; Graß, Röhmkrise, 99f.; Bracher, Machtergreifung, 434-442; Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power, 307-317.

of the building of the military forces. It would then be seen if France had any statesmen, Hitler explained, for if so, France would at once attack Germany.¹⁵

Hitler's speech largely coincided with that of Defense Minister Blomberg, delivered earlier that morning to the generals. His own goals, explained Blomberg, consisted of retaining the impartial political position of the Reichswehr, making the Army a truly useful instrument of security, and reinforcing the Reichswehr by militarizing the entire population. This last goal, he stated, would necessitate increasing and expanding activities related to defense, especially the activities of the Reichskuratorium. "The man for that in the Cabinet," said Blomberg, "is Seldte (his ministerial portfolio is only provisional). Hitler's and Seldte's thoughts and intentions come together in the desire for the [greater] defensive preparation of the populace. Seldte," explained Blomberg, "is just the man to carry

¹⁵IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, 3 February 1933, Bl. 191f.; Zgs. 105, Mellenthin, Bl. 6. Hitler, at this stage in his career, was consistent in what he said to his generals and civilian aides, and his message to the latter within a week of his conference with the generals was unequivocal: "Die Zukunft Deutschlands hänge ausschließlich und allein vom Wiederaufbau der Wehrmacht ab. Alle anderen Aufgaben müssen hinter der Aufgabe der Wiederaufrüstung zurücktreten." in BA, R-43 II/1292, Rk. 1188, "Niederschrift über eine Sitzung des Ausschusses der Reichsregierung für Arbeitsbeschaffung in der Reichskanzlei", 9 February 1933, Bl. 9.

out this task together with us soldiers."¹⁶

In other words, as General Liebmann wrote in a secret letter to the subordinate commanders of his 5th Division, the attitude of the Army to the youth training and military sport associations would change. It was, he noted, the wish of both the Chancellor and the Defense Minister that the armed forces henceforth would participate at once in discussions with the relevant groups on this issue.¹⁷

Hitler and Blomberg were not the only ones who had given thought to a semi-military training program for the nation's youth. Gruppenführer Krüger, the ambitious SA representative to the Reichskuratorium and de facto head of the SA military sport program, drafted a proposal calling for the establishment of a "German Military Sport Office", an agency similar to that suggested by Seeckt in 1925.¹⁸

Krüger recommended that the Government organize the new office to direct all youth physical fitness and military sport training. The current military sport activities of the SA and the Stahlhelm would, he wrote, remain essentially

¹⁶IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, 3 February 1933. "Der Mann dazu im Kabinett ist Seldte (Minister-Portefeuille nur vorläufig). Hitlers und Seldtes Denken und Wollen münden im Wunsch auf Wehrhaftmachung des Volkes. Minister [Blomberg] bezeichnet Seldte als geeigneten Mann dafür, im Verein mit uns Soldaten diese Aufgabe durchzuführen." Bl. 188f.

¹⁷Ibid., draft of a secret letter from Liebmann to his 5th Division subordinate commanders, 6 February 1933, Bl. 193.

¹⁸IfZG, Fa-90/2, "Vorschlag, Grundgedanke", 19 February 1933, Bl. 131-143.

unaffected by this office. Its main function, he stated, would be to centralize and standardize all fitness and military sport programs, especially those conducted by organizations outside the "national movement". Coordinating the activities of these groups, he noted, would be the function of the Reichskuratorium. Groups which presently supervised military sport training in the spirit of the "new" Germany, he hastened to add, would have the complete support of the purported military sport office, but those organizations hostile to the new course would be ruthlessly and inexorably disbanded.¹⁹

In effect, Krüger envisioned an agency (with a prominent position reserved for himself) supervising the military sport activities of an otherwise autonomous SA and Stahlhelm, and a subordinate Reichskuratorium, training over 250,000 adolescents per year. The Chief of the Military Sport Office, attached to the Defense Ministry with a rank analogous to State Secretary and equivalent to the Chief of the Ministry Office, would receive instructions from and be responsible to a committee composed of the Chancellor and the Ministers of Defense, Air Transport, and Labor. In carrying out its duties, added Krüger, the Military Sport Office would "... establish the bases for the subsequent expansion of the armed forces and, within the framework of the

¹⁹Ibid., Bl. 132-35.

restrictions of the [Versailles] peace treaty, make preparations for universal military service."²⁰ His presumption in suggesting that he be given a position comparable to State Secretary and elevated to head an agency that, in effect, would supervise Röhm was rivaled only by his naiveté in believing that the Defense Ministry, the SA, the Stahlhelm, and the Reichskuratorium would all meekly abdicate their individual pretensions to the control of a program of the greatest importance to the state and the Army.

Although Krüger apparently prepared his report at Röhm's insistence, it appears that the SA Chief of Staff was unable to act immediately upon its suggestions, in all likelihood owing to his pre-occupation with the consolidation of Nazi power.²¹ Officers in the Defense Ministry, however, sensed the increasing importance of military sport activities and began efforts to insure that Franz Seldte would direct any program that might be established.

That Seldte should direct the military sport effort would have appeared only natural to the Defense Ministry, especially after Blomberg's warm endorsement of 3 February.

²⁰Ibid., "Das D.[eutsche] W.[erhsport] A.[mt] stellt... die Grundlage für spätere Wehrmachterweiterungen her und bereitet im Rahmen der heute durch den Friedensvertrag gezogenen Grenzen die allgemeine Wehrpflicht vor." Bl. 143.

²¹BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme zur 'Niederschrift über den Chef des Ausbildungswesens'", 10 October 1935, Bl. 1f. (Hereafter cited as "Stellungnahme".) For some idea of Röhm's activities during this period, see footnote 13, this chapter.

Moreover, Seldte, in his capacity of Labor Minister, controlled the Voluntary Labor Service, a growing activity in which the Stahlhelm had participated and which the Army had seen as a concomitant to its military sport program.²² But perhaps most important, he still headed the Stahlhelm, which not only equaled the SA in size, but was composed of the "right" sort of people (Hindenburg was an honorary member), and it pursued its own active military sport program. Finally, the Nazis were still a minority in the Cabinet with a seemingly uncertain future and to turn over to the SA the responsibility for the military sport training effort would have appeared irresponsible to Blomberg. Certainly few outside of the Nazi Party believed that Hitler would soon drive out or neutralize his coalition comrades.

On the 4th of March Hindenburg appointed Seldte Chairman of the Reichskuratorium,²³ thus transferring effective control over the military sport program from the Reich Interior Ministry to the Labor Ministry. The importance of this transfer became apparent two days later upon the

²²IfZG; Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, "Schleicher als Reichskanzler", Dec. 1932, Bl. 186; letter Schleicher to Papen, RWM 486/32, g.W.V., 17 October 1932 (reproduced in Schützle, Reichswehr wider Nation, appendix); and Kreuzzeitung, Nr. 351, 17 December 1932. The Nazis also saw the Labor Service as a preparatory step towards military service. See Hans-Henning Freiherr von Grote, Konstantin Hierl: Oberst a.D. Staatssekretär für den Arbeitsdienst. Der Mann und sein Werk, Berlin, 1934, 55f.

²³BA, R-43 II/519, Rk. 2487, Erlaß des Reichspräsidenten, 4 March 1933.

unexpected death of General von Stülpnagel. Seldte and Blomberg, in compliance with the Cabinet directive of 12 September 1932, recommended Captain (Ret.) Georg von Neufville²⁴ as Stülpnagel's successor, to which Hindenburg assented on 16 March.²⁵

Although Neufville made the obligatory promise to work closely with all military sport organizations,²⁶ the fact remains that the Stahlhelm had taken over, with the active support of the Defense Ministry, the state-sponsored military sport program, a program which the new Chancellor had already indicated would be enlarged. Indeed, by the middle of March, Seldte, in his triple capacity of Reich Labor Minister, Stahlhelm Bundesführer, and Reichskuratorium chairman was in apparent control of most youth oriented military training programs. Being on excellent terms with the Defense Ministry, he appeared to be "just the man."

Seldte and Blomberg wasted no time in attempting to consolidate Seldte's control of youth training programs.

²⁴(?-1941?), Rittmeister a.D. The former leader of Stahlhelm Landesverband Baden-Württemberg, Neufville, after the dissolution of the Reichskuratorium, joined the Chef AW as a Referent with the rank of Standartenführer. In March 1935, he was appointed to lead the newly-created OSAF Ausbildungsabteilung. Apparently re-joining the army, he fell in action in Russia in 1941.

²⁵BHStA, I, MK 13832, Reichskuratorium für Jugender-tüchtigung, Der Geschäftsführende Präsident, Nr. 4169 a 18, to Bay. Staatsmin. d. Inneren, 24 March 1933.

²⁶Ibid.

At Blomberg's request, Dr. Walter Kayser, a high level civil servant working in Reichenau's office, prepared a study concerning the feasibility of organizing all Government-sponsored youth programs under a single agency. Alleging that shortages, poor organization, duplication, and bureaucratic red tape characterized current Government subsidized youth programs, Kayser suggested establishing a Reich Youth Ministry. It would, he explained, have four sections: the Reichskuratorium (greatly expanded), a Youth Employment Services division, the Labor Service, and a Physical Training division. In contrast to the existing haphazard arrangements, he argued that a youth ministry could rationally dove-tail all youth programs with proposed mobilization measures. The Youth Minister, for reasons unexplained by Kayser but perhaps reflecting a hint from Blomberg, would also act as either Reich Labor Minister or Prussian Minister for Academics, Art, and Education.²⁷

Urging that a special commission be created to study and organize the proposed youth ministry, Blomberg forwarded Kayser's report to the Chancellory, the Reich Interior and Labor Ministries, and the Prussian Ministry for Academics,

²⁷ IfZG, MA-260, RWM 1630/33 W.F., 18 March 1933, Bl. 6227817-23.

Art, and Education.²⁸ The Reich Cabinet, meeting in early April, discussed ideas resembling Blomberg's proposal, but nothing concrete appears to have come from this meeting except the approval of the Labor Service budget.²⁹ Although eventually Hitler rejected it, Blomberg's suggestion for a youth ministry demonstrated that both the SA and the Reichswehr had observed a need for a comprehensive youth training program and that both had specific, although conflicting, ideas regarding the organization of youth military sport programs.³⁰

Blomberg meanwhile lost no time in expanding the activities of the Reichskuratorium. In an order of 13 April to Reichswehr commanding generals, General Wilhelm Adam

²⁸Ibid., Bl. 6227822f.; BA, R-43 II/519, Dr Kayser to Dr Lammers, Rk. 3054, 18 March 1933. In sending the report to Seldte, Blomberg prematurely addressed him as "Reichsminister für Arbeit und Jugendertüchtigung."

²⁹BA, R-43 II/516, "Vermerk über Chefbesprechung unter dem Vorsitz des Herrn Reichskanzlers am 4. April 1933", Rk. 3509/33; Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 95, 5 April 1933.

³⁰Krüger claimed that Röhm had long forseen him as head of the youth program (BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 2) while Blomberg's remarks of 3 February and Kayser's Youth Ministry proposal leave little doubt that the Reichswehr envisioned Seldte for the post. Blomberg's curious remark of 3 February, that Seldte's heading the Labor Ministry was only temporary, implies that both Blomberg and Seldte had already given thought to a Youth Ministry. This is confirmed in a letter from Hugenberg to Seldte, in which the former petulantly complains that "Es war Ihre [Seldte] Absicht, ein Ministerium für Jugendertüchtigung und Arbeitsdienst zu übernehmen, nicht aber das Arbeitsministerium. Sie haben dies in eine Unterhaltung... erklärt, daß Sie das Arbeitsministerium vorläufig als solches übernehmen...." BA, R-43 II/143, letter Hugenberg to Seldte, 17 April 1933.

(Chief of the General Staff) explained that the Reichskuratorium would sponsor, during the coming summer, an increased number of military sport encampments. Noting that neither the Reichskuratorium nor the para-military organizations (the SA and the Stahlhelm) could provide a sufficient number of instructors for these new encampments, he ordered each Military District to provide about 40 sergeants or corporals for this duty. Stressing that commanders should select competent men, he added that those chosen would attend a special training course to be conducted by the Reichskuratorium during early May.³¹

Apparently the soldiers did not think highly of this duty, for a week later Hammerstein reminded all commanders that the Army Command placed the highest value on military sport training. To suppress any doubts, he stated that from the 1st of May, all recruits for the Border Guard-East would be required to complete a military sport course prior to receiving any military training. Noting that familiarizing recruits with military weapons took relatively little time in comparison to marksmanship training which could just as easily be provided in a military sport course, he concluded that "the Army Command hopes that every soldier upon enlistment is ready to begin immediately combat training

³¹BA-MA, WK VII/2188, CHL TA 261/33 g.Kdos. T4 III, 13 April 1933.

with [his] weapon."³²

While Blomberg and Seldte were expanding the activities of the Reichskuratorium and ensconcing Seldte's authority over military sport training, Röhm was pre-occupied with the "coordination" of the state governments. He had, however, by no means abdicated his desire to control the Reichskuratorium as a preparatory step to an increased role for his SA in military affairs.³³ Although aware of Seldte's improved position, there was little Röhm could do to block the Stahlhelm leader, aside from making threatening noises,³⁴ until the completion of the Nazi seizure of

³²Ibid., CHL TA 262/33, g. Kdos. T4 III, 21 April 1933. "Die Heeresleitung strebt an, daß jeder Soldat mit seinem Dienstantritt so vorgebildet ist, daß bei der Truppe sofort mit der Gefechtsausbildung mit der Waffe begonnen werden kann."

³³BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme". According to Krüger, "... SA sich unmittelbar nach der Machtergreifung mit diesen Fragen eingehend zu befassen und den Anspruch auf Führung auf dem Gebiet der vormilitärischen Ausbildung geltend zu machen. Das Präsidium des Reichskuratoriums für Jugender-tüchtigung wurde daher im Frühjahr 1933 von der damaligen Obersten SA-Führung beansprucht und als erstes greifbares Ziel für die Betätigung der SA im Sinne der Landesverteidigung ins Auge gefaßt." Bl. 1f. See further IfZG, Fa-88/337, Hitler-jugend, Stabsleitung/Ref VI, 1/32, vertraulich, 26 August 1932, which states that universal, mandatory Wehrsport programs will be set up in the "Third Reich". Bl. 167ff.

³⁴BA, NS-23/124, OSAF I, Nr. 751/33, 18 March 1933. Röhm stated that new guidelines (presumably his own) would follow for selection of the students for Reichskuratorium courses. Evidence does not indicate if new regulations were ever issued.

power in April. He did order Krüger, in February, to prepare for the SA take-over of the Reichskuratorium,³⁵ but Krüger made no visible progress except for attending a conference in mid-April during which all participants (SA and Stahlhelm leaders, as well as Neufville and the Reichskuratorium directors) merely agreed that military sport courses were of great importance and required more subsidization.³⁶

To a certain extent, Krüger's lack of visible progress in his discussions with Reichskuratorium leaders can perhaps be explained by the fact that from outward appearance, he was negotiating from a position of weakness. Seldte and Neufville, unaware that Hitler planned to turn on his coalition allies once the Nazis had eliminated their potentially dangerous foes, saw no reason to enter into conversations with Krüger. Nonetheless, Krüger's lack of progress in his conversations with Seldte and the leaders of the Reichskuratorium did not really matter. In any question of jurisdiction concerning Nazi Party affairs, the final arbiter was Hitler, whose decision in this episode was predictable.

³⁵BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 2.

³⁶Völkischer Beobachter, Nr. 103/104, 13-14 April 1933. A budget, expanded or not, was necessary, as the original Reichskuratorium budget ran only through March. See IfZG, Thilo Vogelsang, "Der Chef des Ausbildungswesens", unpublished MS (15pp.), p. 1.

As the Nazis consolidated their power, Röhm moved to eliminate or render impotent all paramilitary organizations except the SA. By the end of April it was public knowledge that the Stahlhelm would shortly lose its independence, becoming subordinate, in some as yet unknown fashion, to the SA.³⁷ There could no longer be any question that the SA would inherit control of all pre-military training programs.

With his own future made secure by this recent turn of events, Krüger traveled in early May to Geneva with SS Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, Chief of the SS Security Service. Officially, Krüger and Heydrich went to Geneva as SA and SS representatives, respectively, to represent the Nazi Party at the Disarmament Committee discussions, but the third member of their delegation, Rudolf Hess, did not accompany them. It is possible, but unlikely, that the trip was merely an excuse to get the prickly Krüger out of town in an effort to facilitate the discussions between the SA and the Stahlhelm over the future of the Reichskuratorium. For one reason, Heydrich was too valuable an assistant to Himmler to waste on a wild goose chase, and for another reason, less expensive pretexts could have been found to

³⁷There had been some difficulties between the SA and the Stahlhelm since February, and by the end of April, it was clear that the Stahlhelm would shortly lose its independence. See Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 19 April 1933; Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 263-267; and Hans Buchheim, "Die Eingliederung des Stahlhelms in der SA", in Gutachtendes Instituts für Zeitgeschichte, München, 1958, 370-77.

exclude Krüger from the talks with the Reichskuratorium. In all likelihood, the Krüger-Heydrich mission was either a crude attempt to intimidate the delegations to the Disarmament Conference or a by no means unique example of Nazi exuberance and enthusiasm in the first months of the Hitler Regime. Whatever the purpose for their presence in Geneva, Krüger and Heydrich left an unpleasant impression.³⁸

During Krüger's absence from Berlin, his chief of staff, Helmut Wähmann,³⁹ assisted Röhm, who now assumed a more personal and active role in the discussions with Neufville over the future of the Reichskuratorium. On 5 May, Lt. Col. Walter Model, the Reichswehr liaison officer to the Reichskuratorium, met with Wähmann. Allegedly speaking for Neufville, Model stated that once the SA had assimilated

³⁸Krüger and Heydrich created a sensation by appearing in full uniform during conference sessions. Expressing the official anti-Semitism of the Hitler Regime, they shocked Ambassador Nadolny by demanding that the Delegation's interpreter be immediately replaced, claiming that his "jewishness" offended them. Another ugly scene followed when Krüger discovered that the Delegation neither possessed nor flew a Swastika flag. In his report to Röhm, Krüger urged that the members of the Delegation be dismissed. They had, he claimed, lost all touch with the Fatherland and should be replaced by men more sympathetic to the "new" course. See Ba, Nachlaß Krüger/15, Report to Röhm, 12 May 1933. It is perhaps no coincidence that within a week after the return of Krüger and Heydrich to Germany, Hitler made his 17 May Reichstag "peace" speech, aimed at dampening fears of resurgent German militarism. For the speech, see footnote 47, this chapter.

³⁹A member of the SA since February 1932, he served as adjutant, then staff leader under Krüger's Gruppenstab z.b.V., and became chief of staff of the Chef des Ausbildungswesens in 1933. Allegedly an alcoholic, who frequently required "drying out", he joined the SS in 1935 with Krüger.

the Stahlhelm, the Reichskuratorium would place itself under the SA and recognize Röhm as the organizer of all non-military defense preparations.⁴⁰ It is not certain why Neufville adopted this position, but perhaps he drew the proper conclusions from Seldte's visibly weakened position vis-à-vis the SA,⁴¹ which apparently even Blomberg recognized, as the Army certainly offered no objections to Neufville's proposal.

Two days later, Neufville personally repeated his offer, first to Röhm in a private conversation, then to Wähmann, Model, and Reichskuratorium Executive Secretary Major (Ret.) von Olberg. Neufville stated that there could only be one agency for non-military defense preparations, the SA. Röhm explained that he envisioned a role for the Reichskuratorium as a liaison office between the Reichswehr and a putative SA Ministry, adding that he would fill in more details following Hitler's awaited decision concerning the SA Ministry. Although he had indicated that there might

⁴⁰IfZG, Fa-90/1, letter Wähmann to Krüger, 5 May 1933, Bl. 2f.

⁴¹In addition to his difficulties with the SA, by the end of April Seldte had lost control of the Labor Service to Col. (Ret.) Konstantin Hierl. See the concluding chapter of Köhler's Arbeitsdienst; Berghahn, Stahlhelm, 252f.; Bracher, Machtergreifung, 206-208; and Paul Meier-Benneckenstein (ed.), Dokumente der Deutschen Politik, I, Berlin, 1935, Nr. 86, Erklärung des Staatssekretärs für den Arbeitsdienst Hierl über die Aufgaben des Arbeitsdienstes", 248-252. (Hereafter cited as Dokumente der dt. Politik.)

be some role for the Reichskuratorium, Röhm went on to state bluntly that some of its personnel were flatly unacceptable. These were, he said, people with whom his SA men simply could not work, which necessitated the immediate dismissal of the personnel in question.⁴² Neufville assented, stating that he would quickly take care of this matter. He then asked Röhm to name a SA leader as OSAF Deputy to the Reichskuratorium, who would also simultaneously serve as its vice-president. Röhm agreed to this suggestion, but added that only Krüger, on account of his past ties to the Reichskuratorium, could be considered for this post, and suggested that Neufville discuss this position with him.⁴³

After the meeting had ended and the Reichskuratorium participants had left, Röhm told Wähmann that "... this

⁴²Röhm did not mention anyone by name, but perhaps he had in mind Lt. Col. (Ret.) August Hörl, the Munich regional office director. He had drawn the fire of the Franconian SA leader v. Obernitz, who alleged that Hörl, prior to 1933, had been anti-Nazi. Hörl vainly defended himself, but Obernitz insisted on his removal, claiming that Hörl, as a Reichskuratorium leader, "...die SA benachteiligte und die systemtreuen Verbände oder Organisationen bevorzugte, [and he] hat in unserem Reich an führenden Stellung nichts mehr zu suchen. Im Namen der ganzen fränkischen SA bitte ich ... den Oberstleutnant Hörl so schnell wie möglich verschwinden zu lassen." See BHStA, I, MK 13843, Bay. Staatsmin. f. Kultus und Unterricht, VII, 13821, to Hörl, 13 April 1933; Hörl's reply in MK 13874, 21 April; and Obernitz's letter, Nr. 7292/32 [sic], 24 August 1933. The final disposition of Hörl's case is unclear, but his name does not appear again, so it is likely that he was dismissed.

⁴³IfZG, Fa-90/1, Bericht Nr. 1 (7 May), attached to Wähmann's 5 May letter to Krüger, Bl. 5f.

Neufville is an intelligent and nice fellow, and that's why he must be ruthlessly eliminated."⁴⁴ Perplexed, he asked Wähmann if Neufville always surrounded himself with "ruins" such as Olberg.⁴⁵

Model, Olberg, and Wähmann met on the 9th of May to discuss the plans of the Reichswehr to utilize military sport training. Model explained that in accordance with its expansion plan, the Army needed as many military sport program graduates as possible. He added that graduates of the Reichskuratorium and SA military sport courses would receive training in the use of military weapons. Further details and information concerning weapons training, he noted, would be provided at a later date by the Defense Ministry.⁴⁶

Blomberg partially addressed this problem a week later, on 17 May, agreeing to transfer sufficient small arms to the SA for "... its training and its domestic political tasks...." with the explicit understanding that

⁴⁴Ibid., "... der Neufville ein ganz gescheiter und netter Kerl sei und gerade darum rücksichtslos gleichgeschaltet werden müsse." Bl. 6.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., Bericht Nr. 2 of letter Wähmann to Krüger, 10 May 1933, Bl. 12-15.

all such weapons remained Reichswehr property.⁴⁷ Although issuing Army weapons to the SA implied recognition of a SA role in national security affairs, Blomberg buttressed his position by securing a decree from Hitler asserting the primacy of the Reichswehr in all defense issues. Hitler further emphasized the authority of the Reichswehr by subordinating the Labor Ministry, still nominally responsible for the Reichskuratorium and fitness training programs, to the Defense Ministry in all matters relating to military sport and youth fitness programs.⁴⁸

Nonetheless, with the existence of the Reichskuratorium in doubt, its subordination to the Defense Ministry had little meaning and without establishing some form of control and supervision over the weapons given to the SA, the Army might as well have relinquished all its claims to the weapons loaned the SA. Blomberg solved both these

⁴⁷IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Befehlshaberbesprechung, 1 June 1933. "... für ihre Ausbildung und ihre innerpolitischen Aufgaben...." Bl. 199f. Cf. Hitler's "Peace Speech" of the 17th of May, in which he stated "Die Aufgabe, daß die SA und SS der nationalsozialistischen Partei in irgendeiner Beziehung zur Reichswehr in dem Sinne stünde, daß es sich um militärisch ausgebildete Bestände oder Reserven der Armee handeln würde, ist unwahr. ... Ihr [SA] Zweck war und ist ausschließlich die Beseitigung der kommunistischen Gefahr, ihre Ausbildung ohne jede Anlehnung an das Heer nur berechnet für Zwecke der Propaganda, der Aufklärung, der psychologischen Massenwirkung, des Niederbrechens des kommunistischen Terrors." Dokumente der deutschen Politik, I, Nr. 35, Hitlers Friedensrede im Reichstag, 17 May 1933, 9ff.

⁴⁸IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, 1 June 1933.

problems in early June by agreeing with Krüger to disband the Reichskuratorium and to allow the SA, under what amounted to Army supervision, to assume sole responsibility for all military sport training. Reichenau concurred.⁴⁹

Blomberg's support for the SA at the expense of the Stahlhelm, a reversal of his position in February, was dictated by circumstances beyond his control. The equality in the "national" movement that Blomberg had assumed in February between the SA and the Stahlhelm, which had never existed in the minds of Hitler and his followers, had disappeared by June. Moreover, the Defense Minister abandoned his earlier hopes that the Reichswehr could remain apolitical. During a conference on 1 June with his division commanders, he stated that the era of political parties had run its course, adding that "being apolitical now is over [for us] and there remains only one [course of action]: to support the national movement with all devotion."⁵⁰

The Defense Ministry solved several related problems by acknowledging the SA as the sole military sport training agency. By dealing directly with Krüger rather than a number of military sport groups, the Reichswehr greatly

⁴⁹BA, Sam Sch/421, letter Krüger to Reichenau, K/P, Qu 1538/33, 19 June 1933. Bl. 2.

⁵⁰IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, 1 June 1933, "Jetzt ist das unpolitisch sein vorbei und es bleibt nur eins: der Nationalen Bewegung mit aller Hingabe zu dienen." Bl. 199.

simplified its responsibilities for control and supervision. Moreover, by channeling the SA into pre-military training, the Defense Ministry hoped to satiate SA claims to a meaningful role in national defense affairs,⁵¹ while simultaneously providing an activity for considerable numbers of unemployed SA men.⁵²

It is unlikely that Blomberg and Reichenau handed the SA the task of pre-military training without some misgivings. They feared, with some justification, that SA leaders might see military sport activities as a pretext for a greater voice for the SA in defense preparations. Nonetheless, Army leaders were hardly in a position to do otherwise, for their own 14% expansion and increased training commitments⁵³ left most Reichswehr units short of ex-

⁵¹BA-MA, Nachlaß Beck, N-28/3, Fritsch Aufzeichnung; Nachlaß Stülpnagel, N-5/27, 75 Jahre, 350; Bracher, Machtergreifung, 945ff.; Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS, 35; and Müller, Heer und Hitler, 91. Many SA men believed themselves to be the vanguard of a new peoples' army. See HA, f. 1876, OSAF, Stellvertreter-Süd, November 1930; f. 1874, SA Generalinspekteur, 453/31, 17 December 1931.

⁵²Krüger's Wehrsport organization, when disbanded in 1935, employed over 10,000. See BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift über den Chef des Ausbildungswesens", by General Fromm, Rk. 6754, 25 September 1935. For the problem of SA unemployment, see HA, f. 1547, PND 741, 9 July 1931; f. 1874, SA Generalinspekteur, 453/31, 17 December 1931; Engelbrechten, Braune Armee, 122f., 190ff; and Heinrich Bennecke, Die Reichswehr und die "Röhmputsch", München, 1964, 37f. (Hereafter cited as Bennecke, Röhmputsch.)

⁵³In addition to normal recruit training activities, expanded by 14% in 1933, the Army Command had assigned a further 264 officers and 792 men as Border Guard instructors. An additional 45 officers and some 150 men were scheduled to train

perienced instructors. To drain more instructors for military sport training from units already committed to an expanded recruit training effort would cause immense difficulties, and to relinquish or curtail the pre-military training program meant effecting corresponding changes in or abandoning the expansion and mobilization plans of 1929. Thus someone had to be given the task of pre-military training, and in spite of possible misgivings, the evolution of the Nazi state by June 1933 left Blomberg and Reichenau little choice but to turn to Krüger and the SA.⁵⁴

Other Nazi Party organizations at that time apparently did not openly question Krüger's title to military sport activities, although Baldur von Schirach,⁵⁵ the Hitler

university students, but it is not certain if this latter commitment were carried out. See BA-MA, II H/139, CHL TA 232/33, T2 IIIA/T4 III, 10 April 1933, and CHL TA 300/33 g.K., T4 III, 11 April 1933, and Chapter VII, 216ff.

⁵⁴Bracher, Machtergreifung, 886; and O'Neill, German Army, 33f., state that the SA was given control of the pre-military training program in return for acknowledging the authority of the Reichswehr in all defense related matters. While the Defense Ministry may have promoted the idea that pre-military training was assigned the SA as a quid pro quo, the over-extension of the Reichswehr's training capacities suggests that Blomberg and Reichenau simply made the best of a necessary bargain.

⁵⁵(1907-1974). He joined the NSDAP (Nr. 17251) in 1925 while a university student, and became Reich Leader of the National Socialist German Students' League in 1928. In 1931 he was named Reich Youth Leader of the NSDAP and Reich Leader of the Hitler Youth in 1932. He became Gauleiter of Vienna in 1940 and remained there until 1945.

Youth Leader, and Hans von Tschammer und Osten,⁵⁶ the Reich Sport Commissar, both contested his claims to control all youth fitness programs. During the spring of 1933, Schirach and Tschammer und Osten had methodically eliminated or taken over most non-Party youth and sport organizations, including some with military sport interests.⁵⁷ Schirach attempted to become Reich Youth Commissar, an ambition which Tschammer und Osten and Röhm resolutely opposed.⁵⁸ Schirach eventually

⁵⁶(1887-1943). Commissioned a lieutenant in the Saxon Army in 1906, Tschammer was invalided in 1919 with a lame right hand, a war injury. He administered estates after his discharge, and served as leader of the Jungdo in Saxony until 1926. He joined the NSDAP in 1930 (Nr. 205742) and held a number of SA positions in Dresden until 1933, when he was appointed in March as Reichssportskommissar in the Reich Interior Ministry. He became Reich Sport Leader in July 1933, and held that position until his death in 1943.

⁵⁷See Baldur von Schirach, Ich Glaubte an Hitler, Hamburg, 1967, 176-181, 191-195. Hereafter cited as Schirach, Ich Glaubte; Dokumente der dt. Politik, I, Nr. 96, Frick speech of 9 May 1933 on Tschammer's duties, 307; Herbert Michaelis und Ernst Schraippler, Ursachen und Folgen. Vom deutschen Zusammenbruch 1918 bis zur staatlichen Neuordnung Deutschlands in der Gegenwart, Frankfurt, n.d., IX, Nr. 2219, Order banning the Großdeutsche Jugendbund [Trotha group] and the Reichsausschuß der deutschen Jugendverbände [Vogt group], 23 June 1933, 518; Hajo Bernett, Nationalsozialistische Leibeserziehungen. Eine Dokumentation ihrer Theorie und Organisation, Schorndorf, 1966, 177f.; Hajo Bernett, Sportpolitik im Dritten Reich, Schorndorf, 1971, 25-31; Hans-Christian Brandenburg, Die Geschichte der HJ. Wege und Irrwege einer Generation, Köln, 1968, 283-6; and Jürgen Dieckert, Die Turnerjugendbewegung, Schorndorf, 1968, 111-121.

⁵⁸IfZG, Fa-90/1, letters Wähmann to Krüger, 5 May, 10 May 1933. Bl. 4, 10; BA, Nachlaß Krüger/15, letter Wähmann to Krüger, 11 May 1933; and Schirach, Ich Glaubte, 186ff., 190f.

triumphed, but his appointment as Reich Youth Leader⁵⁹ did not resolve the jurisdictional problems over youth fitness programs because the activities of the Labor Service, the Reich Sport Commissar, and the SA, all of which overlapped, remained unaffected by Schirach's new title.

With the seizure of the Reichskuratorium by the SA imminent, Neufville made one last attempt to save his position. He suggested to Reichenau, on 17 June, that the Reichskuratorium should continue "as the central training agency of the paramilitary groups (SA, SS, Stahlhelm, and National Socialist Motorized Corps)".⁶⁰ Krüger would, he wrote, be named chief of staff of the Reichskuratorium, and Captain von Bernuth, a regular officer assigned to the Defense Ministry, would become the military chief of the Reichskuratorium, a new position upon which Neufville did not elaborate.⁶¹

Reichenau informed Krüger of his conversation with Neufville, which prompted Krüger to reply two days later in an angry missive "... that Neufville's proposal is an unac-

⁵⁹Dokumente der dt. Politik, I, Nr. 33, "Verfügung Adolf Hitlers über die Ernennung des 'Jugendführers des deutschen Reiches' vom 17.6.1933", 65f.; Stachura, Nazi Youth, 199f.

⁶⁰BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, Reichenau's notes, "Besprechung am 17.6 [1933] mit Neufville als Vorschlag". Written on the bottom of the notes is [Reichskuratorium] "als zentrale Ausbildungsstelle (T.4) der Wehrverbände".

⁶¹Ibid.; and Sam Sch/421, letter Krüger to Reichenau, K/P, Qu 1538/33, 19 June 1933.

ceptable compromise for the SA"⁶² Claiming that Neufville's suggestions went contrary to all his own, Krüger added that he believed Neufville's latest ideas had the support of the Defense Ministry. It was difficult, he admitted, to understand the apparent volte face by the Army Command, when Reichenau himself had acknowledged that Neufville's leadership of the Reichskuratorium had been poor. Krüger then reminded Reichenau of Röhm's promise to watch the Reichskuratorium with "Argus Eyes", and added, in a naked threat, that Röhm would be coming to Berlin in two days and that he, Krüger, felt duty-bound to take whatever measures seemed appropriate to insure the realization of the SA's wishes vis-à-vis the Reichskuratorium.⁶³

Reichenau's response to Krüger's insubordinate letter has unfortunately not survived, but either Krüger successfully carried out his threat or Reichenau thought he would and abandoned his support for Neufville's proposal. Röhm, who had come to Berlin to celebrate the incorporation of the Stahlhelm into the SA,⁶⁴ met with Blomberg and

⁶²BA, Sam Sch/421, Krüger to Reichenau, K/P, Qu 1538/33, 19 June 1933. "... daß dies Vorschlag des Herrn v. Neufville für die SA einen unmöglichen Kompromiß bedeute und [ich] erwähnte weiterhin, daß das Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung überholt sei." Bl. 1. Krüger's impression that Reichenau favored Neufville's proposal may have been erroneous. See IfZG, Zgs. 1709, Huwe, Bl. 17, 35. Huwe states that Reichenau supported Krüger's candidacy throughout the spring of 1933.

⁶³BA, Sam Sch/421, Krüger to Reichenau, K/P, Qu 1538/33, 19 June 1933, Bl. 2ff.

⁶⁴Publicly announced on 21 June 1933. See BA, R-43 II/828, Wolffs' Telegraphisches Büro, Nr. 1495.

Reichenau and resolved the issue of the leadership of the military sport project in favor of Krüger.⁶⁵ On 27 June, Röhm promoted Krüger to the rank of SA Obergruppenführer and named him Chief of Training Affairs of the SA (Chef des Ausbildungswesens der SA), or in its abbreviated German form, Chef AW.⁶⁶

After the resolution of the military sport leadership question, there remained the task of determining Krüger's responsibilities. The interested parties, Krüger, Reichenau, Röhm, Tschammer und Osten, Schirach, and Hitler, met at the SA Leaders' Conference at Bad Reichenhall from 1 to 3 July. They discussed, among other things, the youth training program.⁶⁷ During the conference, Hitler told Krüger that he wanted him to train annually some 250,000 men in the use of military weapons. Hitler envisioned the courses lasting from four to six weeks.⁶⁸ At the end of the conference, Röhm issued an order outlining Krüger's

⁶⁵BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 2.

⁶⁶IfZG, Führerbefehl, Nr. 15, OSAF II, 1328/33, 1 July 1933, effective 26 June 1933.

⁶⁷For a summary of the conference and the speeches given by the participants, see Schultheß' Europäischer Geschichtskalender 1933, Berlin, 1934, 167f., and Norman Baynes, (ed.) The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922-August 1939, (trans. N. Baynes) London, 1942, 553f.

⁶⁸BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 8; IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, "Besprechung mit Oberst von Vietinghoff, Chef der Wehrmachtabteilung, am Mittwoch, 5.7. 1933", 4.

tasks as Chef AW. With the concurrence of the Defense Ministry, wrote the SA Chief of Staff, "... the entire pre-military youth training program is transferred to the Supreme SA Headquarters."⁶⁹

A week later, Hitler superseded Röhm's order, issuing his own "Basic Directives for Pre-Military Youth Training."⁷⁰ Hitler delineated three classes of sport: (1) youth sport, for youngsters under 15 years of age, to be conducted in the schools and in youth groups directed by Youth Leader Schirach; (2) terrain sport, for 16 and 17 year olds, to be conducted in the schools and by the various sport organizations under the jurisdiction of Reich Sport Commissar Tschammer und Osten; and (3), SA-sport, which OSAF would conduct for its men between 18 and 35 years of age. The SA leader responsible for SA-sport, wrote Hitler, was Krüger, who, after consulting with the Defense Ministry, would prepare the basic directives for all three classes of sport, insur-

⁶⁹"... die gesamte vormilitärische Jugendertüchtigung in die Hand der Obersten SA-Führung gelegt worden." Röhm's order, apparently OSAF Ch. 2001/33, is reproduced without a heading or number in Rundbefehl Nr. 184 of the Stahlhelm Bundesamt, Abt. Ia, 4 July 1933, in BHStA, IV, Stahlhelm, Bd. 78. On the problem of the number of this order, see BA, NS-10/77, letter Krüger to Brückner, Chef AW Ch. 213/33, Geheim, 13 July 1933.

⁷⁰BA, NS-10/77, "Grundsätzliche Anordnungen für die vormilitärische Jugendertüchtigung", 12 July 1933. The two orders, Hitler's and Röhm's of 4 July, are basically the same, with minor wording changes. Hitler did rescind Krüger's authority to regulate the Wehrsport activities of the Reichsarbeitsdienst.

ing that all sport activities merged into a comprehensive youth fitness program. The implementation of Krüger's guidelines for youth and terrain sport, explained Hitler, was the responsibility of Schirach and Tschammer und Osten, while Krüger was responsible, after consulting Blomberg, for implementing the guidelines for SA-sport.⁷¹

By July, five months after the advent of Hitler to power, he and Röhm had eased Seldte, Neufville, and the Stahlhelm out of the military sport movement, replacing them by Krüger and the SA, a phenomenon paralleling the Nazi seizure of power in other spheres of activity during the first half of 1933. Everywhere the conservative Nationalists were routed, displaced by the irrepressible Nazis whom they had hoped to exploit. The Army, like so many other organizations, acknowledged the Nazi victory when it turned over its cherished youth fitness program to the SA.

The consolidation, under the aegis of the SA, of all defense related youth activities, recognized at Bad Reichenhall, represented the ironic completion of Groener's youth fitness program concept of October 1930. The SA, the better elements of which he had hoped to convert to loyal supporters of the Weimar Republic, instead adopted, albeit in mirror image, his idea of using the Government sponsored youth fitness program as a substitute "school of the nation" to com-

⁷¹Ibid.

bat political partisanship. Rather than eradicating political partisanship, the Nazis wanted to inculcate National Socialist loyalty through youth training and military sport activities. In the words of Röhm, the SA had become "... the grand school for the education of the German youth in a militant and National Socialist spirit."⁷²

⁷²Schultheß! Europäischer Geschichtskalendar 1933,
167. "...die große Schule für die deutsche Jugend zur Erziehung in wehrhaftem und nationalsozialistischem Geist."

C H A P T E R V I I I

THE CHEF AW ORGANIZATION:

KRÜGER'S EMPIRE

Upon returning to Berlin from the Bad Reichenhall SA Conference (1-3 July 1933), Krüger faced immense problems. The SA pre-military training program, which Röhm had recently appointed him to direct, existed in name only. An organization capable of providing pre-military training for 250,000 men annually, which Hitler demanded of Krüger simply did not exist. No less pressing was the problem of the disposition of the personnel and facilities of the Reichskuratorium.

With characteristic energy, however, Krüger lost no time in disbanding the Reichskuratorium. On the 5th of July, he promptly rejected a suggestion from Neufville that the Reichskuratorium be allowed to retain a vestige of autonomy¹ and three days later the SA leader ordered Neufville's organization disbanded.² The budget of the Reichs-

¹IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, "Aktenvermerk", Krüger-Vietinghoff conversation, 5 July 1933, 2ff.

²BHStA, I, MK 13832, Reichskuratorium für Jugender-tüchtigung, Zweigstelle München, Nr. 2167R, to Bay.Staats-min. f. Kultus und Unterricht, 8 July 1933. The Reichswehr claimed that Krüger assumed control of the Reichskuratorium on 7 July. See BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift", Bl. 1.

kuratorium was absorbed by the Chef AW Organization.³ To insure the complete isolation of Seldte and his Stahlhelm lieutenants from any facet of military sport training, Krüger proposed that ministerial responsibility for the Chef AW Organization budget be transferred from Seldte's Reich Labor Ministry back to the Reich Ministry of the Interior, a proposal to which Blomberg agreed.⁴ Krüger also received authorization from Röhm on the 6th of July to take over Stahlhelm military sport training facilities.⁵

In organizing the headquarters of his new Chef AW Organization, Krüger apparently used the personnel of his former Group Staff for Special Purposes (Gruppenstab z. b. V.) as a nucleus for the new Chef AW Organization staff. From an original strength of three men at its inception in June 1932, the Gruppenstab z.b.V. had grown to number at least twenty by June 1933.⁶ Very little evidence

³BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 4; IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, conference of Krüger and Staatssekretar im Reichsfinanzministerium Reinhard, 18 July 1933, 7.

⁴BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "Aktenvermerk", Blomberg-Krüger conversation, 10 July 1933; IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS "Aktenvermerk", Blomberg-Krüger meeting, 15 July 1933, 4f.

⁵BA, Sam Sch/270, OSAF 1336/33, 6 July 1933.

⁶Although the Gruppenstab z.b.V. was organized in June 1932, Röhm did not issue the "Dienstsanweisung für den Gruppenstab z.b.V. in Berlin", until 20 November 1932. See BA, Sam Sch/408, OSAF Qu. Nr. 3388/32, 20 November 1932; IfZG, Führerbefehl II, OSAF 2420/32, 9 September 1932; Führerbefehl IV, OSAF Reichartz/II, 3790/32, 15 December 1932.

concerning this organization is known to have survived, but its mission was to serve as a liaison between the SA and the Reichswehr in matters relating to military sport programs, the Border Guard-East, and the Volunteer Labor Service.⁷

At any rate, the central staff headquarters of the Chef AW Organization, located in Berlin at Friedrich-Wilhelmstr. 5, seems to have emerged from the Gruppenstab z.b.V. by mid-July. The Chef AW Organization headquarters, under the direction of Staff Leader Wähmann, initially had six sections: personnel, training, organization, financial administration, a general section, and the staff inspectorate sections.⁸ The Army Command assigned two liaison officers, Captain von Bernuth and Major Model, to the Chef AW Organization.⁹

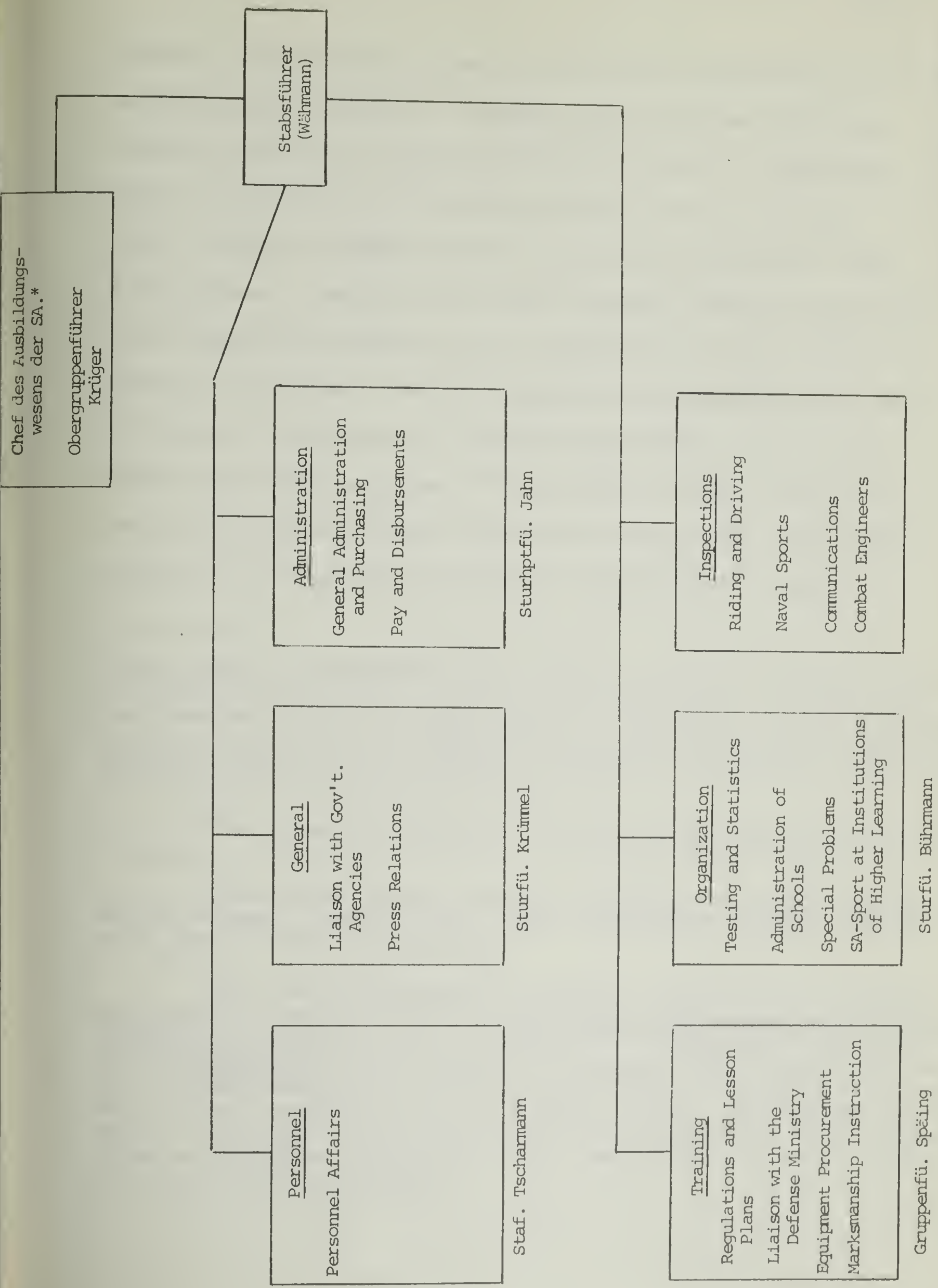
While the duties of most of the staff sections are self-explanatory, the general section, headed by Dr. Carl Krümmel,¹⁰ acted, in effect, as Krüger's liaison with Gov-

⁷BA, Sam Sch/408, OSAF Qu. Nr. 3388/32, 20 November 1932, "Dienstsanweisung für den Gruppenstab z.b.V. in Berlin".

⁸See next page.

⁹IfZG, Zgs. 248 (II), Holtzendorf, Eidesstaatliche Erklärung, 16 April 1957, Bl. 63; IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, "Aktenvermerk", Krüger-Vietinghoff", 5 July 1933, 2ff. Little information can be found concerning Bernuth, who reportedly fell in action in Russia in 1941.

¹⁰A machine gun company commander during the First World War, Krümmel entered the Universität München after the war, became active in athletic clubs, and earned a doctorate in political science in the early 1920s. An employee of the Army



*Source: BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, undated organization schematic diagram.

ernment and Nazi Party agencies which had interests in the military sport program. Krümmel also served as public relations officer for the Chef AW Organization.¹¹ The four staff inspectorates, horse and vehicle driver training, naval training, communications training, and pioneer (combat engineer) training, were each led by a Chef AW Organization Inspector responsible for conducting not only Chef AW training, but also training carried on by the entire SA in his area of competence. The four inspectors, two of whom were recent Army retirees,¹² had their own small staffs as well as a liaison officer assigned to them from the Defense Ministry.¹³ Although the Chef AW Organization inspectors

Sport School in Wünsdorf from 1923(?) to 1933, he became close friends with Reichenau, and at his insistence, transferred to the Chef AW in 1933. Krümmel left the Chef AW in 1934 to become head of the office for physical education (Abt. K) in the Reich-Prussian Ministry for Education, Culture, and Popular Education. He died in an airplane crash in 1938.

¹¹BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, undated organization schematic diagram.

¹²Brigadier General (Ret.) Leo Hederich, Inspekteur der SA/SS Reiterei, and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Alexander Bernay, Inspekteur des SA Nachrichtensports.

¹³BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, undated organization schematic diagram; Oberste SA-Führung, Gliederung des Stabes des Obersten SA-Führers, München, n.d. [1934], 33-43. (Hereafter cited as OSAF, Gliederung.) The Reichswehr assigned Major Graf Rothkirch (a former commander of the Army Sport School, Wünsdorf) as liaison to the Inspector of SA/SS Riding Affairs, and the Navy assigned Lt. Commander von Kieseritzski to the Inspector of SA Naval Affairs. Evidence indicating the names of the other two liaison officers has not survived.

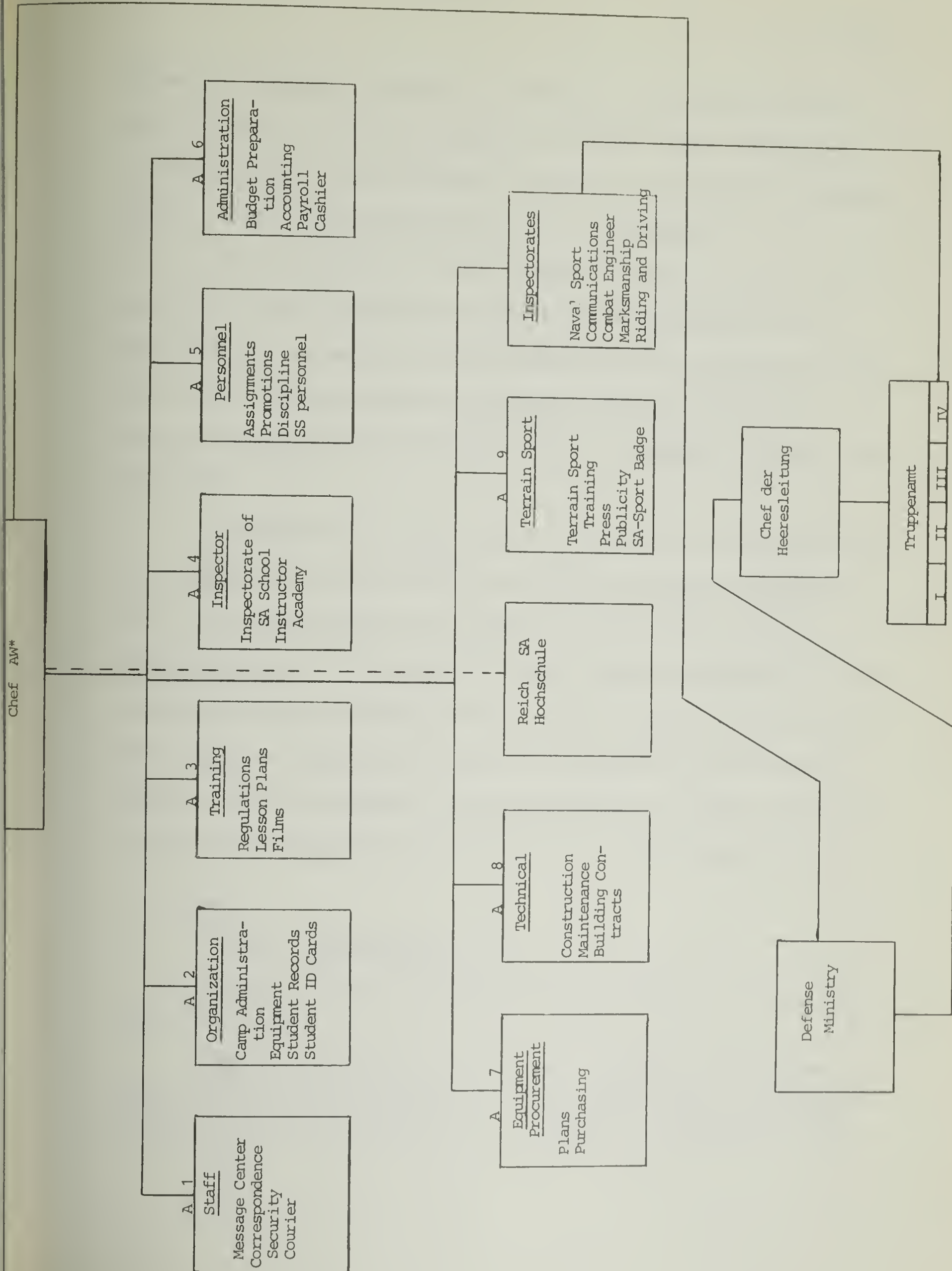
had the authority to draw up training regulations for the SA, responsibility for implementing these was shared with the commanders of the SA Groups,¹⁴ a division which later caused difficulty.

During the fall of 1933 and the winter of 1933-34, Krüger added several more staff sections and made minor reorganizations of his headquarters.¹⁵ He eliminated Wähmann's position as Staff Leader of the Chef AW Organization, assigning him instead to head the newly created "staff" section, the functions of which appear to have been routine matters of administration.¹⁶ Krüger moved Krümmel to the new terrain sport section, making him responsible for supervising the Chef AW Organization military sport schools. Krümmel still retained his public relations duties, but Krüger seems to have personally assumed responsibility for dealing with agencies outside his own organization with interests in military sport. In addition, the Chef AW created a technical (building construction and plans) section, and an Inspectorate of SA Schools section which appeared to enjoy a slightly

¹⁴BA, Sam Sch/405, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1513/33, 11 September 1933, "Dienstsanweisung für den Inspekteur der Marine-SA sowie Organisationsplan für die Marine-SA"; NS-23/125, OSAF Ch. NR. 1511/33, 12 September 1933, "Dienstsanweisung für den Inspekteur des Nachrichtensports".

¹⁵See next page.

¹⁶OSAF, Gliederung, 33. The reasons for Wähmann's demotion are unknown, but a colleague claimed he was an alcoholic who had to be persistently "dried out". Perhaps this resulted in his degradation. See IfZG, Zgs. 1709, Huwe, Bl. 8ff.



*Source: OSAF, Gliederung, 32-43.

elevated position compared to Krümmel's baliwick and the four inspectors of the technical schools. The Inspector of SA Schools, Heinz Späiling, acted as an inspector general for all Chef AW Organization and SA training.¹⁷

By the spring of 1934, Krüger's staff numbered 181. Forty-five were listed as "specialists" and ninety-four were either assistants to the specialists or secretaries to the same. Krüger hired one doorman, and the remaining forty-one employees held jobs such as handyman, driver, and guard.¹⁸

Although the headquarters of the Chef AW Organization was located in Berlin, Röhm authorized, during September 1933, the appointment of a Chef AW Organization deputy (Beauftragter) to the staff of each major SA command.¹⁹ To a certain extent, Röhm followed normal military practice in defining the responsibilities of the Chef AW Organization deputy. While reminding the deputies in an order issued on the 9th of September that they had "... to attend to the

¹⁷ OSAF, Gliederung, 33-43.

¹⁸ IfZG, Fa-90/2, Etatsvorschlag, October 1933-March 1934, Bl. 12f.

¹⁹ BA, NS-23/126, OSAF II, Nr. 1607/33, 20 October 1933, effective 15 September 1933. (There were 8 SA Senior Groups (one in Austria and 7 in Germany) and 20 SA Groups. See IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1525/33, 8 September 1933.

timely and proper execution of all orders of the Supreme SA Headquarters and the Chef AW pertaining to training,"²⁰ the SA Chief of Staff strongly reiterated to the senior SA commanders that they were still fully responsible for the state of training in their commands.²¹

Röhm made, however, some deviations from orthodox military custom. By tradition, a military commander is permitted to pick his own staff, the only exceptions coming in the area of technical advisors (e.g., surgeons, lawyers, communications specialists) where professional training dictates the choice. The SA Chief of Staff partially ignored this custom and ordered both Krüger and the concerned SA commanders to recommend candidates for appointment as Chef AW Organization deputies. Röhm reserved the final decision for himself,²² and the entire arrangement caused considerable rancor among the parties involved.²³ He further complicated staff relations by assigning the deputies to Krüger's staff for administrative matters (pay and promotion),

²⁰BA, NS-23/125, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1510/33, "Betr. Ausbildung im SA Sport", 9 September 1933. Er hat dafür zu sorgen, daß alle Anordnungen der Obersten SA-Führung bzw. des Chefs des Ausbildungswesens, die die Ausbildung betreffen, rasch und richtig durchgeführt werden." See also BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 7.

²¹Ibid., and OSAF, Ch. Nr. 1507/33, "Betr. SA-Schulungslager," 9 September 1933.

²²Ibid.

²³See Chapter IX, 245ff.

while at the same time the SA Chief of Staff reminded each deputy that he "... nonetheless belongs generally to the staff to which he is attached."²⁴ The ambiguities inherent in this relationship led to constant quarreling between Krüger and the SA commanders.

The direct lines of communication between the Chef AW Organization schools and the central headquarters in Berlin were severed by Röhm. Some of the SA commanders asserted that the Chef AW Organization schools that were located within the boundaries of their commands ipso facto fell under their authority, a position hotly disputed by Krüger.²⁵ Röhm sided with his commanders and encouraged them to inspect all facilities within their commands.²⁶ Krüger did succeed, in October 1933, in removing all purely internal administrative matters concerning the camps from the purview of the SA commanders,²⁷ but the chain of command between the Chef AW and his schools continued to pass through the major SA headquarters until the separation of

²⁴BA, NS-23/125, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1510/33, "Betr. Ausbildung im SA-Sport", 9 September 1933. "...gehört jedoch im übrigen zum Stabe der Dienststelle, der er zugeteilt ist."

²⁵BDC, Personalakt Krüger, Röhm to Krüger, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1527/33, "persönlich", 13 September 1933.

²⁶BA, NS-23/126, OSAF 1552/33, "Dienstanweisung für den Führer einer Obergruppe." 18 September 1933.

²⁷IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF/Chef AW, Nr. O/5515/106/33, 21 October 1933.

the Chef AW Organization from the SA in August 1934.²⁸

In October 1933, Krüger authorized the Chef AW Organization deputies small staffs of their own. At the Senior SA Group level, deputies were permitted seven assistants,²⁹ while their colleagues at the SA Group level had to make do with an assistant and driver.³⁰ Within six months the staff of the Senior Group deputy had increased to twenty, and a similar proliferation had occurred at the level of the SA Group. In addition, Krüger assigned each of his deputies a security specialist.³¹ While some of this increase in personnel can be attributed to the bureaucratic phenomenon of spontaneous generation, some posts were probably created to meet the expanding work load of the Chef AW Organization. Spurred on, moreover, by the Nazi Party, Krüger made special efforts to find positions for the Party stalwarts, the "old fighters".³² These efforts apparently

²⁸BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 8.

²⁹Ibid., OSAF/Chef AW, V/6001/33, 26 October 1933.

³⁰Ibid., OSAF/Chef AW, V/6557/117/33, 3 November 1933.

³¹Ibid., Fa-90/2, Etatsvorschlag, 2 June 1934, Bl. 86f.

³²GA, NS-10/77, "Staatistische Abteilung, betr. Lehr- und Ausbildungspersonal Chef AW", bi/2, 20 December 1934. There is some ambiguity in the term "old fighter." In its proper usage, the term applies only to those Nazis who were Party activists prior to September 1930, but it often meant anyone who had joined the Party before January 1933. It is not clear which definition Krüger used.

included creating "make work" positions.

Although the basic control apparatus of the Chef AW Organization consisted of the central staff in Berlin and the regional deputies, a semi-autonomous agency, the Reich SA University Office, was established by Röhm on the 9th of September as part of Krüger's organization.³³ The Reich SA University Office supervised the military sport program for students at universities and other institutions of higher learning. While the University Office enjoyed some autonomy, its inclusion in the Chef AW Organization represented a considerable triumph for Krüger.

Hitler's "Basic Principles for Pre-Military Youth Fitness Training" of 12 July had defined Krüger's responsibilities in respect to youth and terrain sport programs, but had not mentioned the considerable military sport activities conducted by university students under the aegis of the Nazi-oriented AWA, led by Otto Schwab.³⁴ During the spring of 1933, he had increased the AWA's activities and with the approval of the National Socialist German Students' League, the German Student Corporation, educational authorities, and the Army, had established AWA military sport offices at all

³³BA, Sam Sch/279, OSAF I, Nr. 1586/33, 16 October 1933. The term "Reich SA University Office" will be employed instead of the more cumbersome direct translation "Reich SA University and Institution of Higher Learning Office."

³⁴See Chapter III, 58f.

the universities and institutions of higher learning.³⁵

Schwab had approached Röhm and the Reichswehr in late April or early May, asking for assistance in finding suitable leaders for his military sport offices. Röhm responded at once, ordering his subordinate commanders on the 4th of May to recommend prospective candidates to Krüger, who, because of the immediacy of the projected appointments, made the final selections. In urging the commanders to submit their recommendations to Krüger immediately, Röhm pointed out that "positions not occupied by SA and SS leaders will, in all likelihood, end up in the hands of the Reichswehr."³⁶ The Army, justifying his suspicions, allocated on the 15th of May the funds necessary to support military sport training squads for Schwab's offices.³⁷ It is questionable

³⁵BA, NS-23/125, OSAF I, Nr. A 174/33, 4 May 1933; Schwab's request to the Reichswehr for assistance was the subject of CHL TA 400/33 g.K. T4III, 29 April 1933 [missing], referred to in BA-MA, II H/139, Wehramt Memorandum to TA, Nr. 3899/33 g.K., Wehramt III, 15 May 1933.

³⁶BA, NS-23/125, OSAF I, Nr. A 174/33, 4 May 1933. "8. Stellen, die nicht durch SA-und SS-Führer besetzt werden, gehen höchstwahrscheinlich in die Hände der Reichswehr über." Bl. 2.

³⁷BA-MA, II H/139, Wehramt memorandum to TA, Nr. 3899/33 g.K., Wehramt III, 15 May 1933. The personnel for these training camps had already been assigned on 10 April. See CHL TA 232/33 g.K. T2IIIA/T4III. Commencing with the Winter Semester 1933-34, the Reichswehr assigned five officers to the universities to teach military science courses. IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, Gerullis-Krüger conference, 17-18 July 1933, 8. For some idea of the nature of these military science courses, see IfZG, Ma-619, Haushofer Papers, "Wehrwissenschaftlichen Vorlesungsverzeichnis des Wintersemesters 1933-34", Universität München. Bl. 161851.

whether or not the Army could have met this commitment, a fact which the Army seemed to realize a month later when the shortage of military instructors mandated the transfer of the entire military sport training program to the SA.

In order to consolidate his position as director of all military sport training, Krüger had to bring Schwab and his AWA under the authority of the Chef AW Organization. Krüger had no difficulty in gaining the support of the Army for such a move. Colonel Heinrich von Vietinghoff genannt Scheel, an officer assigned to Reichenau's staff, endorsed the idea on the 5th of July.³⁸ The Chef AW next approached Reich Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick, under whose jurisdiction student affairs fell, as well as responsibility for military sport subsidies. Frick agreed "... that the entire military sport training program for the university students should be placed under the direction of the Chef AW."³⁹ Krüger hurdled the last possible obstacle to his plan by securing an endorsement of Frick's position from Ministerial Director Gerullis⁴⁰ of the Prussian Ministry for

³⁸IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, "Aktenvermerk," Vietinghoff-Krüger meeting 5 July 1933, 2ff.

³⁹BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "Aktenvermerk, Besprechung mit Minister Frick", 10 July 1933. "...daß die gesamte wehr-sportliche Ausbildung der Studentenschaft ebenfalls unter die Aufsicht des Chef des Ausbildungswesens gestellt werde."

⁴⁰A former university professor from Königsberg, he was a Ministerialdirektor in charge of student affairs in the Prussian Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksausbildung.

Academics, Art, and Popular Education. Gerullis not only seconded Frick, but suggested to Krüger that he forestall any opposition from the touchy students by appointing one of their leaders, either Schwab or Gerhard Krüger,⁴¹ to the staff of the Chef AW Organization.⁴²

Krüger followed this advice and appointed Schwab to his staff, probably in August, although Schwab seems to have worked already for the Chef AW Organization in some capacity during July.⁴³ Apparently Schwab made an attempt to retain his relative independence as head of the AWA, but his appointment to Krüger's staff and the disbanding of the AWA in August frustrated this effort.⁴⁴

Having thus neutralized by absorbtion any potential opposition from the AWA, Krüger, on the 9th of September,

⁴¹(6 December 1908-). Krüger headed the German Student Corporation. He hoined the NSDAP in 1928 while a student at Greifswald. In 1929 he transferred to Leipzig, and from 1931 to 1933 he headed the Deutsche Studentenschaft. Receiving his doctorate in history in 1934, he held a number of party positions until 1945.

⁴²IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, "Aktenvermerk", Gerullis-Krüger, 17-18 July 1933, 8.

⁴³Schwab's retroactive appointment to 1 July 1933, (BA, NS-23/126, OSAF II, Nr. 1607/33, 20 October 1933) and the fact that he was not mentioned in the first set of orders listing Chef AW appointments (see IfZG, Führerbefehl, Nr. 16, OSAF II, Nr. 4411/33, 1 August 1933) suggests that his initial activities for the Chef AW were either unofficial or undetermined, but later recognized, hence his appointment with seniority as of 1 July.

⁴⁴IfZG, Zgs. 1685, Heinrich Bennecke, Bl. 17f.; Bracher, Machtergreifung, 895.

replaced the defunct AWA with his own creation, the University Office. He named the Dresden SA Brigadeführer Heinrich Bennecke⁴⁵ to lead the University Office and appointed Schwab as Bennecke's deputy. An integral section of the Chef AW Organization staff, Bennecke's small section enjoyed considerable autonomy from Krüger in its supervision of the military sport offices at the universities and other institutions of higher learning. Bennecke personally selected the military sport office leaders, choosing students or recent graduates. The military sport camp directors were chosen by Krüger and local SA leaders, and there seems to have been some hostility between the camp leaders and the students. During the winter of 1933-34, Röhm ordered all healthy German male university students to report to their respective university military sport office to register for attendance at a military sport camp. The student, prior to his fifth semester, had to complete successfully a military

⁴⁵Personalakt Heinrich Bennecke, OSAF II, B, Nr. 3583/33, 12 September 1933. Bennecke claimed that he received word of his unexpected appointment while on vacation. IfZG, Zgs. 1685, Bennecke, 17f. and Bennecke, Röhm Putsch, 28. Born 8 February 1902, Bennecke had a long history of involvement with radical nationalist causes. A Zeitfreiwilliger with I.R. 23 in 1920 (during the Kapp Putsch), he served in Upper Silesia with the Freikorps Haßfurth, and was again a Zeitfreiwilliger with Pionier Abt. 7 in Munich during the time of the Hitler Putsch. A member of the NSDAP (Nr. 4840) since 1922, he served in the Dresden Frontbann (1924 to 1926), the National Socialist German Students' League (1926-28) and in the Dresden SA from 1929. He commanded SA Brigade 33 when appointed to the Chef AW. Following the war he became an apologist for the SA.

sport training course.⁴⁶

While consolidating his position vis-à-vis rival claimants for the mantle of military sport training tsar, Krüger busily recruited personnel for his organization. Despite Röhm's fulminations in May concerning "unacceptable" Reichskuratorium personnel, the Chef AW kept most Reichskuratorium employees, including von Neufville and von Olberg.⁴⁷ Other personnel for the Chef AW Organization were recruited from the SA and the general public.

SA men interested in joining Krüger's organization had to apply through SA channels, with their immediate SA commander making his evaluation of their military abilities, character, and "... the degree of [their] ideological solidarity...."⁴⁸ Before sending the application to Krüger,

⁴⁶BA, Sam Sch/279, OSAF I, Nr. 1632/33, 31 October 1933, "Dienststanweisung für den Führer des Reichs SA Hochschulamts"; and IfZG, Zgs. 1685, Bennecke, Bl. 20-23. Bracher, in Machtergreifung, 895, states that the Reich SA Hochschulamts was independent of the Chef AW. The above-mentioned "Dienststanweisung", sections 2,3,6,7, and 9 clearly establishes the subordinate relationship of Bennecke's section to the Chef AW. See also IfZG, Zgs. 1685, Bennecke, Bl. 20.

⁴⁷BA, NS-23/157, OSAF/Chef AW IIa/314/33, 17 July 1933; letter OSAF II/B, Nr. 2741/33 to Krüger, 23 July, and letter Chef AW St/IIa 820/33 to OSAF, 4 August 1933; Nachlaß Krüger/10, has an undated organization schematic diagram listing Olberg as head of its administrative section. Regierungsrat a.D. Jahn transferred to the Chef AW as Olberg's assistant. See IfZG, Führerbefehl Nr. 19, OSAF II, 1640/33, 9 November 1933; and Neufville transferred to the Chef AW, section A-9, Referat für Geländesport, on 27 March 1934. See IfZG, Führerbefehl Nr. 23, OSAF P, 6400.

⁴⁸IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF/Chef AW IIa/313/33, 17 July 1933. "...den Grad der weltanschaulichen Festigkeit...." Bl. 30.

the appropriate SA regional commander reviewed it and made his own recommendations, which was apparently decisive.⁴⁹

Non-SA applicants wrote Krüger's staff in Berlin directly, filling out an application form and responding to a questionnaire. In addition, they had to submit a certificate of exemplary character from their local police authorities, as well as military proficiency and evaluation records and letters of reference.⁵⁰

Krüger hurried to begin training operations, and he usually notified successful applicants within ten days of receipt of their files. He assigned newly appointed personnel to instructor training courses conducted by the Army.⁵¹ Most appointments to the Chef AW Organization were probationary for 90 days, at which time, following a review and evaluation of the candidate's performance, permanent appointment followed.⁵²

By January 1935, at the time of the disbanding of the Chef AW Organization, it employed over 10,000 people.⁵³

⁴⁹BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 8.

⁵⁰IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF/Chef AW, IIa/313/33, 17 July 1933, Bl. 30.

⁵¹BA-MA, II H/139, CHL TA 578/33 g.K. T4IIIIa, 2 August 1933. This order required each Military District to establish a training school for Chef AW instructors.

⁵²IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF/Chef AW, IIa/313/33, 17 July 1933, Bl. 30.

⁵³BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift", Bl. 5. This figure represents those on the payroll as of 24 January 1935.

As was to be expected from the nature of the training, a large percentage of Krüger's instructors were veterans of military service, about 40%,⁵⁴ and many of these were former career men whose military service had been cut short by the drastic reduction in the size of the Army following the loss of the war.⁵⁵ Krüger made a conscious effort to hire the "old fighters", and he claimed that more than half of his employees fell into this category.⁵⁶

At the bottom of the Chef AW Organization, and its reason for existence, were its schools and military sport camps. Surviving evidence indicates that the Chef AW Organization had some 242 schools, of which 148 were devoted to military sport training, 24 were used for terrain sport (Geländesport) instruction, 14 provided SA leadership training, and 3 were Chef AW Organization instructor training facilities. An additional 7 schools gave advanced marksmanship instruction, 17 prepared SA men for cavalry and

Bennecke claims that there were over 13,000 Chef AW employees. See his Röhm Putsch, 27ff. Krüger requested in his budget, for the period from October 1933 through March 1934, funds for 7303 employees. See IfZG, Fa-90/2, Etatsvorschlag, Bl. 26.

⁵⁴BA, NS-10/77, "Staatistische Abteilung, betr. Lehr- und Ausbildungspersonal Chef AW", Bi/Z, 20 December 1934.

⁵⁵BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, [Chef AW] Personalamt to Gruppenchef I, im Hause, 29 January 1935; IfZG, Zgs. 1709, Huwe, Bl. 4.

⁵⁶BA, NS-10/77, "Staatistische Abteilung, betr. Lehr- und Ausbildungspersonal Chef AW", Bi/Z, 20 December 1934.

transportation duties, 9 taught communications techniques (including pigeon post and dog handling), 8 instructed would-be combat engineers, 9 were SA naval schools, and one gave instruction to SA medics and first aid specialists.⁵⁷

Chef AW enrollment statistics have unfortunately not survived, and any estimate of attendance must come from the planned enrollment estimates contained in Krüger's budget proposals, which may not have been attained. In the first six months of the operations of the Chef AW Organization (October 1933 through March 1934), it appears that some 110,000 to 115,000 students attended military sport courses.⁵⁸ From April 1934 through March 1935, Krüger planned to train 316,330 students.⁵⁹ In all likelihood, owing to the re-

⁵⁷There are several conflicting lists and totals for the number of Chef AW schools. The most detailed list is that of the Präsident der Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung, III 7480/252, 30 December 1935, in BA, Sam Sch/421, reproduced in appendix A. This document listed all former Chef AW Organization AW schools in order for former employees to establish a claim for unemployment compensation. According to this list, there were 233 Chef AW schools, but for some unknown reason, the 9 Chef AW naval schools do not appear. Krüger himself stated that he ran 236 schools. See BDC, Personalakt Krüger, I, letter Krüger to Dr Hans Frank, 9 August 1935. The Chef AW budget proposal for fiscal year 1933 requests funds for 240 schools, but the proposal for fiscal year 1934 requests money for only 215 schools. See IfZG, Fa-90/2, Bl. 2, 63. For a list of Chef AW schools, see Appendix A.

⁵⁸BA, Nachlaß Krüger/15, undated letter of Krüger to response to RWM 32/33g. VGH, 22 September 1933. Krüger was requested to respond no later than 29 September. See also IfZG, Fa-90/2, Etatsvorschlag, Bl. 7.

⁵⁹IfZG, Fa-90/2, Etatsvorschlag, 2 June 1934, Bl. 63, indicates a projected enrollment of 276,640. In addition, Krüger planned to train 39,690 terrain sport students. See BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, Etatsvorschlag, Abt. "G", 2ff.

organization of the Chef AW following the "Röhm Putsch" of 30 June 1934, the organization fell short of its projected goal, and may have trained only 220,000 men.⁶⁰ In the twenty months of its formal existence, a conservative estimate is that some 330,000 men attended Chef AW Organization schools and camps.

Chef AW Organization personnel received excellent salaries which generated envy and created considerable ill-will, especially in the rest of the SA, the vast majority of whose members received no pay.⁶¹ Claiming, with some

⁶⁰This figure is roughly corroborated by an SA statistical report of 1941, which states that 143,629 SA men received the SA badge in 1934, and 436,526 in 1935. The badge was awarded to those who completed Chef AW military sport courses and passed a test. The Chef AW ceased operations in March 1935, so probably no more than 100,000 of those receiving the SA badge in 1935 attended Krüger's camps, and some of the men who received the badge in 1934 actually completed the Chef AW instruction in 1933. See BA, Sam Sch/409, OSAF, FK, 1d, 16061/41/Be/Se, 31 March 1941. In March 1935, the OSAF assumed responsibility to award the SA sport badge. See BA, NS-23/128, OSAF 13174, 16 March 1935.

⁶¹BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift", "An das Personal" of the Chef AW Organization, wrote General Fromm of the Army General Office, "wurden überhöhte Gehälter bezahlt." Bl. 2; *ibid.*, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 19; IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Erlebnis", Bl. 19; Bennecke, *Röhmputsch*, 29. Röhm, in early May 1933, had received 15 million RM from the Reich Interior and Finance Ministries to assist unemployed SA men. Röhm intended to garrison ca. 100,000 men in camps. See IfZG, Fa-90/1, Wähmann letter to Krüger, 7 May 1933, and BA, Nachlaß Krüger/15, letter Wähmann to Krüger, 11 May 1933. Röhm expressed his chagrin at the shoddy treatment accorded the SA in financial matters in letters of the 23rd and 25th of May 1933, to Nazy Party Treasurer Schwarz. See HA, f. 328. Röhm only received 3 million RM, the remainder being directed to Krüger in July. The money thus passed effectively from Röhm's control. See BA, Nachlaß Krüger/15, Frick-Krüger meeting, 10 July 1933.

justification, that he needed the relatively high salaries in order to compete with the military services and the Reich Labor Service in the search for good instructors.⁶² Krüger paid his full-time instructors, on the average, RM 226 monthly,⁶³ about the same pay which an Army lieutenant earned monthly.⁶⁴

Krüger's largess in dispensing generous salaries was matched by his seemingly extravagant outlay for the sport schools and their attendant facilities. While critics in the Army later accused him of fiscal irresponsibilities,⁶⁵ the circumstances associated with the military sport program dictated that it would be expensive. The enormous expansion of student enrollment (from approximately 12,000 trained by the Reichskuratorium in the spring of 1933 to the 250,000 students per year mandated by Hitler) necessitated the acquisition of numerous training facilities in addition to

⁶²During the winter of 1933-34, Krüger attempted to prevent his personnel from joining the Reichswehr, claiming that the Reichswehr was deliberately enlisting his best personnel. See IfZG, Fa-90/1, Blomberg to Röhm, RWM 168/34 g.K. LIIA, 22 February 1934; Krüger to Röhm, Ch/G 837/34, 24 February 1934; and Röhm to Blomberg, 26 February 1934.

⁶³BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 19ff.

⁶⁴IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, memorandum of conversation with Reichenau, November 1933, Bl. 6.

⁶⁵BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift", passim.

the 28 Reichskuratorium camps and the 16 SA military sport schools which Krüger already had. The obvious source of training facilities, namely the pre-war Army garrison facilities, which were available at no cost and plentiful, had to be rejected for security reasons. Most of these garrisons were located in large towns and cities, where the clandestine training of the SA would be all too easily observed. The need for secrecy dictated that most Chef AW Organization schools be located in small, relatively isolated rural communities,⁶⁶ which meant that building had to begin from scratch.

In his instructions for establishing Chef AW Organization facilities, Krüger urged his assistants to try every conceivable means to keep construction costs to a minimum. He stated that communities which offered to assist either in the construction or the financing of Chef AW facilities would be given first consideration for the location of the schools. For whatever construction or renovation was necessary, he wrote, it was imperative to approach the Reich Labor Service for assistance, which presented the most economical means of building a camp or school, involving only the cost of materials. If the Labor Service refused to assist, he cautioned his staff members to sign contracts only with reputable firms owned by Nazi Party members (preferably of

⁶⁶BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 22f.

long-standing) which would be required to hire unemployed SA men for Chef AW projects.⁶⁷ Krüger also urged his assistants to explore other avenues of economy, such as long-term leasing, or arranging tax credits with the Reich Finance Ministry for communities which assisted the Chef AW building program.⁶⁸ Insofar as possible, Krüger attempted to build his camps and schools on public property. In Bavaria, in contrast to the arrangements of the Bavarian Government with other Nazi Party agencies, the Chef AW Organization negotiated an arrangement so that it did not pay any rent for using state property.⁶⁹

Despite attempts to reduce costs, the enormous growth of Krüger's staff and the tremendous increase in pre-military training activities necessitated an immense expenditure of funds. Krüger absorbed the small (RM 1.5 million) Reichskuratorium budget in July, and received during the summer of 1933 some additional assistance from the Reich Ministry of the Interior and the Army.⁷⁰ While this money covered his

⁶⁷IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF/Chef AW O/G Nr. 90/70/33, 14 September 1933, Bl. 59F.

⁶⁸BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 23ff.

⁶⁹BA, Sam Sch/421, Bay. Staatsmin. d. Finanzen, Nrs. 18000 and 18001, to Landeszeitungsstellen, 27 April 1934.

⁷⁰BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 11; "Niederschrift", Bl. 1; IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, "Aktenvermerk", Blomberg-Krüger meeting, 15 July 1933. During the winter of 1933-34, Krüger received some funds from the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. See BA, Nachlaß Krüger/11, PMd1, VOI 1403/33/I F, 1105/1-18.12, 2 January 1934.

immediate operating costs, a firm budget was imperative, and Krüger prepared one by November, estimating his yearly expenses at RM 118,203,600. To see his organization through the remaining half (1 Oct. 1933 - 31 March 1934) of fiscal year 1933, he requested RM 79,382,000. The budget, however, never gained official approval from the Finance Ministry. Its experts, along with Defense Ministry and Chef AW officials, agreed that a formal confirmation of the Chef AW Organization budget could serve no useful purpose, because the scope of the Chef AW's mission was as yet undefined. Krüger did not receive the RM 79 million, but got instead RM 47 million.⁷¹

Similar problems developed in preparing the 1934 budget. During the first six months of 1934, neither the OSAF nor the Defense Ministry would agree to allow the other to assume responsibility for Krüger's finances. The purge of Röhm in June 1934, ended this conflict. The re-organization of the Chef AW Organization during the summer of 1934 occasioned a repetition of the strange argument that an undetermined mission obviated the need for official approval of the budget. Perhaps this was a sign of unwillingness on the part of the Government and the Army to legalize and make permanent the Chef AW Organization. Krüger nonetheless re-

⁷¹IfZG, Fa-90/2, Etatsvorschlag, n.d. [Nov. 1933], Bl. 7-26, 126; BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", 12f.; "Niederschrift", Bl. 1.

requested RM 120 million in 1934 for his schools and an additional RM 23 million for terrain sport training, the Reich SA University Office, and Hitler Youth training camps. He received RM 90 million, of which all but 8 million was for the Chef AW Organization.⁷²

The fact that Krüger had considerable difficulty and finally failed to secure a sound financial footing for his organization should not be allowed to obscure the remarkable support which he did receive. In the nine months of its existence, the Reichskuratorium received RM 1.5 million. In contrast, the Chef AW Organization, which existed for slightly less than two years, enjoyed subsidies of RM 137 million.

The purpose for the outlay of all this money was to expand the military sport training program, and Krüger began his first courses in some 70 camps on the 15th of October 1933. Terrain sport camps began four days later.⁷³ In spite of the efforts of the Reichswehr to train Chef AW instructors during August and September, there appears to have been a shortage of trained Chef AW instructors, which

⁷²BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 13-18; "Niederschrift", Bl. 1f.

⁷³IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF/Chef AW, G. Nr. 138/81/33, 20 September 1933, and OSAF/Chef AW AA 4318/93/33, 9 October 1933. For a list of schools in operation see *ibid.*, Bl. 198f. The schools were equally distributed in each military district, *i.e.*, 5-6 schools per district.

necessitated further assistance from the Army, already short-handed itself. On 19 September, the Army Command ordered each Military District to assign two officers and 20-25 enlisted men to assist Chef AW Organization schools within their respective districts. The Defense Ministry specified that whenever possible district commanders would assign to this duty the same soldiers who had earlier assisted the Chef AW Organization or the Reichskuratorium instructors. To maintain the deception that the Chef AW Organization and the Reichswehr had no contact, the Defense Ministry in September 1933 ordered its men assigned to Krüger's organization to wear the SA uniform.⁷⁴

The Army provided further assistance to the Chef AW Organization by preparing the programs of instruction and the lesson plans for Krüger's schools. SA military sport training was, wrote the Army Command in an order of the 27th of July 1933, basic recruit training under arms.⁷⁵

⁷⁴BA-MA, II H/139, CHL TA 730/33, g.K. T4IIIA, 19 September 1933; WKVII/2188, WKII/Ib, 1588/33 g.K./Ia-A, 25 September 1933; and WKVII/734, CHL TA 740/33 g.K. T4IIIA/337/33 g.K.H., 29 September 1933.

⁷⁵BA-MA, WKVII/1451, Abschrift of CHL TA 533/33 g.K. T4III, "Richtlinien für die vormilitärische Ausbildung", 27 July 1933. "SA-Sport ist Rekrutenausbildung mit der Waffe.... Das Ziel der SA-Sportausbildung ist die gründliche Einzelausbildung (Rekrutenausbildung)...." See also BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 8. (emphasis in original)

According to regulations issued in the summer of 1933, successful completion of the basic SA military sport course was a pre-requisite to enlistment.⁷⁶

SA military sport courses lasted four weeks, and the technical (communications, combat engineer, riding and driving, and seamanship) courses averaged three weeks in duration.⁷⁷ The students' 13 hour day was long but well-regulated and the students were kept busy. Reveille came at 6 AM, followed by physical training and breakfast. Mornings were devoted to learning field exercises (e.g., forced marching, offensive and defensive tactics, and field fortification techniques), while afternoon instruction focused on marksmanship, range estimation, map reading, assembly/disassembly of military weapons, and outpost and sentry duty, followed by more physical training, drill, and team sports. Organized into squads and platoons, the student groups competed against one another, with the victors receiving special privileges, usually an extended leave from camp. Dinner was held at 6 PM, and unless some form of night training was scheduled, evenings were free. The students were

⁷⁶BA-MA, WKVII/1451, Abschrift CHL TA 533/33 g.K. T4III, "Richtlinien", 27 July 1933. This was later changed to give priority to those who had completed pre-military training. See BA, Sam Sch/405, "Merkblatt für den Eintritt in die Reichsmarine", Frühjahr 1934; and NS-23/319, "Merkblatt für den Eintritt in das Reichsheer", April 1934.

⁷⁷BA-MA, WKVII/1451, Abschrift CHL TA 533/33 g.K. T4III, "Richtlinien", 27 July 1933; IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF/Chef AW Insp. d. SA/SS Reiterei 490/33, 26 October 1933; and BA, NS-23/319, Chef AW, Landesführer IV, Pi/G, 201/34, Be/Fa, 9 November 1934.

encouraged to spend their free time and the pocket money they received from the Chef AW Organization in the camp canteen or in the local community. The camp lights were normally extinguished at 10 PM.⁷⁸

Some of the first Chef AW technical courses had to be conducted in Army garrisons because the SA facilities were not completed. Various Reichswehr units were ordered by the Defense Ministry in September 1933 to assign soldiers to assist the Chef AW Organization instructors and to provide logistical support and lodging for the Chef AW schools quartered in their garrisons.⁷⁹ The orders to the garrison commanders stressed the secrecy of the program, insisting that all correspondence concerning any SA training employ the street, rather than the military address of the garrison and its units "because foreign policy reasons prohibit any visible relationship between the SA and the Reichswehr, and for the duration of the courses, the wearing of the SA uniform by the students in the vicinity of the garrison is prohibited."⁸⁰ The Chef AW Organization students in this

⁷⁸IfZG, Fa-90/1, CHL TA 533/33 g.K. [T4III, 27 July 1933] Anlage 2, Bl. 1-24; BA, R-53/191, letter Karl-Heinz Stigler (zur Zeit bei der SA-Sportschule Aschaffenburg) to his uncle Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen, 20 March 1934.

⁷⁹BA-MA, WKVII/734, CHL TA 734/33 g.K. T4IIIA, Wehr. A 648/33 g.K. In 51, 28 September 1933.

⁸⁰Ibid., and CHL TA 740/33 g.K./337/33 g.K.H., 29 September 1933. "Da aus aussenpolitischen Gründen kein Zusammenhang zwischen Heer und SA nachweisbar sein darf, ist den Teilnehmern während der Dauer der Lehrgänge das Tragen der SA-Uniform im Bereich des Standorts verboten."

instance wore the uniform of the Reichswehr.⁸¹

Although a few SA men attended technical training in Reichswehr garrisons, most SA men received their military sport training in Chef AW Organization camps. The typical camp was new and situated on the outskirts of or at some distance from a rural community. This relative isolation aided the physical security of the camp and helped to discourage the curious. The camp, surrounded by a fence, was usually constructed of wood and had private bungalows for the staff and their families, barracks for the students, and communal dining, bathing, and recreation facilities. The Chef AW Organization initially adopted the camp arrangement because of its low cost and ease of security, but later the camp became extolled by the Nazis as an end in itself, a place where young Germans learned not just to work, but to live with one another in the "healthy" atmosphere of a National Socialist community.⁸²

Although the size of the camps often varied on account of location, Krüger attempted to achieve uniformity among them. Military sport schools had an average enrollment of 210 students per course, as did the terrain sport schools. There were 54 staff members assigned to each of these schools. Enrollment figures for the technical schools

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Bernett, Leibeserziehungen, 79ff.

fluctuated from 280 students per combat engineer course to 160 per communications course. The staff of a communications school numbered 85, in comparison to 64 at combat engineer schools, and only 37 at marksmanship schools.⁸³

To recognize the growing number of SA men who had been graduated from Chef AW Organization military sport courses, Röhm established the SA Sport Badge in December 1933. Applicants had to complete several preliminary tests prior to attending a Chef AW military sport camp, and at the end of the four week course the final test was conducted. SA and SS men who passed all the tests were entitled to wear the badge on their uniforms.⁸⁴

When Röhm created the sport badge in December, Krüger's Chef AW Organization had already been in operation for several months and had probably graduated some forty or fifty thousand SA and SS men from its courses. From a nucleus of 18 Reichskuratorium camps and 16 SA schools, Krüger had built and put into operation over seventy military sport schools by mid-October 1933. In addition, within a scant five months he had organized a command structure

⁸³IfZG, Fa-90/2, Etatsvorschlag (1.4.34-31.3.35), 2 June 1934, Bl. 63, 66-94.

⁸⁴BA, NS-23/1, OSAF, I Nr. 1719/33, betr. SA-Sportabzeichen, 5 December 1933. The precise requirements for the SA badge were issued in a 15pp. pamphlet prepared by Krüger, a copy of which can be seen in BA, Sam Sch/415, "Ausführungsbestimmungen." See also SA Mann, No. 13, 31 March 1934.

capable of directing and supporting his large and far-flung military sport school empire. Finally, he had outmaneuvered his rival Nazi Party comrades who had contested his claim to direct all military sport programs. On the other hand, Krüger's position was by no means secure and the most bitter and prolonged opposition to his organization came from his fellow political soldiers in the SA.

C H A P T E R I X
BETWEEN THE SA AND THE REICHSWEHR

JULY 1933 - JUNE 1934

The Bad Reichenhall Agreement of July 1933 represented the highpoint of Reichswehr-SA relations. From the Army's standpoint, the decision to allow the SA to direct the military sport program relieved the already over-committed military instructors of the burden of having to train thousands of SA men. Moreover, in the eyes of the Army Command leaders, the SA now had a meaningful role in national defense, with which they falsely assumed the SA would be satisfied.

Röhm, however, appears to have interpreted the Reichenhall Agreement as the beginning of an increased role for the SA in national defense and national policy determination. He expected Hitler, at any moment, to create a SA Reich Ministry, which among other things, would be responsible for all non-regular defense forces and activities.¹ Röhm had, for the most part, gained control of all irregular forces at Reichenhall, but his ambitions were greater. Execrating the lack of political commitment in the pre-1914

¹IfZG, Fa-90/1, Wähmann to Krüger, Bericht Nr. 1, 7 May 1933, Bl. 5. Messerschmidt, in Wehrmacht, 27, argues that Röhm, by gaining control of all pre-military training programs, had already won an important concession and that pre-military training provided him and the SA a base from which to expand their power.

Army and the Reichswehr, he castigated the Army for its non-partisan politican attitude. Such attitudes, he wrote, had contributed materially to the loss of the 1914-1918 war. The German soldier did not, he claimed, have any political convictions to inspire him to carry on the struggle when all appeared lost. Such courage of conviction, explained the SA Chief of Staff, could only emanate from a sincere commitment to a political ideology. In the new National-Socialist state, he asserted, the traditional efficiency of the German Army must be tempered by the political conviction of its soldiers, whose loyalty for not only the state but the Nazi movement must be unshakeable. Thus, explained Röhm, the apolitical Reichswehr was an anachronism in the Nazi state and it would have to be replaced by an army of steadfast National Socialists.² Röhm apparently never expressed a clear decision regarding the future of the Reichswehr, but ambiguously implied that the Reichswehr either would become a training cadre for a SA Peoples' Army or would become the elite striking force of the Nazi Peoples' Army.³

With a series of misunderstandings marring Reichswehr-

²Röhm, Hochverräter, 110, 168f.

³Papen, Memoirs, 313; Gisevius, To the Bitter End, 112.

SA relations during the spring of 1933,⁴ both parties hoped that the agreement reached at Reichenhall would eliminate areas of conflict. Army officers left Bad Reichenhall convinced that their difficulties with the SA had been resolved and that the SA would attempt no further inroads into military spheres of activity.⁵ This relative calm and illusion was quickly shattered when the Army Command began to discover that Röhm had no intention of allowing the Army to dominate the SA pre-military training program. While this program did provide a temporarily useful outlet for the SA, Röhm saw the danger of allowing Blomberg and Reichenau to fashion Krüger and the Chef AW Organization into a brown auxiliary of the Reichswehr. The SA Chief of Staff had to retain his authority over Krüger in order to further his ambitions for a greater military role for the SA, while the Reichswehr could not allow the SA any further incursions

⁴A number of these misunderstandings were quite petty, such as the failure to exchange salutes between SA and Reichswehr personnel. See BA, NS-23/125, OSAF IIB 107/33, 19 April 1933; and Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS, 32. For the more serious matter of SA men arresting military employees, see the lengthy correspondence in BA-MA, RW 6/v66 and WO1-5/108; BA, NS-23/125, OSAF 1313/33, 27 June 1933, and IfZG, F-56, Aufzeichnung des Generals a.D. Kurt Weckmann, Bl. 8f. The question of whom should lead SA units incorporated into the Grenzschutz presented the thorniest problem of 1933. The SA insisted on retaining its own leaders, and the Army demanded that it should name the leaders. This issue wrecked the Grenzschutz of that period. See IfZG, Zgs. 39 (I), Fretter-Pico, Bl. 31f; Zgs. 11, Böckmann, Bl. 3f; Zgs. 105, Mellenthin, Bl. 33f; and F-56, Weckmann, Bl. 5-8.

⁵Keitel, Verbrecher, letter of Frau Lisa Keitel to her mother, 5 July 1933, 53.

into the sphere of national defense without abrogating its claim of being the sole national military force. To allow Röhm undisputed control of the pre-military training program was to open a veritable Pandora's Box of insatiable SA demands which might culminate in the replacement of the Army by the brown battalions. Thus Krüger, from the onset of his appointment as Chef AW, found himself in the extraordinarily difficult position of being responsible to two antagonistic factions, each intent on eliminating the influence of the other.⁶ While the domination of the Krüger Organization was only one facet of the struggle between the Reichswehr and the SA, it was the most visible and tangible objective for each party.

While the majority of Krüger's problems stemmed from the antagonisms of the Army and the SA toward one another, more than a few of his difficulties arose from his attempts to institutionalize his precarious position, namely to give his organization some statutory definition and hence protection against caprice. His efforts were perhaps not unjustly perceived by Röhm and Reichenau as "empire building".⁷ In this contest Krüger's abrasive personality proved of

⁶BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 5-9; IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Erlebnis", Bl. 17-24; Vogelsang, "Chef AW", 9f; Steiner, Clausewitz bis Bulganin, 112f; Bennecke, Reichswehr und Röhmputsch, 30, 46.

⁷BDC, Personalakt Krüger, Himmler to Krüger, 29 December 1939.

inestimable value. With a sense of duty that allowed no compromise, he shrank from no task, no matter how unpleasant, essential to the completion of his mission. When the occasion demanded, he could be brutally frank. He had already accused Reichenau of working against him and the SA,⁸ and had become involved over an alleged slight in an acrimonious dispute with the Prussian Ministry for Education, Arts, and Vocational Training.⁹ Supremely confident, his self-righteousness could be insufferable. An idealist, he drove himself and his personnel ruthlessly, yet they rewarded his excessive concern for their welfare with considerable respect and fidelity.¹⁰ His portraits reveal a cold haughtiness and a lack of either expression or emotion.¹¹ Krüger's personality, his military background, and his austere private life made him suspect in the eyes of many of the radical SA leaders, while these same characteristics gave him a certain entr   with the Defense Ministry.

Krüger had developed one additional capacity which was to serve him well: an instinct for identifying and ingratiating himself with the "right" people, those who

⁸BA, Sam Sch/421, Krüger to Reichenau, Qu 1538/33, 19 June 1933.

⁹Ibid., Gerullis to Krüger, 15 August 1933; Krüger to Gerullis, 17 August 1933.

¹⁰See IfZG, Fa-90/1, Wähmann letters to Krüger, May 1933; Steiner, Clausewitz bis Bulganin, 112ff.

¹¹The only picture of Krüger readily available in the United States is in Nikolai Tolstoy, The Night of the Long Knives, New York, 1972, 47.

wielded power. For example, at the end of February 1933, radical SA leaders from Silesia requested his assistance in blocking the appointment of an allegedly notorious Free Mason to the Breslau Police Presidium. Deploing the fact that the political leaders of the Nazi Party rarely consulted SA leaders prior to making important personnel appointments, the radical SA leaders in their letter to Krüger noted that this most unacceptable candidate was even alleged to be friendly with Göring. Krüger's reply to the Breslau SA leaders has not survived, but he forwarded their letter on 2 March to Göring's Prussian Ministry of the Interior where it was surely read and recorded with interest, as well as gratitude.¹²

Although Krüger had already clashed with Reichenau, and perhaps recognized in him an opponent of equal ambition and energy, the two appeared to have resolved their differences by the end of July in the light of the greater threat posed by the ambitious Röhm. Side-stepping a clumsy effort earlier in the month by Reichenau to assert Reichswehr control over his budget,¹³ Krüger nonetheless apparently agreed

¹²BDC, Personalakt Krüger, letter of Gruppenstabsführer Pückler to Krüger, "vertraulich", 28 February 1933. The letter has Krüger's initial at the top and a stamp marking receipt by the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, 2 March 1933. Göring, a former commander of the SA, despised Röhm and feared his power. He especially hated SA leaders Edmund Heines (Breslau) and Karl Ernst (Berlin), for whose arrest and execution he was personally responsible.

¹³IMT, XXIX, 1850-PS, Blomberg-Krüger conversation, 15 July 1933, 4f.

in the interests of harmony to submit his final budget to the Reichswehr for review.¹⁴ By the end of July Krüger and Reichenau signed an agreement which called for Krüger to train some 250,000 men yearly with the Army providing whatever assistance he needed.¹⁵

Reichenau's greatest success in his dealings with Krüger consisted in gaining a strong voice in Chef AW personnel selection. The military nature of the Chef AW training programs dictated employment of as many veterans as possible and it appears that Reichenau proved quite willing to supply Krüger with numerous personnel suggestions and recommendations.¹⁶ Reichenau, moreover, had "liaison" officers assigned to the important Chef AW Organization staff sections. These military liaison officers kept Reichenau informed of activities at the highest level of the Chef AW Organization and in all likelihood influenced Krüger's plans and decisions.¹⁷ After Hitler became alarmed in October 1933 over alleged security leaks in the Krüger Organization, Krüger created security specialists for the

¹⁴BA, Nachlaß Krüger, "Stellungnahme", 12f.

¹⁵Ibid., 9; BA-MA, WK VII/1451, RWM TA 533/33 g.K. T4III, Berlin, 27 July 1933 (Abschrift).

¹⁶Bracher, Machtergreifung, 893f; Messerschmidt, Wehrmacht und NS, 26f.

¹⁷IfZG, Zgs. 248 (I), Holtzendorff, Bl. 58; BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 9.

staff of each SA Group headquarters. These specialists were almost entirely selected by Reichenau, who encouraged them to work closely with local Reichswehr counterparts. The Chef AW security sections provided the Reichswehr with considerable information concerning internal SA activities.¹⁸ Finally, Reichenau secured the appointment of Dr. Karl Krümmel to head the General Section of the Chef AW Organization staff. Krümmel was responsible for liaison and coordination of Chef AW activities with government agencies. Krümmel left his position of instructor at the Army Sport School in Wünsdorf only at the insistence of Reichenau, who had been a close acquaintance for ten years.¹⁹

In addition to gaining some influence in the Chef AW Organization by influencing personnel selection, it is possible that Reichenau may have considered using the Krüger Organization to split and weaken the SA. By providing SA men, disgruntled with their small share in the spoils of the Nazi regime, with an example of Reichswehr-SA cooperation, namely the Chef AW Organization, Reichenau may have wanted to show SA men that not only was cooperation with the Army

¹⁸IfZG, Fa-90/1, Aktenvermerk Krüger, 19 October 1933; Zgs. 1709, Huwe, Bl. 11; Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Erlebnis", Bl. 5; Bennecke, Reichswehr und Röhmputsch, 46f; Manstein, Soldatenleben, 184-187.

¹⁹I am indebted for this information to Prof. Dr. Horst Überhorst, who graciously permitted me to read his manuscript of a forthcoming biography of Krümmel.

feasible, but beneficial: beneficial to the Army by alleviating the manpower shortage, and beneficial to the SA by providing employment. He may have hoped that in the long run such an example might attract the conservative and reasonable elements of the SA to the Reichswehr and the state, leaving Röhm and his radicals isolated and without significant political influence. There was, from Reichenau's standpoint, little risk in pursuing a policy directed at dividing the SA. Should he have only partial success, at least the Krüger Organization, vital to defense plans, would remain safely under Army control, and should he achieve complete success, rallying the "decent" SA men to the Reichswehr banner, the problem of the intractable Röhm would disappear.

Although his own position between the Army and the SA was not at all clear, Krüger had no doubts as to his position vis-à-vis other SA leaders. In an order issued 19 July, he informed them that they would no longer visit Defense Ministry officials without his permission, noting that "by the establishment of the headquarters of the Chief of Training Affairs of the SA, all intercourse and the sole liaison with the Army has been laid in my hand".²⁰ Two days later Röhm explained to his SA commanders that they would provide Krüger any assistance he needed in making personnel

²⁰IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF Chef AW, V/R/360/33, 19 July 1933. "Durch die Einrichtung der Dienststelle des Chefs des Ausbildungswesens der SA ist der gesamte Verkehr und die einzige Verbindung zur Reichswehr in meine Hand gelegt."

selections. Further, wrote the SA Chief of Staff, commanders would place no obstacles in the path of their men who wished to join the Chef AW.²¹

In dealing with men whose inflamed sensitivities demanded twelve lives as retribution for every SA man lost in action,²² Röhm's order authorizing a personnel raiding expedition and Krüger's arrogant tone were bound to provoke a strong reaction. The SA Group Commanders complained bitterly to Röhm,²³ and according to Krüger, procrastination, reluctance, begrudging compliance, and in some cases outright defiance, characterized the cooperation he received from his fellow SA leaders.²⁴ A conference held at Bad Godesburg during the middle of August, at which Hitler, Röhm, Reichenau, Krüger, and the senior SA leaders were present, failed to resolve the nascent conflict. Hitler and Röhm repeated, in lengthy and "flimsy" speeches, the tired platitudes that the Army remained the sole fighting force of the nation. Nothing was accomplished toward resolving Krüger's anomalous position or tenuous authority, and Hitler's attempt to paper over

²¹Ibid., OSAF Chef AW Nr. 490/33, 21 July 1933.

²²Ibid., OSAF Ch. 1415/33, 31 July 1933, "Disziplin".

²³Röhm immediately scheduled a conference of all major SA commanders and staff leaders for 3 August 1933. See BA, NS-23/125, OSAF I, Nr. 1413/33, 28 July 1933. No record of this conference can be discovered.

²⁴BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 3, 7f.

serious rifts between warring factions with vague formulas did not prove to be a crashing success.²⁵

In the absence of a decision by Hitler, Röhm was not slow in either responding to Reichenau's efforts to dominate indirectly the Chef AW Organization or in answering the angry cries of his subordinates who professed to be outraged at Krüger's arrogance. While not quite countermanding his order of 21 July, the SA Chief of Staff effectively superseded it six weeks later. Reserving for himself the authority to approve Krüger's regional staff director (Chef AW deputies) nominations, Röhm permitted senior SA commanders to make recommendations concerning the suitability of Krüger's nominees.²⁶ In addition, he made Chef AW deputies subordinate not to Krüger but to the senior SA commanders,²⁷ who were made responsible for implementing Krüger's directives.²⁸ In a similar fashion, Röhm authorized the four Chef AW training inspectors to issue training regulations for the entire SA, but assigned authority for executing these direct-

²⁵Müller, Heer und Hitler, 93; Graß, Jung, 119.

²⁶BA, NS-23/125, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1510/33, 9 September 1933; Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 7.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸BA, NS-23/125, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1507/33, 9 September 1933; NS-23/126, OSAF 1551/33, 18 September 1933, "Dienstweisung für den Führer einer Obergruppe."

ives to SA unit commanders.²⁹ The SA Chief of Staff thus effectively subverted Krüger's authority, granted in July by Hitler,³⁰ to deal directly with SA commanders in matters relating to military sport. In the event of non-compliance by refractory SA leaders, Krüger could now only request Röhm, who alone had the prestige and authority in the SA to compel obedience, to enforce the training directives.

Fearing that Röhm's newest orders would only exacerbate his worsening relations with SA leaders, Krüger complained to the Chief of Staff that his "...regulations governing the relations between SA unit headquarters and [the Chef AW] Inspectors could be expected to lead to difficulties."³¹ In a private reply, Röhm all but accused Krüger of disloyalty and sharply admonished him to avoid the imperious tone which permeated his correspondence. "I accept", wrote Röhm, "the responsibility [for any problems] because I have issued the order. You have", he continued,

²⁹BA, Sam Sch/405, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1513/33, 11 September 1933, "Dienststanweisung für den Inspekteur der Marine-SA sowie Organisationsplan für die Marine-SA"; NS-23/125, OSAF Ch. Nr. 1511/33, 12 September 1933, "Dienststanweisung für den Inspekteur des Nachrichtensports."

³⁰OSAF Ch/A/35/33, 5 August 1933, quoted in BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 3. This order has not been discovered.

³¹BDC, Personalakt Krüger, Röhm to Krüger, OSAF Ch. 1527/33, 13 September 1933, persönlich. "...Regelung des Verhältnisses zwischen Dienststellen und Inspektionen Schwierigkeiten zu erwarten wären."

"dutifully expressed your apprehension; [however] after I have made the decision, the matter rests."³²

While the actions of SA commanders, who appointed men hostile to Krüger to the Chef AW deputy posts,³³ seemed to justify Krüger's predictions, a new issue arose which threatened to destroy the Chef AW Organization. From the genesis of the Organization, Krüger and Reichenau had incorporated training with military weapons into the curriculum of the military sport program. They planned to prevent public disclosure of this aspect of SA training³⁴ at least until Germany received approval to re-arm from the Disarmament Committee of the League of Nations. Krüger appears to have naively expected the League to acquiesce momentarily, but he did warn the Defense Ministry in September that despite stringent security precautions, it would be impos-

³²Ibid. "Die Verantwortung dafür trage ich, da ich die Anordnung getroffen habe. Du hast Deine Auffassung pflichtgemäß vertreten; nachdem die Entscheidung von mir getroffen wurde, muß es damit sein Bewenden haben."

³³BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 8; Sam Sch/421, Krüger to Röhm, 5 December 1933, persönlich.

³⁴As early as August 1933 the German Government took steps to prohibit press reports concerning SA military sport training. IfZG, Ma-260, RMdI to RM für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, IA 2200/1.8, 7 August 1933, Bl. 6227728. For military security precautions, see BA-MA, WK VII/1451, (Abschrift) RMW TA 533/33 g.K. T4III, 27 July 1933; WK VII/734, CHL TA 734/33 g.K. T4IIIA, Wehr. A. 648/33 g.K. In 5L, 28 September 1933; and CHL TA 740/33 g.K./337/33 g.K.H., 29 September 1933.

sible to maintain complete secrecy for a prolonged period.³⁵ Well aware of the potentially damaging effects that premature public disclosure of the military sport program could have on his efforts to find approval to re-arm, Hitler, who probably knew of Krüger's warning, ordered in early October a halt to all weapons training in the SA sport camps.³⁶ The halt was merely temporary, for "as soon as the diplomatic situation permits", said the Army Command, "weapons training in SA sport camps will re-commence."³⁷

The security measures instituted in July by the Army and Krüger to conceal military sport training proved insufficient for Hitler, who castigated SA leaders for lax security precautions during a meeting on 17 October. After insisting that there were spies in the SA, he claimed that it was possible for these agents to expose SA military training activities, with terribly detrimental consequences to current diplomatic negotiations.³⁸ Hoping to transfer some

³⁵BA, Nachlaß Krüger/15, RWM 32/33 geh. VGH IV, to RMdI, PMdI, RL-M, OSAF (CHEF AW), 22 September 1933, with Krüger's comments on the enclosure, returned 26 September 1933.

³⁶BA-MA, WK VII/1451, WK VII/7 I.D., Ib/Ia 1679/g. Kdos./M, 5 October 1933, with telephone call notes of 6 October, referring to Ib/Ia 1664/g.K./M, 3 October 1933 memorandum from Hitler.

³⁷Ibid., WK VII/1342, RMW CHL TA 788/33 T4IIIIa/T2IIIIc, g.K., 10 October 1933. "Die Waffenausbildung wird in den SA-Sport Lagern wieder aufgenommen werden, sobald die außenpolitischen Lage es zuläßt." SA units which trained in Reichswehr camps (normally specialized training) continued their weapons training.

³⁸IfZG, Fa-90/1, Krüger Aktenvermerk, 19 October 1933.

of this censure from the SA, Röhm sought to shift responsibility for any future problems to the Army. He instructed Krüger to inform Reichenau that Blomberg must accept responsibility for any security leaks arising from the military sport program. Otherwise, noted the Chief of Staff, he would order a halt to all SA-Reichswehr training activities.³⁹

Hitler's remarks to the SA were doubtless prompted by the German walk-out from the League of Nations on 14 October following unsuccessful efforts to secure League approval to rearm.⁴⁰ Hitler seems to have feared that disclosure of SA military sport programs could become an excuse for intervention by hostile powers. Paradoxically, as the success of the walk-out tactics became evident, so did Germany's isolation and vulnerability. Hitler's observation of 3 February 1933 concerning the quality of French statesmanship became painfully obvious to the officers in the Defense Min-

³⁹ Ibid. Cf. Bracher, Machtergreifung, 932f., who alleges that Hitler's speech of 17 October 1933 was a distinct blow to Röhm, placing him on the defensive vis-à-vis the Army. Following Hitler's speech, both SA and the Army increased security measures. See BA-MA, II H/153, RWM Abw. 496/33 IIIL g.K., 3 November 1933; BA, NS-23/126 OSAF Z, Nr. 1615/33 g.K. 25 October 1933.

⁴⁰ Hitler had continued, without success, the efforts of his predecessors, to secure approval of the Disarmament Commission of the League of Nations to re-arm and expand the Reichswehr. His failure to secure concessions led to the German walk-out on 14 October. He was apparently still willing to negotiate unilaterally in February. As a quid pro quo, he offered to cease SA weapons training activities in return for permission to expand the Reichswehr. See DGFP, C, II, Nr. 271, Memorandum of Hitler-Eden conversation, 20 February 1934, 516ff; and Nr. 306, German Ambassador to England to German Foreign Ministry, 8 March 1934, 572.

istry. In light of Germany's isolation and weak military posture, accelerating the Army expansion plan adopted in 1932 became imperative, and alteration of any of its provisions, especially those regarding pre-military training, which had acquired even greater importance and urgency, bordered on irresponsibility. It at once became obvious to both Röhm and the generals that accelerating the expansion program would further strain the over-taxed Reichswehr and could not be accomplished without a steady influx of pre-trained recruits from the military sport program.

On the surface, Röhm's ultimatum to Blomberg to accept complete responsibility for security for SA military sport programs appears to have been a mixture of arrogance and presumption, but it was actually a shrewd and almost successful attempt to wrest control of the Krüger Organization from Reichenau. Röhm not only knew that the Army would not and could not assume responsibility for the actions of a party organization, but he was also cognizant that the Army considered the military sport program to be essential. Even Reichenau had acknowledged the Army's reliance on the SA sport program, telling Krüger that if the program were discontinued, the Border Guard and certain aspects of military training would have to be abandoned.⁴¹ Regardless of

⁴¹IfZG, Fa-90/1, Krüger Aktenvermerk, 19 October 1933. Effective 1 October 1933, the Reichswehr required Border Guard recruits to have completed either a Reichskuratorium or Chef

Reichenau's hopes for dividing the SA, the Army could not allow Röhm to halt Chef AW Organization activities. Already burdened with the task of training additional recruits, the Reichswehr could not easily have assumed the vast training activities carried out by the SA, yet these activities were essential to the success of the Army's expansion and mobilization plan.⁴²

It thus became imperative for Reichenau to reach a new modus vivendi with Röhm to insure that the work of the Chef AW Organization continued. Röhm's ultimatum of October, however, placed the Army in an awkward position: were it to accept responsibility for Chef AW security, the blame for the inevitable security disclosures would fall upon the Reichswehr, yet it was patently impossible to scrap the SA military sport program. The obvious alternative, which Röhm hoped to see Hitler adopt, was to divorce the Chef AW Organization from all ties with the Reichswehr, giving the SA Chief of Staff undisputed authority over his semi-autonomous

AW military sport training course. BA-MA, II H/139, CHL TA 510/33 g.K. T4IIIIa/ Richtlinien für die Tätigkeit der Grenzschutz A-Bataillone ab. 1.10.33, 17 August 1933.

⁴²The most succinct reasoning for Reichswehr-SA co-operation was given by the 7th (Bavarian) Division's Artillerieführer in BA-MA, WK VII/741, Art.Fü. VII, Ia 65/33 g.K., 24 October 1933. "Die Zusammenarbeit [with the SA] erstreckt sich auf folgende Gebiete:... (b) Gewinnung des planmäßigen Rekrutenersatzes für das Heer, (c) Gewinnung von Ersatz für kürzeren Dienst im Heere, (d) A=Vorbereitungen [mobilization] in personeller und materieller Hinsicht." (emphasis in original).

subordinate.

In early December, the General Staff considered increasing, as soon as was possible, the Reichswehr to twenty-one infantry divisions as outlined in the 1932 expansion plan.⁴³ Already the military personnel assigned to Krüger's camps and schools had been ordered to return to their units no later than 1 March 1934⁴⁴ and similar orders were issued to the Border Guard advisors.⁴⁵ As military personnel attached to the Chef AW Organization returned to their units, much of Reichenau's influence over it would evaporate, and as the Army accelerated its expansion program, it would depend on Röhm's favor.

By December, the Reichswehr could neither put off

⁴³On 14 December, General Ludwig Beck, the new Chief of the General Staff, circulated a study calling for the immediate implementation of the November 1932 expansion plan. Noting that volunteers would suffice to meet manpower quotas only for the first half of 1934, he stated that a universal military service requirement would have to be introduced no later than October 1934 in order to continue the expansion effort. To create a reserve force, he wrote, the new recruits should only have to serve for one year of active service followed by a number of years in a reserve status. BA-MA, II H/153, CHL TA 1113/33 g.K. T2IIb, 14 December 1933, "Neues Friedenssheer". On the following day, the Defense Ministry informed major unit commanders that "alle vom Oktober 1934 in das Reichsheer eingestellten Soldaten werden nur noch auf die Dauer eines Jahres verpflichtet." Ibid., WK VII/1517, RWMIn 660/33 g.K. Wehr. A. Allg. (II), 15 December 1933. (emphasis in original). See also Rautenberg, Rüstungspolitik, 306ff.

⁴⁴BA-MA, WK IV/89, WK IV Ia Op² 278/33 g.K., 13 November 1933. Rautenberg, Rüstungspolitik, 224f., indicates that by the winter of 1933, 1530 Reichswehr officers and 4590 enlisted men were attached to either Reichswehr or SA units conducting military sport training. In other words, over one-third of the entire Reichswehr officer corps was committed to aiding SA training!

⁴⁵BA-MA, II H/153, TA 1228/33 g.K., T2IB, 15 December 1933.

reaching some understanding with Röhm nor afford to risk angering or alienating him by categorically rejecting his demands for a greater role for the SA in defense preparations. His elevation to the long-desired Reich cabinet rank, albeit without portfolio,⁴⁶ on 1 December 1933 indicated his growing importance. The establishment, on the same date, of the SA sport badge, was a measure of the growing number of military sport graduates. Knowing the predicament of the Army, Röhm pressed at once for a greater role for both himself and the SA in military affairs. Even today the extent of his demands is unknown, but it appears that he insisted on complete control of the Border Guard and recognition that the SA constituted Germany's military reserve force.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Krüger claims that Röhm became a Reichsminister on 8 November 1933. See BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 4f. It is more likely that Hitler told Röhm of his pending appointment on 8 November, the anniversary of the Munich Putsch and the date on which NSDAP honors lists were published, as Röhm's certificate of appointment signed by Hitler and Hindenburg, is dated 1 December 1933. See HA, f. 328, Rk. Nr. 13837, 1 December 1933.

⁴⁷IfZG, Zgs. 152, Stapf, Bl. 1, 7, 14ff., conversation of 7 September 1951, Bl. 1; Zgs. 1709, Huwe, Bl. 39; Bennecke, Reichswehr und Röhmputsch, 40; Foertsch, Schuld und Verhängnis, 47f. Both Stapf and Bennecke state that Röhm wanted to see the SA become a militia, modelled on the Swiss system. Predicated on universal military service, the Swiss militia was impractical as a model for Germany for a number of reasons, among them geography, expense, and prohibitions against compulsory military service. Röhm certainly knew of these limitations and instead probably favored only the Swiss pattern: a cadre/mobile striking force (perhaps to be assumed by the Reichswehr) with a substantial defensive force, the militia, whose function in Germany would be assumed by the SA.

During December and early January, Reichenau and Röhm (or their assistants) conducted a series of inconclusive talks concerning the role of the SA in the military expansion effort. Just how far these talks progressed and on just what points they broke down is unclear.⁴⁸ Because the Reichswehr personnel shortage really left no other choice, it seems that Reichenau agreed to allow the SA to take over, without interference from the Army, all military sport training, and he appears to have discussed the possibility of an expanded role for the SA in the Border Guard, hinting that the SA might take over the Border Guard. General Staff officers, led by their new chief, Ludwig Beck,⁴⁹ opposed the transfer of the Border Guard to the SA. Noting that the Border Guard was integrated into the mobilization plans, they logically claimed that the Army, responsible for all mobilization measures, had to retain command of the Border

⁴⁸IfZG, Zgs. 152, Stapf, Bl. 141 Stapf, a Lieutenant Colonel then in charge of mobilization plans, states that Reichenau offered extensive concessions to the SA, to include transferring to its control the Border Guard. This claim has no collaboration, and Reichenau's alleged concessions were not so "extensive". See below.

⁴⁹1880-1944. A brilliant staff officer, Beck had initially been sympathetic to younger officers who supported the Nazis. Beck became Chief of the General Staff on 10 October 1933. His later moral and practical objections to the Nazi regime were ignored and he retreated into the purely professional aspects of his work. Retiring in 1938 on account of his opposition to Hitler, Beck later became a chief conspirator and was shot for his role in the attempt on Hitler's life, on 20 July 1944.

Guard.⁵⁰

Actually, Reichenau's conversations with Röhm, however unpalatable to the General Staff, did not compromise anything essential to military interests. In the unlikely event that the Border Guard was transferred to the SA, the loss was negligible. The military efficiency of the Border Guard, staffed after 1933 almost entirely by SA men, was poor⁵¹ and hence its contribution to the defense effort was limited. The Army, moreover, could simply not spare the soldiers needed to improve the readiness status of the Border Guard.

The dilemma the Army faced with regard to the SA and Röhm's demands received considerable attention at the Army commanders conference held in late December. After confirming the preparatory steps taken by Hammerstein and Beck to implement the expansion plan, Blomberg stated that the Reichswehr would expand to 21 infantry divisions within the next four years. For 1934, he explained, voluntary enlistments would prove sufficient to meet enlistment quotas, but

⁵⁰IfZG, Zgs, 152, Stapf, Bl. 14. See also Stapf's note to other General Staff sections stating that only after the mission and organization of the putative SA Ministry was made public could Army planners include the SA in military planning. BA-MA, H-1/319b, TA, Chef T2, 1218/33 g.K., 7 December 1933.

⁵¹IfZG, Zgs. 39 (I), Fretter-Pico, Bl. 32-38; F-56, Weckmann, Bl. 5. Not all relations between SA units and Border Guard instructors were hostile. See BA-MA, WK VII/182, Aktenvermerk Kommandantur Regensburg, 13 November 1933.

his long range goal was to have compulsory military service reintroduced. There were, he noted, two additional problems: the future of the Border Guard and the efforts of the SA to form its own armed force. However, "the Reich Chancellor agrees ... completely", he said, "that everything [relating to defense] except pre-military training [SA military sport] is the function of the armed forces."⁵² The Defense minister cautioned the generals not to argue for the time being with SA leaders (whose men still staffed the Border Guard) concerning command authority over Border Guard units. Instead, he urged that these problems be brought to his attention so that he could handle them personally. "Such problems must not", he insisted, "be allowed to disturb the relationship [of the Army] to the SA and its leaders."⁵³ The implication was clear: the SA was not to be disturbed as its men, services, and assistance were still needed.⁵⁴

⁵²BA-MA, WK VII/4082-2, "Besprechung in Berlin am 22. und 23.12.1933." "Der Reichskanzler stimmt mit dem Reichswehrminister darin überein, daß außer der vormilitärishchen Ausbildung alles bei der Reichswehr liegt..." Bl. 2. (Emphasis in original) A week later, weapons training in SA sport camps resumed. Ibid., WK VII/1453, CHL TA 1139/33 g.K., T4IIIIa, 28 December 1933.

⁵³Ibid., "Durch solche Schwierigkeiten darf das Verhältnis zur SA und ihre Führer nicht getrübt werden."

⁵⁴The Chief of the Allgemeine Abteilung was more specific when he later states: "Die Bezirkskommandos sollen der Truppe vorallem Leute zuleiten, die vormilitärische Ausbildung [SA military sport] mit Erfolg durchgemacht haben." Ibid.

Prior to the Army conference of 22 December, Röhm apparently had reached the conclusion that he would be able to take-over full control of the Chef AW Organization because of the Army's preoccupation with its expansion program. Wasting little time, he intimated during a December conference with regional SA leaders that responsibility for all training conducted by the Chef AW Organization schools and camps would soon be transferred to them. This transfer would, he added, result when the SA Ministry became operative and would produce a drastic change in the mission of the Chef AW.⁵⁵

Although not invited to this conference, Krüger had discovered its deliberations, and protested to Röhm that transferring the military sport program responsibilities to the senior SA commanders would destroy his hopes for assuming a complete take-over of the program when the military advisors returned to their units. Execrating the senior commanders, he complained that they had dealt imprudently and independently, in violation of his orders to the contrary, with the Reichswehr, frustrating and complicating his own work. The leader of OSAF section I,⁵⁶ he added, had publicly stated that the newly issued SA sport badge was unnecessary. Krüger concluded his letter with a request

⁵⁵BA, Sam Sch/421, letter Krüger to Röhm, 5 December 1933.

⁵⁶Generalmajor a.D. Franz Ritter von Hörauf. See Chapter IV, n. 51.

for a personal meeting to resolve these grievances, clearly the work, he added, of jealous third parties.⁵⁷

Röhm's response, if any, to Krüger's charges is unknown, but Krüger seems to have concluded that his tenure as Chef AW would be very short should Röhm gain complete control of the military sport program. Accordingly, he approached Reichenau in January to forestall Röhm's anticipated take-over of the Chef AW Organization. The Defense Ministry initially favored retention of the current system, that is, with Krüger in coordination with the Defense Ministry conducting the military sport program.⁵⁸ Krüger instead suggested that his staff be organized into two sections: one for training and one for administration,⁵⁹ and asked Reichenau to appoint a military officer to direct the training section. Because this suggestion would clearly allow him some influence within the Chef AW should it be completely transferred to Röhm, Reichenau agreed and nominated Lt. Col. Wilhelm Auleb for the new position, with the proviso that

⁵⁷BA, Sam Sch/421, letter Krüger to Röhm, 5 December 1933.

⁵⁸See the report of a conference on terrain and military sport, 5-7 January 1934, held in the Defense Ministry and chaired by Dr. Kayser, Reichenau's specialist for training. BA, Sam Sch/421, NSLB Reichsreferent für Geländesport E. Linß to NSLB Reichsgeschäftsführer Kolb, 22 January 1934.

⁵⁹IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF Chef AW, "Geschäftsordnung für den Stab des Chefs des Ausbildungswesens", 23 January 1934.

Auleb receive an appropriate SA rank.⁶⁰ Krüger accepted Reichenau's proposals and the two men prepared an agreement authorizing Krüger's proposed re-organization of his staff and Auleb's transfer to the post of Chef AW chief of Staff with the SA rank of Oberführer.⁶¹

Blomberg presented the proposed agreement to Röhm, along with suggestions delineating the Reichswehr's concepts of what tasks the SA should fulfill in the event of mobilization and in the Border Guard. These proposals, except for Krüger's and Reichenau's draft agreement, have not survived, but Röhm rejected all of them.⁶² From his perspective, an Army officer serving as Chef AW chief of staff perpetuated military meddling in internal SA affairs and shattered whatever hopes he had of assuming complete control over the military sport program. Krüger's proposal, moreover, left no doubt as to where the SA stood vis-à-vis the Reichswehr: "... in the areas in which the SA has a military interest (training, mobilization, Border Guard), it is subordinated

⁶⁰IMT, XXXI, 2823-PS, "Vorschlag RWM über Aufgaben-gebiet Oberstleutnant Auleb im Stabe des Chefs AWs", 24 January 1934, 166f.

⁶¹Ibid., "Vereinbarung zwischen RWM und OSAF, 1/34", 162.

⁶²IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Befehlhabersbesprechung, 2-3 February 1934. See Blomberg's remarks, Bl. 212. The surviving agreement (footnote 61) was never signed by either party. Auleb, in April 1934, was assigned as a deputy commander of the Lübeck Wehrgau. See 1934 Reichswehr Stellungenbesetzung, I, 27. Cf. Absolon, Wehrmacht im Dritten Reich, I, 111, who incorrectly asserts that the Chef AW-Reichswehr agreement became operative.

to the Defense Minister and his chain of command."⁶³

Röhm, who had maintained all along to the public the fiction that he had no ties with Reichswehr and had dutifully acknowledged the Reichswehr as Germany's sole military force,⁶⁴ was apparently surprised by Blomberg's proposals. His hopes for a greater and more autonomous role for the SA in military affairs were dashed, and this disappointment, coupled with the lack of visible progress towards the creation of the SA Ministry⁶⁵ profoundly upset him. Outraged and chagrined, he sent an angry missive to Blomberg at the end of January, which arrived providentially (for Blomberg) during the middle of a generals' conference. After hearing the Defense Minister briefly recount his failure to reach an understanding with the refractory Röhm, the generals then listened while Reichenau read aloud the SA Chief of Staff's letter. "I envision," wrote Röhm, "the Reichswehr

⁶³IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, 2-3 February 1934. "...auf den Gebieten, auf denen SA sich militärisch betätigt (Ausbildung, Mobilmachung, Grenzschutz), untersteht sie dem Reichsverteidigungsminister und den nachgeordneten Kommandostellen der Wehrmacht." Bl. 212. Cf. Zgs. 152, Stapf, who asserts that Reichenau made many concessions to the SA, Bl. 14ff, and conversation notes, 7 September 1951, Bl. 1.

⁶⁴See his interview in the SA Mann (2), 13 January 1934. "Zwischen der Reichswehr und der SA bestehen keinerlei Bedingungen."

⁶⁵Even the Army had expected Hitler to create the SA Ministry. A General Staff study of mid-January 1934 included a SA Ministry in mobilization plans, placing it on a level with the Army and the Navy Commands, and the Air Transport Ministry. BA-MA, H-1/319b, Chef TA, "Vorschlag: Spitzengliederung", 15 January 1934.

from now on only as a school for the training of the nation. Direction of war efforts and those of the mobilization will be, from now on, functions of the SA."⁶⁶ Blomberg calmly noted that Röhm's attitude left him no choice but to approach Hitler and request his intervention. On account of the unstable foreign affairs situation, the Defense Minister explained, it was impossible that Hitler would reach a decision before the end of the month, but, he hastened to add, any information on the subject would be relayed at once to the generals. For the meantime, said Blomberg, the generals were to avoid clashes with the SA leaders.⁶⁷ The new Chief of the Army Command, Major General Werner Freiherr von Fritsch,⁶⁸ promised "...that he would oppose the demands of

⁶⁶IfZG, Zgs. 182, Weichs, February 1934 Commanders Conference notes: "Ich erkenne die Reichswehr nur noch als Schule für das Volk an. Die Kriegsführung und also auch die Mobilmachung sind künftige Sache der SA." Bl.8; and Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Bl. 212. Liebmann's record of Röhm's exact wording is slightly different, but conveys the same message.

⁶⁷Ibid., Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, 2-3 February 1933 Befehlshaberbesprechung, Bl. 212f.

⁶⁸1880-1939. A highly respected General Staff officer, Fritsch opposed, on account of professional reasons, any participation by the SA in defense matters. A batchellor, he dedicated his life solely to his profession, serving as Chief of the Army Command from January 1934 to 1938. He incurred Hitler's displeasure by appearing to move too slowly. Too popular and respected to be relieved, instead he was smeared by the Nazis on false charges of homosexuality and suspended from duty. Although he was exonerated of all charges, Hitler did not return Fritsch to his post. Exercising his privilege as honorary commander of an artillery regiment, Fritsch accompanied it into the field in 1939, where he fell in action.

the SA with all his power and energy."⁶⁹

During the week following the 2-3 February generals' conference, Fritsch apparently convinced Hitler that the Reichswehr, constitutionally responsible for defense, required undisputed authority in all aspects of national security in order to accomplish its mission. Hitler, who had previously appeared unconcerned about Röhm's pretensions, told Blomberg on 11 February, as they travelled to Berchtesgaden for the Army ski championships, to assume a more recalcitrant attitude vis-à-vis the SA. This meant, he explained, that the SA was to have a major role only in the area of military sport.⁷⁰

⁶⁹IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, "...daß er [Fritsch] sich mit aller Kraft und seiner ganzen Person den Ansprüchen der SA widersetzen werde." Bl. 213.

⁷⁰Ibid., Zgs. 152, Stapf, Bl. 14ff; Zgs. 105, Mellenthin, Bl. 35f. It is not known when or if Fritsch personally spoke to Hitler, but on 5 February Hitler told the assembled SA leaders at Friedrichsroda that their tasks were to spread the National-Socialist ideology, anchor the Führer principle, and assist the movement by acting as the guarantor of the new order. See SA Mann (5), 5 February 1934. Considerable energy and ink has been spilled to explain why Hitler "chose" the Reichswehr instead of the SA in 1934. While interesting and imaginative, these essays overlook the consistency of his utterances since 1924, namely that the armed forces were the sole military force of the state and that the mission of the SA was political and educational. Hitler's assignment of the military sport program to the SA did not deviate from this position. To him, the main function of the Chef AW Organization was sport and ideological education.

A committee of senior staff officers⁷¹ from the SA and the Reichswehr reached a new understanding on 23 February. This latest draft, submitted to Röhm and Blomberg, clearly established Reichswehr supremacy in all areas of national security. "The duties of the SA in connection with national defense are regulated....," read the first sentence of the draft, "by the Reich Defense Minister."⁷² SA defense responsibilities consisted, according to the proposal, of providing military sport instruction in connection with youth training, of training eligibles not called to military service, and of preserving the skills of both veterans and SA sport course graduates who had no active military service.⁷³ Although restricting all SA military-related activity to military sport training, the draft proposal cannot be regarded as a victory for Krüger; instead, considerable authority was taken from him. In ac-

⁷¹IfZG, Zgs. 152, Stapf, Bl. 14ff. From the Army, Beck and Stapf; from the SA, Generalleutnant a.D. Friedrich Graf von der Schulenburg (SA Führungsamt liaison officer to the Reichswehr), Max Jüttner (OSAF, z.b.V.), and Friedrich Ritter von Krausser (SA Deputy Chief of Staff and head of the Führungsamt). It is indicative of Röhm's attitude toward Krüger that the latter, although most concerned and affected by any Army-SA agreements, did not represent the SA.

⁷²IMT, XXVIII, 1849-PS, "Aktenvermerk betr. Denkschrift Reichsverteidigung, streng geheim!", 23 February 1934. "Die Aufgaben der SA werden von seiten des Reichsverteidigungsministers im Zusammenhang mit der Landesverteidigung ... festgelegt.", 583.

⁷³Ibid., 583f.

cordance with the terms of the 1933 Bad Reichenhall Agreement, he prepared general policy guidelines for youth and terrain sport programs so that these programs would interlock with his own. The new proposal stipulated that the Reich Sport Commissar and the Reich Youth Leader, under the direction of the Defense Minister, were to assume autonomous responsibilities for terrain and youth sport programs respectively.⁷⁴

Evidence does not permit reconstruction of the week of 23-28 February,⁷⁵ but Röhm protested his almost complete exclusion from military affairs to Hitler. The SA Chief of Staff apparently elicited some sympathy from the Chancellor, who permitted several face-saving alterations to the final agreement, which was signed by Hitler, Röhm, and Blomberg at the well-documented Schlieffen Association meeting, 28

⁷⁴Ibid. In all likelihood the Army was responsible for this diminution of Krüger's (and SA) authority. While Röhm had no love for Krüger, it is inconceivable that he would have willingly surrendered any of his authority (however indirect) to his fellow satraps and rivals. On the other hand, the transfer of the direction of youth and terrain sport from the SA to its rivals would not materially affect the military sport program and would permit the Army to play Röhm's rivals against him.

⁷⁵Harry Wilde, in "Röhm's Putsch", Politische Studien, 110, June 1959, 376f., claimed that Röhm and Fritsch reached an agreement during this week allowing the SA some role in defense preparations. Wilde bases his assumption on an interview with Reichsleiter Max Aman. More recent scholarship rejects the idea of a Röhm-Fritsch understanding. See Müller, Hitler und das Heer, 109ff.

February 1934.⁷⁶ The definitive agreement⁷⁷ between the SA and the Reichswehr embodied several significant changes from the earlier proposal of 23 February, encompassing increased defense-related responsibilities for the SA. In addition to those defined on 23 February, SA units could now be accepted into the Border Guard so long as they could meet minimal military proficiency standards established by military region commanders (Wehrgaubefehlshaber). Prospective Reichswehr and Border Guard recruits had to complete successfully a Chef AW Organization military sport course, but membership in the SA was no longer mandatory prior to attending such courses.⁷⁸ SA responsibilities in the event of mobilization were relatively minor, but their inclusion in the final agreement represented a substantial triumph for Röhm. In addition to maintaining mobilization schedules for designated SA units, the SA agreed to make available its equipment if needed to the

⁷⁶Bennecke, Reichswehr und Röhmputsch, 45f; Müller, Hitler und das Heer, 98f; Bracher, Machtergreifung, 943. All these sources reconstruct the meeting from General Liebmann's notes (IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Bl. 219ff.) and Krüger's Aktenvermerk of 23 February 1934 (Cf. Footnote 72)!

⁷⁷The document signed on 28 February has not survived. However, its contents can be reconstructed from the exhaustive notes of General Liebmann and an order of Artillerieführer VII, Nr. 312/34 g.K., Ia, 8 March 1934, and CHL TA 100/34 g.K. T4IIIa, "betr. künftige Ausbildung a.d. RH", 5 March 1934, both in BA-MA, WK VII/1451, (Rh 26-7/254).

⁷⁸BA-MA, WK VII/1451, Art.Führer VII, Nr. 712/34 g.K. Ia, 8 March 1934, Ziff. 8.

Reichswehr. The provision to call SA units to active service was a major concession in principle, by Army authorities, who carefully insisted that "military qualification is a pre-requisite [and] military requirements are decisive."⁷⁹ The Reichswehr also expressed a willingness to consider SA unit leaders for command positions in mobilized SA and Border Guard units, but these leaders had to meet military standards.⁸⁰

The changes between the draft of 23 February and the final agreement did not all benefit the SA. The SA had to acknowledge that "the Reich Defense Minister has sole responsibility for defense preparations,"⁸¹ and military officers received greater freedom to inspect Krüger's camps and schools. All SA activities contributing to the military effort were subject to military review and inspection.⁸² Finally, Hitler indicated that he approved of this Reichswehr-SA cooperation only as a temporary, expedient solution.

⁷⁹Ibid., Ziff. 12, "Militärische Eignung ist Voraussetzung. Militär-Belange entscheiden."

⁸⁰Ibid., Ziff. 13.

⁸¹Ibid., Ziff. 1. "Reichsverteidigungsminister trägt allein Verantwortung für Vorbereitung der Landesverteidigung." (emphasis in original). See also IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Bl. 219.

⁸²BA-MA, WK VII/1451, Art.Führer VII Nr. 712/34 g.K. Ia, 8 March 1934, Ziff. 1,2,3,8,9,10, 12,13,15,17 and 18; and CHL TA 100/34 G.K. T4IIa, 5 March 1934; IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Bl. 219ff.

"He [Hitler] had decided," wrote General (later Field Marshal) von Weichs, "to develop a large standing army from the nucleus of the Reichswehr.... For the transition period [from the Reichswehr to a conscript, standing army] he approved the Defense Minister's suggestion to utilize the SA for Border Guard duties and pre-military [military sport] training."⁸³

Following some expressions of initial unhappiness,⁸⁴ which may have been feigned to placate radical SA leaders, Röhm faithfully executed his portions of the 28 February agreement. On 12 March he established four special SA inspectors whose job was to insure "frictionless cooperation" between the Army and the SA. "The direction of national defense and its [associated] measures lies," wrote the SA Chief of Staff, "in the hands of the Reich Defense Minister

⁸³IfZG, Zgs. 182, Weichs. "Er [Hitler] sei daher entschlossen, ein Volksheer, aufgebaut auf der Reichswehr... aufzustellen. Für die Übergangszeit genehmige er den Vorschlag des R.W.M., die SA für Grenzschaufgaben und für vor-militärische Ausbildung heranzuziehen." Bl. 9; and Zgs. 37, Foertsch, Bl. 1. An Army order of 3 April indicates that the Reichswehr viewed the 28 February agreement as a temporary measure: "Bis auf weiteres bleibt die Ausbildung außerhalb des Reichsheeres als Übergangsmaßnahme...." BA-MA, WK VII/2188, Art.Führer VII, Ia 385/34 g.K.

⁸⁴At a SA reception held immediately after the Schlieffen Day meeting, Röhm allegedly spoke of the Reichswehr-SA agreement as "a new Versailles Dictation". IfZG, Zgs. 105, Mellenthin, Bl. 34. See also Zgs. 152, Stapf, Bl. 1f., 7.

(Reichswehrminister)."85 An order of 15 March attempted to pre-empt discontent expected to arise from the exclusion of the SA from greater participation in military affairs. Röhm acknowledged the disappointment and frustration of his men, especially the "old fighters", who had expected to reap more tangible benefits from the Nazi political victory, and he promised immediate relief to those with no employment prospects. Nonetheless, he felt compelled to conclude his order with a strong reminder that duty and discipline were more important than personal gain.86

The definitive SA regulation governing the relation of the SA to the Reichswehr was signed by Röhm on 19 March.87

⁸⁵Röhm urged "reibungslose Zusammenarbeit" and acknowledged that "Die Leitung der Landesverteidigung und ihrer Vorbereitungen liegt in den Hände des Reichsverteidigungsministers (Reichswehrministers)". BA-MA, WK VII/1342, OSAF F, Nr. G-371, "Dienstsanweisung für die Inspektoren Ost, Südost, Mitte und West der SA", 12 March 1934, Bl. 1. The inspectors were subordinate to the SA Führungsamt. (emphasis in original).

⁸⁶SA Verordnungsblatt (18), 15 March 1934. Röhm promised to establish SA-Hilfslager, of which little is known and whose fate appears to have been similar to that of the National Workshops of Paris in 1848.

⁸⁷BA, Sam Sch/4 1, OSAF Führungsamt, G-429, "Betr. Spitzengliederung der SA und Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Spitzendienststellen der wehrmacht und der SA", 19 March 1934. This document, a photostat with Röhm's signature, is erroneously dated 19 April in IMT, XXXI, 2821-PS, 162f. The schematic diagram found in the BA is not reproduced in the IMT version. Krüger's file note accompanying his copy of the order indicates that he did not see it until 14 April. The Reichswehr order (with the same schematic diagram) paralleling Röhm's 19 March directive is "Vorschlag für die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den obersten Dienststellen der Wehrmacht

He indicated that all activities concerning mobilization and the Border Guard would be handled by the SA Führungsamt, while Krüger retained control of all military sport training. Moreover, Krüger's authority to issue directives to the Reich Youth Leader and the Reich Sport Commissar, in order to insure that sport programs were comprehensive and progressive, was re-affirmed.⁸⁸ The SA Chief of Staff reversed his gradual diminution of Krüger's authority to direct training within the Chef AW Organization schools and camps, noting that "the Chef AW is responsible for this training."⁸⁹ Röhm's reason(s) for restoring Krüger's control over all SA military sport training is unknown, but it is possible that Blomberg may have insisted that the vital military sport training program remain in "safe" and experienced hands, as any disruptions could cause chaos in the Army's expansion efforts.

At any rate, following the agreement signed at the Schlieffen Assembly meeting, there appear to have been no major controversies or arguments of substance between the SA and the Reichswehr, or between Krüger and Röhm. A huge Army propaganda effort to cultivate the image of the Reichswehr

und der Obersten SA-Führung;; in BA-MA, RW 6/v65, Der Reichsverteidigungsminister TA Nr. 9/34, g.K. T2IV, 18 May 1934.

⁸⁸BA, Sam Sch/421, OSAF Führungsamt G-429, 19 March 1934, Ziff. 3.

⁸⁹Ibid., Ziff. 4. "Verantwortlichkeit für die Ausbildung ist der Chef des Ausbildungswesens."

as the sole German military force,⁹⁰ which began in April, appears to have been an unnecessary and wasted effort to insure the success of the 28 February Agreement. Reichswehr intelligence officers discovered no SA intentions of violating the agreement.⁹¹ Army-Chef AW Organization relations were relatively frictionless, and orders issued by Blomberg in late May governing terrain and youth sport training merely re-affirmed the policies established almost one year earlier at Bad Reichenhall.⁹² Military officials approved the wearing of the SA Sport Badge on the Army uniform.⁹³

There is insufficient evidence to indicate if Kruger's relations with Röhm improved or worsened after 28 February. Many SA commanders still regarded Krüger and his organization as a tool of the Army,⁹⁴ even though on at least one

⁹⁰See BA-MA, RW 6/v56, for Major Hermann Foertsch's Briefing Notes outlining a Reichswehr campaign to improve the public image of the armed forces.

⁹¹During the 2-3 February Commanders Conference, Fritsch had ordered the generals to collect material concerning Röhm's plans and intentions. IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann, Bl. 213, and BA-MA, WK VII/1295, CHL TA 544/34 f.K. T2IIIIa, 17 April 1934. This material never revealed any anti-Army actions on behalf of the SA. Müller, Hitler und das Heer, 111. Röhm, who believed that the SA would have its day of reckoning, albeit it in a different fashion from what actually occurred, ordered his subordinates to make careful notes on those people and agencies defaming the SA. IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF P Nr. 1455/34, 16 May 1934.

⁹²BA-MA, WK VII/1451, Der Reichsverteidigungsminister, TA 300/34 g.K. T4IIIIa, 24 May 1934, and Anlage 1 to the same.

⁹³Heeresverordnungsblatt (16), 18 June 1934, Ziff. 289.

⁹⁴BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 8; IfZG, Zgs. 44, Gaertner, "Erlebnis", Bl. 20.

occasion he supported the position of SA Group Berlin-Brandenburg instead of that taken by one of his own staff members.⁹⁵ Difficulties in preparing a Chef AW budget still continued, and both Röhm and Blomberg contested the responsibility for the budget. Blomberg eventually prevailed, and Röhm agreed on 28 May to allow the Defense Ministry to assume responsibility for Krüger's financial support.⁹⁶ This transfer was still in progress when it was superseded by the events of 30 June 1934, the so-called Röhm Putsch.

This well-documented event need not be retold here. Recent scholarship has concluded that Röhm had developed no immediate Putsch plans and that most Army officers, with the possible exception of Blomberg, Reichenau, and Fritsch, had no foreknowledge of the action to be taken against the SA. On the other hand, Hitler's motives for smashing the SA, the extent of the death list during the planning stages, and the moment at which Hitler decided to smash the SA are still debated.⁹⁷ Whatever the final outcome of these argu-

⁹⁵BDC, Personalakt Krüger, I, Bl. 210f, 284.

⁹⁶BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 17f; "Niederschrift", Bl. 2.

⁹⁷Bennecke claims that the NSDAP leadership and the Reichswehr, not the SS, were the driving forces behind the events of 30 June. See his Reichswehr und Röhmputsch, 55, 61f., and 68ff. Messerschmidt acknowledges that Reichenau played the most active and meaningful role of any Reichswehr officer, but he admits that the extent of Reichenau's role is unknown. Wehrmacht und NS, 48. Müller, in Hitler und das Heer, 113ff., agrees that Reichenau's activities are not at all clear, but he implies that Reichenau may have forced Hitler's hand.

ments, there is no evidence indicating that Krüger and the Chef AW Organization members either knew of or participated in the events of 30 June. Not a single Chef AW Organization man was shot in connection with the Putsch, those few arrested were released almost at once, and the Chef AW units were the only ones in the SA allowed to retain their weapons after 30 June 1934.⁹⁸

The indictment of Bennecke, namely that the conflict between the OSAF and the Chef AW exacerbated the tense situation between Röhm and the Reichswehr and precipitated the events of 30 June,⁹⁹ cannot be sustained. While SA-Reichswehr relations had not been overly friendly, serious hostility was temporarily avoided by the acceptance of the Schlieffen Assembly compromise by both parties. With Röhm no longer in a position to threaten the existence of the Chef AW Organization or its vital contribution to the re-armament effort, the Army had no immediate reason to seek his destruction. Krüger, with his own position secure after 28 February, like-

Bracher, in Machtergreifung, 934ff., states that Hitler had no alternative but to kill Röhm who had become too dangerous a rival. See also Helmut Krausnick, Das 30. Juni 1934. Bedeutung, Hintergründe, Verlauf, supplement to Das Parlament, 30 June 1954, who also argues that the Army-SA conflict was secondary to the struggle between the SA and the Nazi Party.

⁹⁸See Heydrich's instructions to SS and police, BA, Sam Sch/421, Funkausspruch aus Berlin, Nr. 91-48-2, 1325; and Nr. 97-82-2, 1345, 3 July 1934; BA-MA, LPI-SW, HO4-1/17, Chef der LAPO, Nr. 81-O107-1700, 1 July 1934; Bracher, Machtergreifung, 916.

⁹⁹Bennecke, Reichswehr und Röhmputsch, 45.

wise had no reason to seek Röhm's elimination. Krüger did hope eventually to become independent of the SA, which Röhm's removal might or might not have assisted, but Krüger, for all intents and purposes, achieved his goal of autonomy from OSAF when Blomberg and Röhm agreed to military supervision of the Chef AW budget. Krüger thus had no reason to sabotage a fragile agreement which guaranteed his autonomy. Finally, there is no evidence that Röhm seriously attempted to subvert or renounce his agreement with Blomberg.¹⁰⁰ Although the "night of the long knives" (June 30 1934) appears to have degenerated from a strike at Röhm and his coterie to a vendetta of the triumphant faction in the Party against personal and political enemies, there seems to be no reason to believe Hitler's assertion that he acted to crush an imminent revolt by Röhm and his clique.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰On 3 March Blomberg wrote Hitler complaining that the SA Headquarters Guards (Stabswache) were being heavily armed and appearing under arms in public. Blomberg appeared more upset over the public display of armed SA men than he was over their existence. Röhm, prompted by Hitler, reminded his commanders of his earlier orders forbidding a display of armed guards. See IfZG, Fa-90/1, Blomberg letter to Hitler, confidential, 3 March 1934 and OSAF G, Nr. 312/34, persönlich, 6 March 1934. See also Zgs. 105, Mellenthin, who describes mutual SA-Reichswehr slights during this period.

¹⁰¹DGFP, C, Vol. III, Nr. 55, Reich Cabinet Meeting Minutes, 3 July 1934, 118-122. Hitler also claimed that Röhm had violated the agreement of 28 February 1934 (the editor's designation of the violated agreement as one made on the cruiser Deutschland is incorrect) and had been procuring arms for the SA. The Reich Chancellor claimed that a letter from Blomberg (possibly that mentioned in footnote 100) "completely established" Röhm's treason. The letter from Blomberg establishing Röhm's guilt has never been found.

Evidence, in a positive sense, indicating that Reichenau had succeeded in isolating Röhm and the radical leaders from the more moderate majority of SA men is lacking. Yet, in a negative sense, the ease with which the SS dispatched Röhm and purged the SA, as well as the total absence of any opposition or reaction to the wholesale executions, tends to indicate that Röhm and his fellow radicals were indeed isolated. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the military goals which Reichenau envisioned for the Krüger Organization were accomplished. After military personnel attached to the Chef AW Organization as advisors returned to their units in the spring of 1934, Krüger's organization continued to function and provide the Reichswehr with recruits whose basic military training was behind them. In May 1934, Blomberg expressed further confidence in Krüger by requesting that the Chef AW train 240,000 additional men by 1 October 1935,¹⁰² a strong endorsement of the military sport program indicating that the Army depended on the Chef AW Organization to relieve the over-taxed soldiers of the onerous burden of conducting basic recruit training.

¹⁰²BA-MA, WK VII/1451, Reichsverteidigungsminister, TA 300/34 g.K. T4IIIIa, 24 May 1934, Bl. 15. An additional 4000 were to be trained by the Navy.

C H A P T E R X

THE END OF THE KRÜGER ORGANIZATION

JULY 1934 TO JANUARY 1935

The events of 30 June 1934 drastically altered the relationship among the Reichswehr and the SA, the SA and the Krüger Organization, and the Army and the Krüger Organization. In early July Hitler ordered the Army to assign no further defense-oriented tasks to the SA, and instituted a purge of SA leaders. He allowed the Reichswehr a free hand in suggesting replacements for the vacated SA posts.¹ Of perhaps greater importance to the Reichswehr than the emasculated SA was the uncertain future of the Chef AW Organization.² Scanty evidence indicates that in mid-July Krüger and Reichenau planned not only to continue the military sport programs conducted by the Chef AW Organization, but to separate it from the SA and increase Krüger's responsibilities.³ It is impossible to ascertain if these plans originated prior to 30 June, and although no evidence

¹BA-MA, WK VII/744, WK VII/7 I,D, 344 g.K. 1c, 17 August 1934.

²Meeting with his chief of staff, Ia and Ic officers on 1 July 1934, the commander of the 7th Infantry Division, General Adam, expressed his grave concern about the future of the military sport program. Müller, Das wahre Vaterland, 361.

³BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, hand-written notes on Wehrjugend proposal; Reichsverteidigungsminister, Nr. 653/34 g.K. L IIa, 10 July 1934; 9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 10f.

exists to support such an assertion, it cannot be entirely dismissed. Certainly the idea of an independent Chef AW can be found in Krüger's proposal of February 1933 and a Defense Ministry study of March 1933.⁴ Röhm's approval, in May 1934, for the transfer of ministerial responsibility for the Chef AW budget to the Defense Minister⁵ intimates that some larger project may have been in the works.

At any rate, Reichenau sent Krüger, on 10 July, a proposal for the reorganization of youth training programs.⁶ Reichenau and Blomberg apparently envisioned transferring all youth training organizations and associations to one large agency. Blomberg, in his capacity as Defense Minister, would have had, according to Reichenau's plan, supervisory responsibility for the agency, but its actual direction and operation would be handled by Krüger. He would have sufficient authority to insure cooperation of all interested parties. Reichenau tentatively assigned this putative agency the designation "military youth" (Wehrjugend). Agreeing with Reichenau's proposal, Krüger merely suggested a few minor changes. A note in Krüger's writing indicates that he insisted on a clear definition of his authority over

⁴Cf. Chapter VII, 179ff, 184f.

⁵BA, Nachlab Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 17f.

⁶Ibid., 10, Reichsverteidigungminister Nr. 653/34 g.K. L IIa, 10 July 1934. The wording of the order indicates that it was prepared for Hitler's signature.

the Hitler Youth and student training programs.⁷

A tentative understanding, reached with the Defense Ministry during July, defined the responsibilities of the "Director of Military Youth" (Krüger). His new responsibilities included supervising all sport and military sport training, required for all eligible (physically and racially) German males, commencing at age 10 and continuing through their twenty-first year. Although he had no responsibility for conducting rudimentary sport training in either the Hitler Youth or the public schools according to this latest agreement, he would train sport instructors for the Hitler Youth and the state schools. Krüger's actual instructional responsibilities were to be limited to conducting military sport courses for the above-mentioned sport instructors and for German males, ages 19 through 21. In theory, young men joining either the Labor Service or the armed forces escaped having to attend the "military youth" courses, but in practice the military services gave preference to prospective recruits with credentials from either the Krüger Organization or the Reich Labor Service which conducted its own military sport program. All in all, the Reichswehr clearly profitted the most from the proposed "military youth" program: just about all male Germans, whether or not they served in the armed forces, would receive military training

⁷Ibid., Krüger marginalia.

in some fashion.⁸

Even though Krüger and the Defense Ministry officials were convinced of the necessity for a single youth sport agency, Hitler avoided committing himself to the project. His procrastination can, in all likelihood, be attributed to the rapid deterioration of President von Hindenburg's health during July. With the demise of the Reich President imminent, Hitler shrank from creating dissention in the Party, a sure consequence should he attempt to impose order on the factious state and Party potentates with vested interests in the youth question. The death of Hindenburg and Hitler's smooth assumption of power on 2 August ended fears of a succession crisis, and on 8 August Hitler separated the Chef AW Organization from the SA,⁹ the first step, hoped Krüger, toward forming a Reich youth agency around the nucleus of the Chef AW.

⁸IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann, 9 Oct. 1934. Bl. 229ff.; Fa-90/2, Aktenvermerk, 12 October 1934; Anlage 1, "Entwurf eines Gesetzes über die Zugehörigkeit zu den nationalsozialistischen Erziehungsverbänden"; BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "Entwurf ..." with Krüger's marginalia; Sam Sch/421, letter (former NSLB Geländesportreferent) Sturmführer E. Linß im Stabe des Chefs AW to Reichsgeschäftsführer [of NSLB] Kolb, 14 September 1934; NS-12/1313, letter Krüger to Bay. Staatsmin. und Reichsleiter [des NSLB] Schemm, Chef AW J, 105723/34, 9 October 1934.

⁹BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift über den Chef des Ausbildungswesens", Rk. 6754, 25 September 1935, Bl. 1; "Stellungnahme", Bl. 9; IfZG, Fa-90/1, Krüger to Schatz, G, 4296/34, 10 August 1934. It is not certain if this order was initially kept secret. A SA order of 9 August indicates that the "bisherigen Unterstellungsverhältnis" of the Chef AW to the OSAF remained in effect. BA, NS-23/127, OSAF Führungsamt F-2, 204604, 9 August 1934.

Throughout August and September Krüger worked closely with Reichenau "...with the goal of placing all pre-military training in one hand."¹⁰ Both conceived of the "military youth" program enrolling nineteen and twenty year olds who would spend one year of their "military youth" period in the Reich Labor Service and the second in the Chef AW Organization. To facilitate implementation of this program, Krüger re-shaped his entire organization. With its separation from the SA, Chef AW Organization deputies assigned to the staffs of the major SA regional commands no longer had a function, and Krüger reorganized the deputies into Chef AW district directors, whose territories paralleled those of the military district commands. The Chef AW Organization District Headquarters Director (Chef AW Landesführer) had a small staff whose mission was to work closely with military recruiting and mobilization authorities in order to insure a continuous flow of military sport graduates into the Army. A Chef AW Regional Headquarters performed the same function at the smaller military region (Wehrgau) level. To facilitate speedy reorganization, Krüger suspended all Chef AW Organization military sport courses during August and September.¹¹

¹⁰IfZG, Fa-90/2, Aktenvermerk: Wehrjugend, 12 October 1934. "...mit dem Ziel, die gesamte vormilitärische Erziehung in eine Hand zu legen."

¹¹Ibid., BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 1 f. A complete list of the Chef AW districts and regions can be seen in the appendix.

In spite of their smooth start, differences of opinion between Krüger and the Defense Ministry developed quickly. During discussions held during July with Reichenau, Krüger had mentioned, apparently without contradiction or opposition, that he envisioned a Chef AW Organization budget in the neighborhood of approximately RM 200 million.¹² He accordingly was chagrined when Blomberg, in August, drew the line on a budget of no more than RM 120 million, a figure later reduced to RM 80 million.¹³ The Chef AW Organization special training courses immediately fell victim to the new budget. Krüger terminated cavalry, combat engineer, and communications training courses at the end of September, closing thirty-eight schools and camps and laying off 1376 employees.¹⁴ His chagrin over the loss of the specialized training camps was not shared by the Chief of the Army Command, General von Fritsch, who had apparently favored this action all along.¹⁵ Evidence is insufficient to state why

¹²BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 15; IfZG, Fa-90/2, Aktenvermerk 12 October 1934.

¹³IfZG, Fa-90/2, Aktenvermerk 12 October 1934. Krüger claimed he requested RM 120 million for Fiscal Year 1934, but Reichswehr records indicate he asked for only RM 100 million. Both sources agree that he received ca. RM 80 million. Ibid.; BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift", Bl. 1f.

¹⁴IfZG, Fa-90/2, Aktenvermerk, Mündliche Besprechung mit Oberst v. Vietinghoff, 26 September 1934; Aktenvermerk, 25 October 1934.

¹⁵Ibid., Aktenvermerk Vietinghoff, 26 September 1934. Krüger vainly tried to see Fritsch prior to the closing of the special training camps.

Fritsch wanted to end the courses, but he had always demonstrated a great antipathy to the Nazi paramilitary organizations, an attitude shared by his colleague and Chief of the General Staff, General Beck.

Blomberg delivered an additional blow in September by demanding the return of all Chef AW Organization weapons.¹⁶ His position was legally unimpeachable; the weapons had been merely "loaned" to the Chef AW Organization.¹⁷ Krüger nonetheless vehemently and vainly protested the action of the Army. With some justification, he felt he had been shabbily treated. He had, he told Colonel von Vietinghoff (Reichenau's deputy), purchased the weapons with funds from his budget and it did not appear entirely just to have to turn them over to the Army without some sort of compensation. He further noted that the Army had already declared most of these weapons unserviceable and planned to turn them over to the Reich Post Office and the Reich Railway Directory.¹⁸ Vietinghoff did not answer Krüger's objections. Blomberg's rationale for wanting the return of the "borrowed" weapons

¹⁶Ibid., Fa-90/1, letter Blomberg to Krüger, Reichsverteidigungsminister, W.A. 1140/34 g.K. L Ia, 14 September 1934.

¹⁷See Chapter VII, p. 193, and IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, 5 July 1934, Bl. 226.

¹⁸IfZG, Fa-90/2, Aktenvermerk mündliche Besprechung mit Oberst von Vietinghoff, 21 September 1934. Krüger had already protested on 18 September the loss of his organization's weapons.

is unknown, but it appears that pressure from Fritsch and Beck to curb the Chef AW Organization caused him to insist that the armed forces retain its monopoly as the nation's sole military force in theory as well as in practice. At any rate, such were the sentiments he expressed to his senior commanders on 9 October. "Weapons training", he enunciated, "of soldiers and reserve forces remains solely the task of the armed forces."¹⁹

By early October, Blomberg had finally written a draft of the "law concerning the membership in National Socialist Training Associations",²⁰ which summarized his July understanding with Krüger. He received this document shortly after a meeting with von Vietinghoff on 12 October, during which the Chef AW had passionately criticized the apparent Army procrastination over preparing the "military youth law." Once again he stressed his disastrous financial situation, insisting that he needed at least RM 10 million per month in order to continue operations.²¹

¹⁹Ibid., Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Befehlshaber-besprechung, 9 October 1934. "Waffenausbildung der Soldaten und Ersatzreservisten bleibt allein Aufgabe der Wehrmacht." Bl. 229. Blomberg did allow Krüger to retain a few weapons (probably of small bore caliber) for marksmanship training.

²⁰During a conference with the Reichswehr commanders on 9 October, Blomberg told them that the "law for state and military training" was still in preparation, and outlined its essential principles. IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Bl. 229; BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "Entwurf... "

²¹IfZG, Fa-90/2, "Aktenvermerk Wehrjugend", 10 October 1934.

Whatever hopes the long-awaited draft of the law concerning membership in Nazi training organizations may have awakened in Krüger, his desire for its speedy implementation remained unfulfilled. Army guidelines distributed to German military attachés on 25 October indicate that as of that date no further progress had been made toward implementing the law.²² On 7 November Reichenau wrote Krüger, informing him that a lack of funds and a subsequent re-evaluation of Krüger's proposed "military youth" organization dictated several changes, which, noted Reichenau, already had the approval of Blomberg and Hitler.²³ Once the international situation would permit, he wrote, the Government planned to introduce compulsory military and Labor Service requirements.²⁴ In the meantime, he added, as many young Germans as possible would serve six months in the Labor Service, during which they would complete their military sport training, necessitating a merger of some Chef AW Organization activities with the Labor Service. Instead of Krüger becoming "Reich Leader of the Military

²²Ibid., Ma-241, Reichswehrministerium/Ausland, "Stichworte für Ausführungen vor den Militär-Attachés, 25 October 1934.

²³Ibid., Letter Reichenau to Krüger, Der Chef des Wehrmachtamts, Nr. 1390/34 g.K., L IIA, 7 November 1934.

²⁴During his commanders conference of 9 October 1934, Blomberg stated that he hoped a universal military service requirement would become law by 1 October 1935. See IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Bl. 231f.

Youth", Reichenau instead proposed that he be appointed "Inspector of Terrain Sport"; responsible to Blomberg for training sport instructors for the SA, SS (Schutzstaffel), Hitler Youth, Reich Labor Service, and the National Socialist Teachers Association. In addition, noted Reichenau, the Defense Minister intended to appoint an active officer to serve as Chef AW chief of staff and to name a committee of representatives from agencies responsible for sport instruction to act as a board of governors for the Krüger Organization.²⁵ On the issue of training with military weapons, the Army remained adamant: "weapons training ... is solely the task of the armed forces. Organizations other than the armed forces do not engage in weapons instruction."²⁶

This newest proposal for the Organization Krüger contained several important changes, all of which militated against both the independence and permanence of the Chef AW Organization. Not only did Reichenau want to remove Krüger's organization from providing military sport instruction

²⁵IfZG, Fa-90/2, letter Reichenau to Krüger, Der Chef des Wehrmachtamts, Nr. 1390/34 g.K. LIIA, 7 November 1934; BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "Entwurf eines Kabinettsbeschlusses zum Gesetz über die Zugehörigkeit zu den nationalsozialistischen Erziehungsverbänden".

²⁶BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "Entwurf eines Kabinettsbeschlusses..." "Die Waffenausbildung ... ist allein Aufgabe der Wehrmacht. Verbände außerhalb der Wehrmacht betrieben keine Waffenausbildung."

directly to young men, but the Army's plans for a board of governors and a military officer serving as chief of staff to Krüger virtually eliminated the latter's former independence.

Krüger immediately realized the direction toward which Reichenau's changes to their July understanding headed: the eventual eclipse of the Chef AW Organization and its transformation into a diminutive instructor training bureau.²⁷ Gathering information with which to undermine Reichenau's arguments, the Chef AW discovered that the budget situation was not as bleak as the Defense Ministry indicated. The Reich Labor Service, he found out, had emerged from its budget surgery in far better shape than had his own organization.²⁸ In a letter to the Defense Ministry, Krüger suggested three major changes to Reichenau's latest proposal: (1) members of the Reich Labor Service would not conduct their own military sport program, but instead would undergo training in special Chef AW Organization camps; (2) the military sport requirement for all male Germans could only be fulfilled in Chef AW Organization camps; and (3) the Chef AW, as the official respon-

²⁷Ibid., Krüger marginalia.

²⁸Ibid., Amt-M, M/G-, 34 to Krüger, im Hause, 14 November 1934. The Reichsarbeitsdienst, asking for RM 260 million, eventually received RM 200 million. Cf. Ba, R-43, II/516, RFM, Ar 1610 (34)-12I, betr. Haushaltsmittel f. RAD, 6 June 1934; RFM Ar 1610 (34)-14 I, 9 July 1934.

sible for all military sport training, would supervise all activities related to military sport training conducted by the Hitler Youth, the schools, and the Reich Labor Service.²⁹

Reichenau's reponse to Krüger's suggestions has not survived, but it appears that he remained unconvinced, because there was no immediate resolution of his and Krüger's differences. Instead, a meeting of all interested parties concerning the "military youth" law took place on 20 November 1934. Little information pertaining to this conference exists, and neither its location nor its participants are known. However, since the proposed law concerned several Nazi paramilitary and service organizations (e.g., SA, SS, Hitler Youth, Chef AW Organization, and the Reich Labor Service) and the Defense Ministry, it is probable that representatives from all these groups attended. While no transcript of this conference is known to exist, the instructions for the SA representatives³⁰ leave no doubt that the Chef AW Organization received full measure of the antip-

²⁹BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "Fragen zum Gesetz über die Zugehörigkeit zu den Nationalsozialistischen Erziehungsverbänden bzw. zum Entwurf eines Kabinettsbeschlußes"; "Stellungnahme zum Entwurf eines Kabinettsbeschlußes zum Gesetz über die Zugehörigkeit zu den nationalsozialistischen Erziehungsverbänden". Both these documents are undated but are attached to Reichenau's letter of 7 November 1934 with a remark that the material was brought to Reichenau's attention.

³⁰BA, Sam Sch/239, Fernspruch Stabschef-Oberführer Reimann am 20. 11. 1934 (vorm.), (festgelegt nach Diktat). The SA representatives were Gruppenführer Marxer (head of SA personnel office) and Brigadeführer Max Jüttner (assistant to Lutze).

athy which had developed between it and the SA.

Following the Röhm Putsch, growing hostility characterized relations between Krüger and the new SA Chief of Staff, Viktor Lutze.³¹ In all likelihood this burgeoning antagonism originated from the irreconcilable and conflicting concepts each had of the role of their respective organizations. Lutze, on good terms with the Army, had no intention of allowing Krüger to monopolize completely all non-regular defense preparations. The first clash came in July when Lutze reminded Krüger, who then was still in the SA, that the sole agency for transmitting the wishes of the Defense Ministry to the entire SA was the OSAF, not the Chef AW Organization. It was unmilitary, wrote the SA Chief of Staff, that a subordinate section of the SA staff would issue directives from the Defense Ministry to the SA without consultation with or the approval of the Supreme SA Headquarters.³² Krüger ignored Lutze and attempted to preserve his position as the sole SA liaison to the Defense

³¹28 December 1890 to 1943. Entering the Army in 1912, Lutze saw service on all fronts during the First World War and received a number of decorations. Blinded in his left eye, he was medically discharged in 1919, and entered a business enterprise in Hannover. He joined the SA in 1923, and became a regional commander and deputy Gauleiter in 1925. In 1931, Lutze became OSAF-Nord. Following the Nazi victory, he became Police President, then Oberpräsident of Hannover until his appointment as SA Chief of Staff on 30 June 1934. He died from injuries received in an auto wreck in 1943.

³²BDC, Personalakt Krüger, I, Lutze to Krüger, OSAF M/G 3806/34, 24 July 1934. A similar letter from Lutze, M/G 1066/34, of 18 July went unanswered.

Ministry, an especially difficult task after his separation from the SA in August. On 17 October an exasperated Lutze wrote:

I am telling you [Krüger], as I have already done several months ago, for the very last time today, that there is no need for an intermediary to transmit to me the wishes and requests of the Defense Ministry. I see no reason why the Defense Ministry cannot deal directly with me.³³

While arguing in this instance from a defensible position, Lutze nonetheless contributed to the rift which developed between the SA and the Chef AW Organization. In an order published the day after Hitler separated Krüger's organization from the SA, the SA Chief of Staff explained to the SA that he foresaw no changes in either his relations with Krüger or in the latter's subordinate relationship to the OSAF.³⁴ Further, several senior SA leaders insisted that Krüger's overweening ambition had resulted in the events of 30 June, an attitude hardly conducive to insuring

³³Ibid., Lutze to Krüger, OSAF 163/34, geheim, 17 October 1934. "...teile ich Ihnen, wie ich das bereits schon einmal vor Monaten getan habe, heute zum letzten Male mit, daß es keiner Zwischenstelle bedarf, die mir Wünsche und Anregungen des Reichswehrministeriums übermittelt, da ich keinen Grund sehe, daß das Reichswehrministerium direkt mit mir verhandelt."

³⁴BA, NS-23/127, OSAF, Führungsamt F-2, 20464, 9 August 1934.

smooth relations between the two groups.³⁵ "Don't speak to us of the Chef AW," said Lutze's adjutant to a Chef AW Organization staff officer, "for us, he is a red flag!"³⁶

A further controversy erupted over the continued wearing of the SA uniform by Chef AW Organization personnel who as yet had no distinct uniform. Lutze, in a letter of 26 October, excoriated Krüger for allowing his men unauthorized liberties (e.g., pinned-back coat lapels, white leather gloves) in wearing their uniforms. These transgressions were deplorable, wrote the SA Chief of Staff, because the public, he added, which could not be expected to distinguish non-existent differences between the uniforms of the two groups, would naturally conclude that all who wore the SA uniform, properly or otherwise, belonged to the SA. Lutze concluded his letter with the threat that if Chef AW Organization men failed to conform to SA uniform regulations, he would see to it "... that they no longer [will] run around in uniform."³⁷ More aggravating to Krüger was

³⁵BDC, Personalakt Krüger, I, report of 26 August 1934, conversation between Wähmann and former SA Reichschochschule leader Heinrich Bennecke. Bennecke has reproduced this document in the appendix to his Reichswehr und Röhmputsch, Anlage 2.

³⁶BDC, Personalakt Krüger, I, unsigned, undated report of a Chef AW staff officer (most likely Wähmann) with SA Oberführer Reimann, Lutze's adjutant. "Sprechen Sie ja nicht bei uns vom Chef AW, der is für uns ein rotes Tuch!"

³⁷Ibid., Lutze to Krüger, OSAS BB, 4119 II/21-d, 26 October 1934. "...daß sie nicht mehr in Uniform herumlaufen."

the voiding of the SA identification papers carried by Chef AW Organization men. This mean action forced him to issue new identity cards for his men, who in the meantime were harassed by police during random security checks and who lost their special railroad travel discount.³⁸

Lutze did not restrict himself to petty swipes at Krüger; Lutze's measures establishing SA training schools were clearly aimed at making Krüger's Chef AW Organization appear redundant and hence a wasteful extravagance. In early November the SA Chief of Staff directed SA Groups in western Germany to send selected students to a new SA instructor training academy located near Hanau. The graduates would, he wrote, form cadres for similar schools which he hoped to set up in each SA Group. "Because these schools will be real SA schools", he added, "special care must be taken in the selection of leaders" with emphasis placed upon their commitment to the National Socialist movement.³⁹ Further measures were taken to establish sport and ideological schools for each SA Group,⁴⁰ and on 15 November Lutze

³⁸BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, letter Landesführer V (Stuttgart) to Krüger, Nr. 4302/34, 19 November 1934.

³⁹BA, NS-23/127, OSAF Z, 31373, 7 November 1934. "Da diese neuen Schulen wirkliche SA Schulen werden sollen, muß die Auswahl die zum Lehrgang kommandierten Führer besondere Sorgfalt gelegt werden." (emphasis in original) Students from the eastern regions of Germany attended the second course (6 Jan. 1935-3 Feb. 1935). See Ibid., OSAF F, 31373/II Ang., 30 Nov. 1934.

⁴⁰Ibid., OSAF P, 32607, 14 November 1934; NS-23/428, OSAF F-3, 32749, 20 November 1934.

appointed Reich Sport Commisar von Tshammer und Osten to the OSAF as sports consultant. He received orders to unify SA sport instruction, insuring its compatibility to existent SA ideological and terrain sport training.⁴¹

The abrasive Krüger had not, however, restricted himself to alienating the SA. He arrogantly dismissed a request to audit his books from Party Treasurer Franz Xavier Schwarz,⁴² who had been specifically designated by Hitler to review SA finances following the Röhm Putsch.⁴³ Acknowledging receipt of Schwarz's request, Krüger imperiously stated that since his organization had, at the express orders of the Führer, been made independent of the SA, an examination of the books was out of the question.⁴⁴ Schwarz, one of the select few who enjoyed Hitler's complete confidence and a former bureaucrat to whom bluster and chicanery were everyday occurrences, refused to be cowed by any situation. Demanding access to Krüger's financial records, he

⁴¹ Ibid., NS-23/127, OSAF F-3, 32472, 15 November 1934.

⁴² 27 Nov. 1875- A career civil servant in the Bavarian Civil Service, Schwarz held a number of middle-level positions culminating in his appointment to the city council of Munich. During the First World War he served all four years as a military official. He became NSDAP Treasurer in 1925 when Hitler refounded the party.

⁴³ IFZG, Fa-90/1, letter Reichsschatzmeister der NSDAP Schwartz to Krüger, Nr. 17761, 31 July 1934. The completed audit, dated 14 December 1934, can be seen in HA, f. 319.

⁴⁴ Ibid., letter Krüger to Schwarz, G 4296/34, 10 August 1934.

replied that according

to the interpretation of the Führer regarding the law for Securing the Unity of the State and the Party (1 December 1933), according to which I am the plenipotentiary of the Führer in all contractual affairs of the NSDAP ... all contracts of the NSDAP, its offices, and its affiliated organizations require my approval.⁴⁵

Krüger's response has not survived, but an audit by the Army, conducted one year later and accusing Krüger of gross mismanagement, gives some indication as to why he attempted to block the Party Treasurer's audit.⁴⁶

While very little evidence providing insight into the relationship between Chef AW Organization camps and the people of the towns in which the facilities were located has survived, ill feelings between the two groups existed in at least one area. A number of peasants in the village of Iburg (Westphalia) complained to local government authorities that students from the Iburg Chef AW Organization camp had trampled grazing areas and had blocked access to

⁴⁵Ibid., letter Schwarz to Krüger, 6 October 1934. "Auf die erste Durchführungsverordnung des Führers zum Gesetz zur Sicherung der Einheit von Partei und Staat vom 1.12.33, wonach ich als Generalbevollmächtigter des Führers in allen vermögensrechtlichen Angelegenheiten der NSDAP gelte und... auch alle Verträge der NSDAP und ihrer Gliederung sowie der Ämter meiner Genehmigung bedürfen."

⁴⁶BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift", passim.

watering holes. The local Regierungspräsident⁴⁷ routinely sent the complaints to the Iburg camp commandant with a request that he address the problem.⁴⁸ The commander replied that he failed to see any harm in his students using the disputed areas for only two or three hours daily. He needed, he explained, access to the grazing areas in order to conduct his training, and he added, he had a contract with the community guaranteeing him this right. He was going to complain to Krüger, he wrote, that the locals were trying to break the contract, implying that the Chef AW would take some retaliation against the peasants. "After all," concluded the commandant, "according to my arithmetic, the miserable creatures [the cattle] still have 21 hours [per day] in which to graze."⁴⁹ Perhaps having second thoughts about this intemperate letter, the commandant dispatched a second missive three days later, informing the Regierungspräsident that he would reduce the number of students using the grazing area. After congratulating himself for this masterful solution, his anger resurfaced as he concluded

⁴⁷There is no precise English translation for this term. The boundaries of a Regierung varied, but the area, on the whole, was larger than a US county, and the Regierungspräsident was an appointed civil servant, responsible to the state government.

⁴⁸BA, NS-23/158, letter Regierungspräsident Osnabrück to Chef AW Sportschule Iburg, III D3, 17, 12 July 1934.

⁴⁹Ibid., letter Commandant SA Sportschule Iburg to Regierungspräsident Osnabrück, Nr. 1308/34, ES, 15 July 1934. "Es verbleiben den armen Vieh dann noch rechnerisch 21 Stunden zum Fraß."

that "... the complaint of the peasants ... is no argument, but mere chicanery!"⁵⁰ The imperturbable Regierungspräsident handled the situation adroitly. Rejecting Camp Commandant Busch's letters as both impertinent and unsatisfactory, he prohibited Chef AW Organization students from using the disputed area until 1 October. Busch's threat to write Krüger, added the Regierungspräsident, was crass and unnecessary, and he explained to Busch that he had already taken the liberty of forwarding to Krüger copies of all of Busch's correspondence with local officials.⁵¹

This one affair is insufficient to hazard even a suggestion that such incidents were characteristic of Chef AW Organization relations with local residents. The only other evidence bearing on this area, Krüger's testimony, which is of course self-serving, contradicts the Iburg impression. Nonetheless, only a few problems of the Iburg type would have been needed to add many local and regional government officials to the growing list of Krüger's enemies. By late 1934 this list included not only such long-standing rivals as Hitler Youth Leader von Schirach and Reich Sport Commissar von Tschammer und Osten, but the newer and poten-

⁵⁰Ibid., letter Commandant SA Sportschule Iburg to Regierungspräsident Osnabrück, 10 July 1934. "Mit guten Willen liesse ich eine Lösung finden, aber Beschwerden der Bauern ... ist kein Argument, sondern Chikane!"

⁵¹Ibid., letter Regierungspräsident Osnabrück to SA Sportschule Iburg, IIID, Nr. 20/2, 24 July 1934.

tially more dangerous foes, namely Lutze, the Reich Labor Service, the Army Command (Fritsch and Beck), Nazi Party Treasurer Schwarz, and possibly a few local government officials.

By November 1934, with opposition to the Chef AW Organization coming from all directions, the first of a series of conversations among interested parties concerning the proposed "military youth" law took place.⁵² During the first meeting, held on 20 November, SA representatives Marxer and Jüttner pointed out that the "SA had prepared a series of its own [sport training] camps which obviated the need for a second organization [the Chef AW Organization], the existence of which serves merely to double expenses."⁵³ Following this damaging observation and taking advantage of the lack of enthusiasm of Reichswehr officers for entering again the maze of paramilitary instruction, Marxer and Jüttner proposed that a new Reichskuratorium, under Reichswehr auspices, be created; otherwise, they added, the SA must assume complete responsibility for youth training. Adding to the already uncomfortable atmosphere, they objected vehemently to the provision in the draft of the

⁵²BA, Sam Sch/239, "Fernspruch Stabschef-Oberführer Reimann am 20. 11. 34 (vorm.) See footnote 30, this chapter.

⁵³Ibid., "SA bearbeitet an sich sämtliche Lager, die alle der SA unterstehen, damit nicht eine zweite Organisation notwendig ist, durch welche erst wieder doppelte Kosten entstehen würden."

"military youth" law calling for the termination of membership in the Party and the SA for the duration of one's military service.⁵⁴ "The reasons were clear" for their objections, they said: "the movement and the state are one, which the Reichswehr always maintains when it [this position] is to their advantage. There is no reason why the armed forces should not mesh completely with the National Socialist State and stop pursuing special interests."⁵⁵

Apparently nothing constructive came from this meeting. Three days later Lutze wrote to the Deputy of the Führer, Rudolf Hess,⁵⁶ seeking an interview with Hitler. Explaining that while he (Lutze) realized that Hitler was free to accept the current wording of the "military youth"

⁵⁴For this law, see BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "Entwurf eines Gesetzes über die Zugehörigkeit zu den nationalsozialistischen Erziehungsverbänden," Ziff. 4.

⁵⁵BA, Sam Sch/239, "Fernspruch Stabschef..." "Gründe sind klar: Bewegung und Staat sind eins, was RW [Reichswehr] ja immer behauptet, wenn es zu ihrem Vorteil ist. Es ist kein Grund vorhanden, daß die Wehrmacht sich nicht voll in den nationalsozialistischen Staat einfügt und Sonderinteressen betreibt."

⁵⁶26 April 1896- Hess was a management trainee in Hamburg when the First World War began and he joined the 1st Bavarian Artillery Regiment. Wounded twice, he was promoted to Lieutenant and joined the flying corps. After the war, he became a student at the University of Munich and became active in racist political groups, including the NSDAP in 1921. He formed the first SA unit at the university. While in jail with Hitler after the failure of the Beer Hall Putsch, he became his private secretary, a position which was elevated to Deputy of Hitler in 1933.

law, there were several sections with which the SA disagreed. He insisted that the Chef AW Organization once again be subordinated to the SA and that SA and SS men be allowed to retain their membership in these organizations while performing their active military service obligations.⁵⁷ Hess arranged for Lutze to meet Hitler on 27 November, and although there is no record of their conversation, Lutze's notes which he prepared in advance have survived. These confirm that the SA Chief of Staff either hoped to regain control of Krüger's organization or to eliminate it and have the SA assume Krüger's responsibilities.⁵⁸

Hitler appears to have made no commitment to Lutze and instead ordered the concerned youth training agencies to re-draft the "military youth" law. The agencies promptly passed this task to a committee.⁵⁹ The five page revised "military youth" law proposal, which called for a cabinet decree reorganizing and regulating military sport training, was apparently the work of this committee. Compared to Krüger's original understanding with the Army in July, the final draft reflected a number of important compromises,

⁵⁷BA, Sam Sch/239, Lutze to Hess, 23 November 1934.

⁵⁸Ibid., Lutze's handwritten notes, "Dem Führer soll unterbreitet werden".

⁵⁹Völkischer Beobachter, 4 December 1934. According to the newspaper, present at a meeting of 3 December were Reichskommissar Hans Frank [the former NSDAP counselor], Hitler Youth Leader von Schirach, Reich Labor Minister Seldte, and RAD Leader Hierl.

which reduced considerably his autonomy and authority.

According to this latest proposal, German males from ages 19 to 21 were to be incorporated into the "military youth". At some time during their 19th year, attendance at a Chef AW Organization course was mandatory, followed by six months Labor Service and subsequent entry into the armed forces. When possible, Krüger was to maintain separate facilities and courses for students who were members of the SA or SS. Additionally, special instructor training courses were to be conducted for Hitler Youth leaders. Funds for all these courses would come from the Defense Ministry, which would assign an officer to serve as Krüger's chief of staff and a civilian administrator to direct the finances of the Krüger Organization. Krüger lost all authority over Hitler Youth and Reich Labor Service training activities, and Lutze's demand that SA men be allowed to continue their SA membership while on active military service was rejected.⁶⁰

Neither the SA nor the Army contributed significantly to the drafting of this proposal which never became law.

The SA and the Reichswehr instead appear to have undermined both the revised "military youth" proposal and the Krüger Organization. Lutze had manifested his opposition to the Chef AW Organization on numerous occasions, and he had

⁶⁰BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, "(Kabinettsbeschluß)" Entwurf vom 11.12.34.

carefully directed attention to the needless expense of maintaining two military sport training organizations, his own and Krüger's, a situation which, he had claimed with logic, violated the military axiom of unity of command. From the side of the Defense Ministry, enthusiasm for the Krüger Organization had subsided since July. First came the decision that the advanced Chef AW training courses were no longer necessary, then the Army Command had insisted upon the return of its weapons. Budget discussions between Krüger's officials and the Army dragged on interminably.⁶¹

Perhaps more to the point, Reichswehr officials were happy to tolerate the Krüger Organization so long as the Government graciously provided the funds for this organization from the Reich Interior Ministry, but they became reluctant to fund it when the money was to come from their own budget, as mandated by the proposed "military youth" law. Further, by October 1934 the Army had almost reached the manpower level which its experts had hoped to attain by 1938,⁶²

⁶¹Ibid., 9a, "Stellungnahme", Bl. 18f. The Army report of 1935 accusing Krüger of gross fiscal incompetence and mismanagement rings hollow. Although the Army succeeded in appointing its own financial expert to the Chef AW staff only in November 1934, Krüger had, from the inception of his organization, kept Army officials aware of his total expenditures and had submitted for their inspection copies of his budget.

⁶²Rautenberg, Rüstungspolitik, 309-313; Absolon, Wehrmacht, I, 53-58.

an expansion which in all probability strained the defense budget. Achieving its 1938 goals four years ahead of schedule, Army officials may have argued that money allocated for the Chef AW Organization, whose function no longer appeared quite so critical now that the Army had a surfeit of men, could be better spent to the advantages of the armed forces by the Defense Ministry itself. Moreover, there appeared little need for subsidizing the expensive Chef AW Organization schools when a similar agency, the SA, would perform the same task at no expense to the Army.

The Army, in fact, had been leaning in this direction since November. Fritsch published an order on 4 December allowing SA and SS units to train with Army recruit battalions. This training, explained Fritsch, implied no peacetime military function for the SA; however, in war or mobilization, those SA and SS units which had undergone military training would serve as replacement units, forwarding men to the front as required.⁶³ Even though the Army restricted this training to men over twenty-five years of age, the implication was that the Army, no longer overwhelmed by a flood of recruits, could spare personnel and facilities to train non-regulars. In other words, the Chef AW Organization had become obsolete.

⁶³BA, Sam Sch/477, CHL TA 6008/34 g.K. T2IIIIa, 4 December 1934.

In early December both the Army and the SA became openly hostile to Krüger. Blomberg sent him an angry letter on 6 December, accusing him of harboring anti-Reichswehr elements within his organization, and demanding an "investigation and thorough measures against the guilty and any suspicious [elements]." ⁶⁴ An order from the OSAF to the entire SA expressed a desire for the establishing of warm, comradely relations with the National Socialist Motorized Corps (NSKK) while forbidding any contact between SA units and the Chef AW Organization. ⁶⁵ The most insidious blow of what Krüger called "the incomprehensible attitude of the SA toward the Chef AW ..." ⁶⁶ came with Lutze's attempt to have Krüger expelled from the Party as well as his post on account of his alleged role in the so-called Killinger Affair. Killinger, ⁶⁷ the Dresden SA leader and Minister-

⁶⁴Ibid./421, letter Blomberg to Krüger, RWM 1699/34 g.K. IIa, 6 December 1934. "Ich halte beschleunigte Untersuchung und durchgreifende Maßnahmen gegen Schuldige und irgendwie Verdächtige für dringend erforderlich."

⁶⁵BA, NS-23/2, OSAF Ch. No. 35110, 26 November 1934; NS-23/319, SA Gruppe Kurpfalz, 197/34 (betr. OSAF G 3410, F-2, geh. 368), 13 December 1934.

⁶⁶BDC, Personalakt Krüger, letter Krüger to Staatssek. in der Reichskanzlei Dr. Lammers, (to be forwarded to Hitler), Nr. 1156/35, 6 April 1935. "Die unverständliche Einstellung der SA gegen den Chef AW."

⁶⁷1886-1944. A Navy officer until 1918, he joined the Erhardt Brigade and became the military leader of Organisation Consul. He led the Erhardt Brigade in 1921 in Upper Silesia and later the Wiking Bund in Saxony. Killinger joined the NSDAP in 1927, and in 1933 became the Minister-President of Saxony. From 1937 to 1939, he served as the German Consul in San Francisco, then Ambassador to Rumania, where he committed suicide.

President of Saxony, had been arrested and interrogated for alleged anti-Reichswehr activities in connection with the events of 30 June 1934. A NSDAP court of honor subsequently cleared him of those charges.⁶⁸ Lutze later discovered that Krüger supposedly had master-minded Killinger's arrest and regretted only that the Saxon Minister-President had not been shot.⁶⁹ Lutze explained these allegations to Krüger, offering him a chance to account for his actions.⁷⁰ Receiving no response, the SA Chief of Staff forwarded the material to Major (Ret.) Walter Buch, head of the Nazi Party Court and Tribunal. Citing what he believed to be Krüger's monstrous deed against a fellow SA Obergruppenführer and Party Comrade, Lutze indicated that he felt obliged to initiate action against Krüger "... with the goal of [his] removal from office and expulsion from the [Nazi] Movement."⁷¹ Since this complaint involved re-

⁶⁸See his memorandum of 1 October 1934, BDC, Personalakt Killinger.

⁶⁹Ibid., letter of Obergruppenführer von Jagow to Lutze, 14 December 1934. Jagow admitted that his informant was Gauleiter Kube (of Dresden).

⁷⁰Ibid., letter Lutze to Krüger, OSAF 270/34 geheim, persönlich! streng vertraulich! 20 December 1934; Personalakt Krüger, II, Lutze to Krüger, OSAF 270/34, B/R, 8 January 1935.

⁷¹Ibid., Personalakt Krüger, II, letter Lutze to Erster Vorsitzender des Obersten Parteigerichts, Pg. Buch, OSAF 270/34 geh. B/R, 23 January 1935; Lutze also informed von Killinger. See Ibid., Lutze to von Killinger, OSAF 270/34 geh. B/R, 24 January 1935.

opening the 30 June controversy, Buch refused to handle the case and sent the material to Hess who, at Hitler's express order, stopped the investigation.⁷² As a final straw, Lutze halted lateral transfers from the Chef AW Organization to the SA and ordered his personnel office to issue discharge certificates for all former SA men in Krüger's employ.⁷³

Sometime in January 1935, on an unknown date and for reasons which are not clear, Hitler decided to disband the Chef AW Organization. Surviving evidence indicates that Hitler made his decision possibly as early as 3 January,⁷⁴ and certainly no later than 12 January, for on that date Blomberg told his commanders that "the Krüger Organization is going to disappear. The Führer has already ordered its dissolution."⁷⁵ Krüger vainly protested the decision on

⁷²Ibid., Personalakt von Killinger, Buch to Lutze, 26 January 1935; Hess to Lutze, Br/Wi, 9 May 1935.

⁷³BA, NS-23/428, OSAF P-1, 9 January 1935. In exceptional cases, Chef AW personnel could seek re-instatement in the SA--at their former SA rank.

⁷⁴A cryptic remark made by Reichenau to Krüger on 31 January 1935 leaves open the possibility that Hitler may have made a tentative decision on 3 January against the Krüger Organization: "... er [Reichenau] habe bereits am 3. Januar Obergruppenführer [Krüger] die Willensmeinung des Führers über den Chef des Ausbildungswesens gesagt...." See IfZG, Fa-90/1, Aktenvermerk: Anruf des Generals v. Reichenau am 31. Januar 1935, 3:15 Uhr". A list of dates relating to the disbanding of the Chef AW in Krüger's handwriting confirms a conversation with Reichenau on 3 January, but provides no further insight. BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10.

⁷⁵IfZG, Ed-1/1-2, Liebmann Notizen, Befehlshaberbesprechung, 12 January 1935. "Organisation Krüger fliegt auf. Führer hat Auflösung bereits befohlen." Bl. 238.

15 January after a conversation with the Defense Minister.⁷⁶ If Hitler had intended for his order to remain confidential (it carried a secret classification when formally issued), he was disappointed. Five days after Blomberg told his generals of the imminent disbanding of the Krüger Organization, top level Nazis shared the secret.⁷⁷

Hitler did not explain his reasons, at least in writing, for disbanding the Chef AW Organization.⁷⁸ Certainly Krüger did not lack either rivals or enemies with close ties to Hitler. Lutze, his most outspoken foe, clearly had indicated his opposition to Krüger's organization, castigating it as a waste of money. The SA Chief of Staff appears to have painstakingly orchestrated party rivals in their chorus against Krüger and successfully blocked his bid to become "Reich Leader of the German Military Youth", a position

⁷⁶Nachlaß Krüger/10, list of dates relating to disbanding of the Chef AW Organization.

⁷⁷By 17 January, General Vogt, formerly of the GVA and now a Hitler Youth official, knew of Hitler's order. His connections with the Defense Ministry had, in the past, been close, and it is inconceivable that he would have failed to relay this information to his superiors who were keenly interested in the Chef AW Organization. See IfZG, Ed-67/19, "Besprechung über Fragen des dt. Jugenddienst am 17. 1. 1935, Aktenvermerk", signed "von Bonin" [a Colonel in Reichenau's office, who apparently leaked the news]. See also Fa-90/1, letter Johannes v. Guenther to Chef AW Gruppenführer Späing, 28 January 1935.

⁷⁸Hitler's letter to Krüger informing him officially of the disbanding of his organization gives no reasons why this action was taken. IfZG, Fa-90/1, letter Der Führer und Reichskanzler, Nr. 272/35 g.K. L IIa, Berlin, 24 January 1935.

which threatened their baliwicks. The arrogant and idealistic Krüger had few friends to intercede on his behalf; even his former comrades in the SA regarded him as a traitor to the SA after the Röhm Putsch. Moreover, from Lutze's standpoint, the Killinger Affair could not have exploded at a better time.

Nonetheless, evidence tends to assign a greater responsibility to the Reichswehr than the SA for the demise of the Krüger Organization. Enthusiasm for an independent Chef AW had clearly waned since the events of the 30 June. Certainly money was a factor as the Army Command, during the fall of 1934, constantly whittled away at Krüger's budget. Moreover, the desperate need in 1933 for semitrained recruits had for the most part diminished. France had not attacked or threatened Germany for its unilateral violations of the Versailles Treaty, and the Army, in 1934, had already reached its 1938 expansion plan goals, the next stage of which called for re-introducing conscription. It appears that the Defense Ministry had no idea when Hitler planned to re-introduce a universal military service requirement, but such a move was expected no later than October 1935.⁷⁹ It is unlikely that the Chef AW Organization would have survived for any length of time once the draft had been reinstated, and Army officers may have urged disbanding the

⁷⁹Cf. Blomberg's remarks of 9 October, footnote 25; Manstein, Soldatenleben, 187.

Krüger Organization in order to point out the need for a draft.

Rumors current in Berlin,⁸⁰ to which Krüger apparently subscribed,⁸¹ blamed the Reichswehr for undermining Krüger's autonomy.⁸² One former Chef AW Organization member claimed that the Army had detailed Lt. Colonel Erwin Rommel (the later Field Marshall) as Chef AW Organization Chief of Staff, but that his work was sabotaged by Krüger's staff director, Wähmann. Rommel, according to this source, then recommended to Hitler the abolition of the Krüger Organization.⁸³

⁸⁰IfZG, Fa-90/2, Krüger's handwritten notes of a conversation with Blomberg, 24 January 1935. See also Reichenau's phone call to Krüger, ibid., Fa-90/1, Aktenvermerk, 31 January 1935.

⁸¹Ibid., Fa-90/1, Aktenvermerk, 31 January; letter Johannes von Guenther to Späing.

⁸²Ibid., Fa-90/1, Aktenvermerk, 31 January, with Reichenau; letter Johannes v. Guenther to Chef AW Gruppenführer Späing, 28 January 1935. Guenther stated that these rumors were current in November 1934. See also Zgs. 44, Gaertner, Bl. 6. Lutze's adjutant told Wähmann that the Reichswehr planned to replace Krüger with a general as soon as Krüger had set up the Chef AW Organization. BDC, Personalakt Krüger, I, Oberführer Reimann Comments.

⁸³Major (Ret.) Huwe, a Chef AW staff officer, claimed that Hitler ordered the Army to assign a young officer decorated with the Pour le Merité for combat heroism as Chef AW chief of staff. Rommel, writes Huwe, received this assignment. Since the Youth Law proposal of 11 December 1935 had not progressed beyond the committee stage, Krüger, zealously retaining his diminishing independence, may have refused to accept Rommel as his chief of staff. While this action would represent a volte face from Krüger's position of January 1934, he now had to contend with the Reichswehr as a threat.

Greater credence can be given to the thesis that the Army presented Krüger, in late December 1934 or early January 1935, with a series of conditions which, if accepted, would have effectively destroyed his autonomy. Even the implementation of the proposed "military youth" law of 11 December, which called for a military officer to become Chef AW Organization chief of staff, curtailed Krüger's autonomy. The Rommel appointment could have been one of the Army's conditions for allowing Krüger's organization to continue. In the event that he might not accept restrictions on his autonomy, the Army Command could then blame him for his own demise, knowing that the SA would assume his training tasks. Both Reichenau and Krüger allude to this thesis,⁸⁴ and Krüger certainly appears to have felt that Reichenau had used him poorly. In a stormy session with Blomberg on the morning of the 24th of January, Krüger told the Defense Minister that he no longer wished to work with Reichenau. "I do not have the impression," he added, "that General von Reichenau, in the last [few] weeks has been completely honest [in his dealings] with me." "That is preposterous," sputtered Blomberg, "on account of two very different reasons. First, because it is not in keeping [with Reichenau], and second, be-

⁸⁴Said Reichenau to Krüger, "Der Chef AW hätte es in der Hand gehabt, den Dingen einen anderen Ausgang zu geben." IfZG, Fa-90/1, Aktenvermerk, Anruf des Generals v. Reichenau, 31.1. 1935.

cause it is false."⁸⁵ The Defense Minister did, however, accede to Krüger's request and assigned Ministerial Advisor Dr. Päckel of the General Army Office to assist in dismantling the Chef AW Organization.⁸⁶

In summation, it appears that Hitler, following the recommendation of the Army which was seconded by Lutze, ordered the Chef AW Organization disbanded in early January. Krüger's organization had outlived its usefulness by the winter of 1934. The Army, along with all other government agencies, had in late 1934 to face a general constriction of funds and the RM 80 million allocated to Krüger for 1935 was an immense sum that the Army apparently decided it could spend more profitably elsewhere. Moreover, by transferring his duties to the SA, the Reichswehr retained, without cost, the same benefits. In addition to the Army, the Nazi Party agencies interested in pursuing military sport activities (the SA, SS, Hitler Youth, and Reich Labor Service) in all likelihood subjected Hitler to a litany of complaints against Krüger. These agencies hoped to eliminate a dangerous rival and to accrue whatever money that might become available

⁸⁵ IfZG, Fa-90/2, Krüger's hand-written notes, conversation with Blomberg, 24.1.35. "Kr[üger] 'Ich habe nicht den Eindruck gewonnen, daß Gen. von Reichenau in den letzten Wochen ehrlich loyal mit mir zusammen gearbeitet hat!' v. Bl[omberg] 'So geht das nicht, aus zweierlei Gründen. Erstens, weil es nicht zutrifft, und zweitens, weil es nicht wahr ist.'"

⁸⁶ Ibid., Fa-90/1, Aktenvermerk: Besprechung mit den Chef des Truppenamts ... 4. Februar 1935; CHL 103/35 g.K. II Ang., Berlin, 7 February 1935.

should his organization be disbanded. Finally, Krüger's abrasiveness left him without friends or protectors when they were most needed.

C H A P T E R X I

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

During the spring of 1935, Krüger met on numerous occasions with General Beck and Colonel Fromm (of the Army's General Office) to discuss arrangements for the dismantling of Krüger's organization. Its facilities and equipment were transferred for the most part to the Army, with other Government and Party agencies receiving what remained.¹ Krüger encountered numerous difficulties in attempting to find employment for the former members of his Chef AW Organization. Overcoming considerable resistance on the part of the Army Command, the Chef AW persuaded reluctant military officials to allow his men to enlist in the Army training battalions under extremely favorable circumstances. Chef AW Organization employees with no prior military service were, for example, sent to special training courses for several weeks, then assigned to Army training units as instructors. These men received accelerated promotion to non-commissioned officer ranks.²

¹IfZG, Fa-90/1, "Aktenvermerk: Besprechung mit dem Chef des Truppenamts Generalleutnant Beck als Vertreter des Chefs der Heeresleitung ... am 4. Februar 1935."

²BA-MA, WKVII/408-1, CHL 400/35 g.K. Allg. E, II, 8 February 1935.

Ex-Chef AW Organization leaders who could meet officer candidate standards likewise received instruction in special courses and were then commissioned in the reserve forces with a regular appointment following after a year of probationary service.³ Nonetheless, the Army did not need all of Krüger's former employees, and ill-feelings developed between Fromm and Krüger, who insisted that the Army could have accepted more of his men.⁴

As Krüger gradually dismantled his organization, its functions were taken over by other Nazi agencies. Hitler transferred responsibility for pre-military training in part to the Hitler Youth⁵ and in part to the SA. It took over the awarding of the SA Sport Badge. Lutze appointed former Reichskuratorium executive President von Neufville to direct the newly-created training section of the OSAF. The Sport Badge fell under his purview.⁶

³Ibid., CHL 8C4/35 PA (A), 30 March 1935.

⁴IfZG, Fa-90/1, "Aktenvermerk, 4 Februar 1935"; BA, Nachlaß Krüger/10, letter Krüger to Blomberg, 8 February 1935; letter Krüger to Staatssekretär Lammers, 9 February 1935; letter Krüger to Blomberg, 11 February 1935; 9a, letter Krüger to Fromm, Chef AW Nrs. 346 and 347, v.E., 11 February 1935; Krüger to Lammers, Chef AW Ch/G 386/35, 26 February 1925 [sic]; letter Krüger to Lammers, Chef AW 513/35, 26 March 1935; letter Krüger to Lammers, Ch/G 759/35, 17 May 1935.

⁵See Chapter VI, passim., of Gerhard Rempel's MS on the Hitler Youth. This is a revised draft of his dissertation, "The Misguided Generation: Hitler Youth and SS, 1933-1939", University of Wisconsin, 1971.

⁶IfZG, Fa-107/2, Stiftungsurkunde der SA Sportabzeichen, 15 February 1935; BA, NS-23/128, OSAF 13174, 16 March 1935; OSAF F, 15654, 28 March 1935; OSAF 26909 to RFSS, NSKK, RJF, PO, DLV, and RAD, 24 May 1935; Sam Sch/414, OSAF Ausb.Abt.A, II/32281, 6 June 1935.

Owing to a lack of evidence, it is not possible to state exactly the fate of most Chef AW Organization personnel. The Chef AW Organization was officially disbanded on the 1st of July 1935.⁷ According to Krüger, only 4930 of his men had found positions when the Organization officially disbanded, and a further 6051 men were still looking for employment at that time.⁸ If the figures of Military District VII (the only one for which evidence is available) can be considered representative, most of Krüger's men who had found employment by the time the Organization was officially disbanded did so in the ranks of the Army.⁹ The SS, in spite of a ban on recruiting, accepted some former Chef AW men, many of whom rose to the highest SS grades.¹⁰ Other Nazi Party organizations proved less receptive, although even Lutze accepted back a few former SA men, but at their previous SA rank, which was generally lower than that held in the Chef AW Organization.¹¹

⁷BDC, Personalakt Krüger, letter Krüger to Reichskriegsminister, 21 June 1935.

⁸BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Stand der Unterbringung vom 31. Mai 1935."

⁹BA-MA, WKVII/4082-1, WKVII 508/35 g. Ib/N, 14 February 1935; WKVII IIa to IIb, 23 February 1935; WKVII 1956/35 g.K. IIb, Az, 12 IIb Ch.AW, 29 March 1935; WKVII 1968/35, Az. 12 IIb g.K./Chef AW, 1 April 1935.

¹⁰For example, Krüger himself, and General der Waffen-SS Felix Steiner and General der Waffen-SS Gottlob Berger.

¹¹BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, letter Krüger to Hitler, Ch/G/ 472/35, 14 March 1935; IfZG, Fa-90/1, OSAF P, Nr. 13113, 18 June 1935.

The final chapter of Krüger's relationship with the Defense Ministry ended in a victory for Krüger. Col. Fromm prepared a report (at whose instigation is not clear) condemning him for allowing gross irregularities in the administration of Chef AW financial matters. Most of the problems to which Fromm pointed concerned unsigned agreements and leases with local communities in which Chef AW camps were located. In some cases, stated Army bureaucrats, the absence of a lease allowed the town to claim Reich property, while in other cases towns were left holding the bill for projects initiated by Krüger's organization. Where leases had been signed, noted the author of the report, long-term agreements were the rule, and the Reich was now faced with the prospects of paying enormous sums for property for which it had no use.¹²

Krüger was permitted to make a rebuttal, and in a thirty-three page document submitted to Hitler on the 10th of October, he refuted the Army's claims, one by one. He acknowledged that many agreements and leases had not been signed, explaining that the need for a piece of property often meant that he had had to take over and use certain facilities or areas before the legal paper work could be completed. These anomalies would have been rectified, he

¹²BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, "Niederschrift über den Chef des Ausbildungswesens", Rk. 6754, 25 September 1935.

said, had his organization not been suddenly disbanded. The same excuse applied to the long-term leases. Not knowing that his organization was to have a short existence, he stated that he had attempted to negotiate the best possible terms for the Reich, and that implied long-term leases.¹³

Hitler read both reports and accepted Krüger's version, fully exonerating him. The Führer told Himmler that "... the [contracts and leases] would have been quite proper had the Organization of the Chef AW continued [to exist]."¹⁴

Blomberg and Reichenau ended their close relationship in 1935 with the transfer of Reichenau to Bavaria to command the Bavarian Military District. Both officers subsequently became Field Marshals, but Blomberg had his career cut short in 1938 when it was discovered that his new wife had starred in pornographic films. He survived the war to die in Allied captivity at Nürnberg in 1946. Reichenau successfully commanded armies in Poland, France, and Russia, where he died of natural causes in 1942.

The enmity between Krüger and Lutze lasted until the latter's death in 1943. Krüger never forgave Lutze for his role in bringing about the dismantling of the Chef AW Organization. In February 1943, Krüger discovered that Lutze had

¹³Ibid., "Stellungnahme zur Niederschrift über den Chefs des Ausbildungswesens." 10 October 1935.

¹⁴BDC, Personalakt Krüger, RFSS, Tgb. Nr. AR/1525 Geh., Himmler to SS Personalbüro, Nach Vortrag beim Führer, 18.10. 1935, 31 October 1935. "... die [Vorträge] wohl richtig gewesen wären wenn die Organisation des Chefs A.W. weiter bestanden hätte."

vacationed in a resort area in Poland reserved for survivors of the Stalingrad disaster, a faux pas which Krüger hastily passed on to Himmler. He asked Himmler, apparently with some relish, to initiate action to have Lutze removed from his post.¹⁵ Himmler duly passed on Krüger's request to Bormann, but Lutze died of injuries incurred in an automobile accident in May 1943 before any official action was taken.

Krüger himself returned to the SS which he had left in April 1931. The Army offered him the opportunity to enter active service, although in exactly what capacity or at what grade cannot be determined. The former Chef AW declined,¹⁶ accepting instead an appointment as SS Obergruppenführer.¹⁷ He never really attained the position of eminence he had held as Chef AW and was shunted about from one relatively menial SS position to another. During the war he served as the Senior SS Officer and Police Leader in

¹⁵IfZG, Ma 290, HSSPF-Ost [Krüger] to RFSS Himmler, 923/43, 23 February 1943, Az. Kr/F 1.

¹⁶BDC, Personalakt Krüger, letter Krüger to Chef des Herrespersonalamts Generalmajor v. Schwendler, Ch. 284/35, 1 February 1935. The content of the letter merely indicates that the Army offered Krüger some position on the 25th of January. One of Krüger's staff officers, Major (Ret.) Huwe, claimed that the Army extended a brigadier's commission to Krüger who declined it, stating that he would only accept a commission as a major general. See IfZG, Zgs. 1709, Huwe, Bl. 9.

¹⁷BDC, Personalakt Krüger, letter Hitler to Krüger, 7 February 1935.

the General Government in occupied Poland, a position which he disliked intensely. Only in the last years of the war was his request to be transferred to the Waffen-SS granted. He disappeared in action in Austria during the last month of the war.¹⁸

Any assessment of the military sport movement necessarily falls into two parts: a military evaluation and a political one. While the circumstances giving birth to the military sport movement were both political and military, namely the Versailles Treaty and the turbulent first years of the Weimar Republic, the Defense Ministry conceived and developed military sport in 1924 as a solution to a military problem. Only much later, in 1930, following the resurgence of political extremism, did the political potential of the military sport program become apparent and attractive. Even Hitler, who certainly did not underestimate the indoctrinational value inherent in military sport training, stressed first and foremost its military value.

Yet efforts to judge objectively the contribution of military sport training to Germany's overall defense posture run into difficulties owing to a lack of evidence. Bombing raids in the Second World War appear to have claimed most Army records concerning its role in military sport, and the files of the majority of private organizations involved in

¹⁸Ibid., II, passim.

the project have likewise disappeared. Evidence in the form of statistics and contemporary evaluations is, for the most part, not available.¹⁹ Military sport graduates as such also never faced that ultimate standard against which military efficiency is measured, war. On the other hand, the fact that war did not occur except at Germany's bidding in 1939 tends to suggest that at the very least military sport may have had a deterrent value, itself perhaps a sufficient justification for the program. Moreover, the continued interest in military sport for over a decade by the Army Command indicates that leading military figures thought highly of the program.

In addition to the immediate military benefits arising from the military sport program, the Defense Ministry regarded its attendant advantages as equally important. Most Army officers remained convinced that future wars would require mass armies, perhaps not as gigantic as those of the First World War, but certainly large enough to require conscription to fill their ranks. With all aspects of military conscription forbidden by the Versailles Treaty, military leaders looked upon military sport as a means of circumvent-

¹⁹The only contemporary evidence available concerning the quality of Chef AW training is found in Krüger's report to Hitler. Krüger wrote: "Es liegen eine Fülle vor Urteilungen hoher und höchster Kommandostellen der damaligen Reichswehr vor, daß es dem Chef AW gelungen ist, eine Rekrutenbildung zu leisten, wie sie das Heer benötigte." in BA, Nachlaß Krüger/9a, Stellungnahme", Bl. 32. It is unlikely that Krüger would tell anything but the truth in a matter so easily verified.

ing the letter of the law. Military sport records provided local government and military authorities with some idea, however vague, of the names and numbers of young men who had had some fashion of military training. In the absence of any administrative machinery for conscription, organizations and groups with military sport programs could be called upon in the event of a national emergency to provide the names of their members.

But perhaps of even greater importance to the armed forces than preparing membership lists or conducting military instruction, organizations which encouraged military sport training promoted, in effect, the concept that every citizen owed some service to his country. It was precisely this belief which the Defense Ministry had to nurture in order to facilitate the re-enactment of universal military service laws as soon as political conditions would permit. To what extent military sport activities contributed to the creation of a climate amenable to re-introducing conscription must remain an unanswered question owing to a lack of quantifiable evidence. Judging, however, from the size of the military sport movement, as well as the growing interest in voluntary labor service, the efforts of the Army Command to keep alive the concept of citizenship and service would appear to have reaped not inconsiderable dividends.

At the same time, the involvement with military sport organizations implied per force an entanglement with politi-

cal parties and interest groups, adding a dimension to military sport into which the Army stepped with the greatest reluctance. This political facet had its origins partially in the partisan nature of many of the organizations which pursued military sport and partially in the dream of General Groener that a military sport program could help to undermine the growing inroads made by National Socialism in the ranks of the nation's youth.

In following its military sport objectives, the Army Command could not avoid contact with political organizations. German schools and universities did not offer team or individual sports in their curricula, nor did they sponsor interscholastic or inter-collegiate sport activities. Sport clubs, youth organizations, veteran's groups, and political associations filled this vacuum. In its efforts to interest as many people as possible in military sport, the Defense Ministry could not escape working with private associations, many of which pursued political goals.

Groener and Schleicher sought to keep the contact with partisan organizations to a minimum. Their method was to restrict military sport training to individuals instead of allowing private organizations as a whole to participate. In other words, members of either Nazi or Socialist paramilitary organizations could enroll in military sport instruction, not as SA or Reichsbanner men, but simply as German citizens. The Army hoped that its military sport students

would be capable of setting aside political differences in the interest of national defense. Overt forms of political expression were expressly forbidden and the Army preferred to work with non-partisan associations, a preference that sometimes gave way in practice.

In short, the policy followed by the Army Command consisted of welcoming the rank and file of the paramilitary organizations, provided that they refrained from partisan political practices and submitted to the guidance of military authorities. This policy purposely presented extremist factions and movements which claimed that their party line transcended patriotism with an awkward dilemma. Endorsing or participating in the Army sponsored military sport program meant a humiliating surrender to the Army on its terms. On the other hand, a steadfast adherence to ideological purity was likely to result in the apostasy and defection of members unable to shed completely their remaining bourgeois values.

Caught in a dilemma from which they could not emerge in all likelihood without some losses, the extremist political parties responded predictably. The Communists, who in any case were not asked to participate, denounced Groener's program as a means of spreading militarism to the as yet untainted working classes, while the Nazis claimed to take no interest in defending a rotten and corrupt political system. In practice the Nazis responded favorably to military

sport, but Hitler attempted to keep the participation of his men to a minimum, fearing that their loyalty could be undermined. Unfortunately, supposedly responsible political parties offered no encouragement to the Government and the Socialists even attempted to prevent their supporters from enrolling in the Army program. For their failure to support the military sport program the Socialists must bear a heavy share of responsibility for the failure of the Republic to capture the loyalty of its youth.

The habitual suspicion with which most Socialists viewed the military as well as the outright opposition from pacifist elements within the party encouraged the Party leaders as well as the rank and file to dismiss the military sport program as just one more means by which the Army planned to launch a counter-revolution to overthrow the Republic. The ideologues of the Party objected not to military sport itself, which their own paramilitary organization practiced, but at the participation of the Army Command in such activities, which they claimed led to a renewal of ties between the Army and the ultra-nationalist organizations.

This charge was not an outright prevarication, for available evidence indicates that more conservative than liberal groups participated in the military sport program. On the other hand, it ignores the role that their own propaganda and pacifist rhetoric played in creating this situation. Many young workers grew up listening to a steady diatribe

which characterized all officers as reactionary militarists who planned to enslave the working classes of Germany in the service of finance capitalism and Prussian Junkerdom. As a result, most working class youths evidenced little enthusiasm for the project and were all too ready to dismiss it. More conservative and nationalist-oriented youths accordingly took the place of the Socialists in the program, reinforcing the Socialist claim that it was one-sided.

Although the Army Command can be absolved of the accusation that it sought the participation of only conservative organizations in its military sport project, General Groener cannot. His military background and subsequent career in the Republic left him with an aversion for the Socialists which he never overcame. As long as he remained Defense Minister the Army seems to have made no serious efforts to have reached a modus vivendi with the Socialists concerning the military sport project. Instead of trying to overcome the hostility between himself and the Socialists, Groener instead directed his efforts at trying to undermine the Nazis, winning over what he considered their better elements, the rank and file of the SA.

General Groener's successor, General Schleicher, cannot be accused of a blind reliance on the political right, but his deviousness and public abandonment of his mentor had left him persona non grata in most circles. The withdrawal of the Socialists from the Reichskuratorium destroyed his

chances for forging a united front against political extremism which led to his isolation and resignation. The General deserved better treatment, for it was he who had made the first step toward a rapprochement between the SPD and the Defense Ministry.

The collapse of the Schleicher Government ushered in Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists who wasted no time in establishing a one-party state. The illusion that the Army could remain above politics slowly evaporated as the Hitler Regime grew in popularity and strength. With Hitler interested in expanding the Army, the military sport project took on an extra importance. Both the Army and the SA grasped at once the political implications of the military sport project. It became an important pawn in the larger struggle between the two forces for the mantle of national defense leadership in the National Socialist state. The demands of the SA for a greater role in military planning, of which gaining control of the military sport program was the first step, could not be ignored with impunity. Hitler's ties to the SA were closer than any loyalties he had to the Army. The Army, however, could not spare the instructors for the military sport program. The inevitable compromise was a length reached: the SA was to run the program under the aegis of the Army.

This arrangement provided the Army with a means of achieving its immediate goal, military expansion, while at the same time it gave the Defense Ministry intelligence of

SA affairs and an opportunity to exert influence within the SA. Reichenau appears to have hoped that his connections with the Krüger Organization would allow him the opportunity to manipulate factions within the SA in the hopes of neutralizing its radical elements whose interests threatened to prove inimical to those of the Army, society, and the nation.

The pursuit of such a policy would seem to render the armed forces culpable of collaboration with National Socialism and guilty of opportunism, manifested by completely abandoning the policy first enunciated by Seeckt, namely that the Army stood above partisan politics.

The charge of collaboration with the Nazi Regime can be readily dismissed. In a one-party state, in which the state and the one political party are theoretically united, and in which party institutions merge with government institutions (e.g., SS, Chef AW Organization, Reich Labor Service), collaboration becomes a meaningless term. Mere existence itself under these conditions means collaboration.

The accusation of opportunism implies that Army leaders, in order to win support for military expansion, recklessly abandoned their previous principle of political impartiality and embraced National Socialism which in turn promised to support the expansion program. The answer to this charge involves an explanation of former policies, an analysis of motivation, and a definition of self-interest.

In the first place, efforts to eliminate or at least to reduce the clauses of the Versailles Treaty restricting military expansion had begun as soon as the Treaty was signed. Moreover, it was the Papen Government which had initiated the steps, three months prior to Hitler's coming to power, to begin expanding the army. It can also be argued that military expansion was not necessarily inimical to the state and that it did not solely benefit the armed forces. It provided jobs, reduced unemployment, and stimulated the economy. The history of the relationship between Hitler and his generals in the years immediately prior to the Second World War refutes the argument that they had favored expansion in order to go to war.

The question of whether the intrusion of the Defense Ministry into the affairs of a political organization, the SA, was motivated by considerations of survival, or a desire to root out radical elements before they could influence Hitler, or for immediate military interests connected to the military sport program must remain unanswered. The principle figures are dead and they left behind a surprisingly small and inconclusive amount of documentary material.

Evidence does suggest, however, that the Defense Minister and his assistant followed the broad outlines of the policy laid down by their predecessors, namely that in resolving its military problems (manpower), the Army should not surrender any of its autonomy to any political entity

other than the state. In other words, the Army wanted soldiers whose loyalty to the country transcended political loyalties. While this policy was no longer entirely feasible in the National Socialist state, Reichenau and Blomberg felt that it was necessary to isolate and neutralize that political extremism emanating from the SA, a major source of Army recruits, which might weaken the loyalty of the armed forces. Whether or not this interpretation of Army interests in the long run constituted a marked deviation from the policy followed by the Defense Ministers and Army Commanders during the Weimar Republic, the reader will have to decide.

It is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of the Army's policy from 1933 to 1935. All that can be stated as fact is that Röhm and his radical coterie were eliminated, albeit drastically. To what extent the Army motivated Hitler's actions has never been, nor probably can be, determined. Moreover, the Army was not the sole agency which wanted to reduce Röhm's power; there were others who feared and loathed him, and his vision of a Spartan-like state was hardly attractive.

What is perhaps significant is that the Army retreated to its former political isolation following the elimination of Röhm and the dismantling of the Chef AW Organization. It is no coincidence that official interest and support for the military sport program declined as the expectation of the re-introduction of conscription arose. A draft, to a certain

extent, obviated the need for military sport training, and the resources available to the armed forces in 1935 did not permit both a massive military sport training program and the conscription of hundreds of thousands of young men. Yet the military sport program had done its work well: the Army had reached its projected 1938 size in late 1934, an expansion that might neither have been possible nor have unfolded so smoothly without the existence of recruits whose basic military training lay behind them, for the most part, when they entered military service.

In retrospect, what emerges from the evidence is an unpleasant picture of lost opportunity. The Army did not lead the Nazis by the hand into the Government; if anything, leading military officials struggled for several years to develop and implement a program aimed at reducing the political base of the Nazis. The SA military sport program was not a revolutionary National Socialist policy, but merely the National Socialist continuation of the youth training policy of the Weimar Republic and the Army, albeit with Nazi modification and amplification. One is struck by the vacillation, lethargy, indecisiveness, and the absence of any sense of urgency in the councils of the Weimar Republic in contrast to the resolute and strong-willed attitude of the National Socialists. Therein perhaps lies the tragedy of the military sport program. Judging from the success of the Nazi ideological indoctrination of Germany's youth following 1933, one

can only wonder what might have happened had Groener and Schleicher succeeded in establishing the military sport program in 1930. Putting aside conjecture, however, the historian can only attempt to relate and explain what happened.

Appendix A.

List of Chef AW Schools and Camps

This list was prepared for the purpose of enabling former Chef AW Organization members to document their claims for unemployment compensation. It was intended to be inclusive, but for some unknown reason, the 9 naval sport schools are not included. The organization into 9 Länder paralleling the Wehrkreise, reflects the Organization at its height in January 1935.

Source: BA, Sam Sch/421, Anlage 1 of Präsident der Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung, III, 7408/252, 30 December 1935.

Wehrkreisverwaltung I.Landesführer I Königsberg.Bereichführer Königsberg

Schießschule	Pillkallen
Nachrichtenschule	Metgethen
Pionierlager	Tapiau
Führerlager	Schmolainen
A - Schule	Gudwallen

Bereichführer Allenstein

Führerschule	Passenheim
Geländesportschule	Lyck
A - Schule	Ublick

Bereichführer Elbing

Reitschule	Marienburg
A - Schule	Riesenburg I - III
A - Schule	Pr. Holland

Wehrkreisverwaltung II.Landesführer II Stettin.Bereichführer Stettin

Pionierlager	Greifenberg
Nachrichtenschule	Warsow
Führerschule	Rothenklempenow
Geländesportschule	Belgard I
Geländesportschule	Nest
A - Schule	Belgard II
A - Schule	Anklam I - II
A - Schule	Lubmin

Bereichführer Schwerin

Geländesportlager	Neustrelitz
Stammschule	Neustrelitz
Führerschule	Burg Stargard
A - Schule	Bad Kleinen
A - Schule	Meyenburg
A - Schule	Sternberg
A - Schule	Serrahn

Bereichführer Hamburg-Stadt

Führerschule	Malente
A - Schule	Mölln I - III

Bereichführer Hamburg-Land

Reitschule	Elmshorn
Reitschule	Eutin
Reitschule	Schleswig
A - Schule	Neumünster
A - Schule	Middelburg
Geländesportschule	Leck
A - Schule	Dän.Nienhof

Wehrkreisverwaltung III.Landesführer III BerlinBereichführer Berlin

Lehrabteilung	Kladow
Reichsnachrichtenschule	Berlin-Lichtenberg
Reichschunde- und Briefftauben-Schule	Sperenberg
Reichsschießschule	Velten
Reichssanitätsschule	Berlin
Reichsfahrschule	Ruhleben
Reichsschule f. Weltanschauung	Neubabelsberg
Pionierpark	Oranienburg
Führerschule	Harnekop
Geländesportschule	Biesenthal
A - Schule	Belzig
A - Schule	Wriezen I - II
A - Schule	Wolzig
A - Schule	Hohenelse
A - Schule	Pieskow
A - Schule	Sanssouci
SS - Schule	Pyritz

Bereichführer Frankfurt a/O.

Pionierlager	Christianstadt
A - Schule	Rehnitz
A - Schule	Sorau I - III
A - Schule	Frankfurt a/O

Bereichführer Magdeburg.

Reitschule	Gardelegen
Führerschule	Altengrabow
A - Schule	Letzlingen
A - Schule	Dornburg
A - Schule	Wernigerode
A - Schule	Golpa
A - Schule	Sandersleben
SS - Sportschule	Gräfenhainichen
A - Schule	Sandersleben

Wehrkreisverwaltung IV.Landesführer IV DresdenBereichführer Dresden

Nachrichtenschule	Dresden
Schießschule	Erdmannsdorf
Führerschule	Struppen
Führerschule	Stenz
A - Schule	Freiberg I und II
A - Schule	Zeithain I und II
A - Schule	Oberschöna

Bereichführer Leipzig

Pionierlager	Leisnig
Reitschule	Wermsdorf
Reitschule	Altenburg
A - Schule	Neusorge
A - Schule	Hainichen
Geländesportschule	Rochlitz I und II
Geländesportschule	Pretzsch
A - Schule	Borna I und II
SS- Sportschule	Leisnig

Bereichführer Weimar

Nachrichtenschule	Jena- Lichtenhain
Reitschule	Gotha
Führerschule	Sondershausen
A - Schule	Geilsdorf
A - Schule	Arnstadt
A - Schule	Eisfeld
A - Schule	Ranis
A - Schule	Greiz
A - Schule	Wasungen
Geländesportschule	Waltershausen
A - Schule	Tännich
SS- Sportschule	Mihla

Wehrkreisverwaltung V.

Landesführer V Stuttgart

Bereichführer Stuttgart

Nachrichtenschule	Cannstatt
A - Schule	Göppingen I und II
A - Schule	Eningen
A - Schule	Kapfenburg
A - Schule	Adelsheim
Pionierlager	Neckarsulm
A - Schule	Reutlingen

Bereichführer Ulm

Schießschule	Heidenheim
Führerschule	Hechingen
A - Schule	Deggingen I und II
A - Schule	Unterböhringen
A - Schule	Immendingen I und II
A - Schule	Schadenweilerhof

Bereichführer Karlsruhe

A - Schule	Lahr I
A - Schule	Lahr II
A - Schule	Kaiserslautern
A - Schule	Landau
Geländesportschule	Achern I und II

Wehrkreisverwaltung VI.Landesführer VI Münster.Bereichführer Münster

Pionierlager	Höxter
Nachrichtenschule	Lippstadt
Reitschule	Münster
Reitschule	Detmold
A - Schule	Meschede
A - Schule	Müsen
A - Schule	Detmold
A - Schule	Borghorst
A - Schule	Beverungen
A - Schule	Lette
Geländesportschule	Altenvoerde
A - Schule	Klafeld

Bereichführer Bremen

Reitschule	Leer
Reitschule	Stade
Reitschule	Hoya
A - Schule	Aurich
A - Schule	Iburg
A - Schule	Stade
A - Schule	Nordholz

Bereichführer Köln

Reitschule	Krefeld
Reiterführerlehrgang	Krefeld
Schule f. Leibesübungen	Linnich
A - Schule	Velen
A - Schule	Morsbach
A - Schule	Bergneustadt
A - Schule	Freudenberg I und II
A - Schule	Wildbergerhütte
A - Schule	Jülich
A - Schule	Eveking
Geländesportschule	Wahn
A - Schule	Viktorshöhe

Wehrkreisverwaltung VII.

Landesführer VII München.

Bereichführer München

Nachrichtenschule	Steinhöring
Schule f. Weltanschauung	Kempfenhausen
Schießschule	Lechfeld
A - Schule	Hohenkammer
A - Schule	Memmingen I und II
A - Schule	Seeon
A - Schule	Niedernfels
Geländesportschule	Laufen
Geländesportschule	Murnau I - III
A - Schule	Mittenwald

Bereichführer Regensburg

Pionierlager	Deggendorf
Führerschule	Erbendorf
A - Schule	Landau
A - Schule	Sulzbach
A - Schule	Zwiesel

Bereichführer Nürnberg

Reitschule	Ellingen
Führerschule	Altdorf
A - Schule	Ingolstadt
A - Schule	Eichstätt I - III
A - Schule	Fürth I
A - Schule	Lauf
SS- Sportschule	Fürth II
A - Schule	Rothenburg

Wehrkreisverwaltung VIII

Landesführer VIII Breslau.

Bereichführer Breslau

Nachrichtenschule.	Wülschkau
Schießschule	Striegau
A - Schule	Wohlau
A - Schule	Lamsdorf I und II
SS- Sportschule	Cosel
A - Schule	Dambritsch
A - Schule	Sylsterwitz
A - Schule	Reichenbach

Bereichführer Liegnitz

A - Schule	Schönau
A - Schule	Boberstein I und II
A - Schule	Ullersdorf
Geländesportschule	Bunzlau
Geländesportschule	Warmbrunn

Wehrkreisverwaltung IX.Landesführer IX Kassel.Bereichführer Hannover

Schießschule	Peine
A - Schule	Bevern I und II
A - Schule	Einbeck I und II
A - Schule	Uelzen
A - Schule	Scheuen
A - Schule	Achterberg
Geländesportlager	Wolterdingen
SS- Sportschule	Wolfenbüttel
A - Schule	Hakensbüttel
A - Schule	Wennigsen
A - Schule	Levershausen

Bereichführer Hessen

Führerschule	Altenburg
A - Schule	Hanau I - III
A - Schule	Friedberg I und II
A - Schule	Arolsen
Geländesportlager	Schwarzenborn
SS- Sportschule	Corbach
A - Schule	Neuhöfe
A - Schule	Rieneck
A - Schule	Schlitz

Bereichführer Koblenz

A - Schule	Kiez I und II
A - Schule	Babenhausen I - III
Geländesportschule	Traben-Trarbach
Geländesportschule	Bad Schwalbach

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In spite of the voluminous archival resources available to the scholar of the National Socialist period, there are enormous gaps. Some material was deliberately destroyed; other files fell victim to the war. The records of the Chef AW Organization and the Reichskuratorium, for example, were turned over to the Army in 1937, sent to the Heeresarchiv in Potsdam, and apparently destroyed in a bomb raid during 1944. The alleged destruction of the Krüger records has presented grave difficulties in the writing of this work. To a certain extent I have been aided, perhaps saved, by that bete noire of taxpayers, the bureaucrat. His penchant, and that of the German office worker in particular, for reproducing documents and forwarding them to sister agencies has made this dissertation possible.

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