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THE POLITICS OF THE GERMAN MILITARY IN THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY; A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE WEIMAR
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**THE POLITICS OF THE GERMAN MILITARY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE
WEIMAR REPUBLIC, THE THIRD REICH AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC**

by

Edward J. Romar

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Political Science in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York.**

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF GERMAN MILITARISM

The last two decades have witnessed the rapid growth of military participation in the political process. Numerous successful military interventions have occurred in Latin America, the Mediterranean world, in the newly independent nations of Africa, and in many Asian nations. Moreover, the evidence suggests the growth of military political activity will be present for some time. In the first edition of his influential book The Man on Horseback, published in the early 1960's, Samuel Finer documented a number of instances where the military successfully intervened and organized military regimes. Recently, Professor Finer wrote:

"Twelve years have passed since the last chapter was written; the course of events has strikingly confirmed the predictions made there. The number of stable liberal-democracies has not

significantly expanded, the number of totalitarian communist states has not contracted, and the single- or dominant-party systems in new states have proved as fragile as suggested. In contrast, these twelve years ending 31 December 1974, have witnessed 101 more coups, thirty-five more states have been affected, and the countries governed by the men who came to power as a result of military intervention now number thirty-eight.... And this is to count only 'hard core cases': it excludes regimes which exist only by courtesy of their military forces...and those where the military, though temporarily disengaged from active politics, continue to dominate political life...."¹

The military, therefore, is an active and important factor in the politics of most, if not all, nations. As Finer correctly suggests, the creation of a military regime is not the only form of military political participation. For example, the military may stage a coup simply to topple one civilian government and install another, after which the military returns to the barracks ready to strike another day. Thus, military involvement in domestic politics is far greater than Finer implies. This leads to an all-important problem--what factors enable the military to intervene so regularly and so successfully? This is, by no means, a simple problem to solve. Although the literature concerning the political role of the military is extensive and rich in valuable insights, for the most part it suffers from a fatal defect. This deficiency has been admirably and succinctly summarized by A. R. Luckham: "The main weakness

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Finer, S. E., "The Man on Horseback--1975", in The Man on Horseback, (Penguin Books, Baltimore: 1975), p. 223. This chapter was added to the recent edition of this influential book.

of existing theories of civil/military relations...is that they still concentrate on the characteristics of civilian politics and their influence on military intervention and civil/military relations to the exclusion of the military itself; or they give emphasis to the latter to the exclusion of the social and political environment."² As Luckham correctly suggests, to understand the political role of the military both the characteristics of the military which foster its particular political goals as well as the environmental factors which create the political opportunities must be analyzed. Military politics is the result of two complexes of factors: 1) the organizational attributes of a particular military which permits the development of interventionist attitudes, as well as the capabilities for intervention; and 2) environmental conditions which allow them to act with impunity. To adequately understand so complex a phenomenon as military politics, both sides of the process must be analyzed. The military, though it is a distinct organization, cannot be considered apart from the environment in which it exists. How the military acts will affect its political environment. How the environment behaves will influence the politics of the military. There are basically two aspects to the problem of the political control of the military. In the first place, it is

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Luckham, Robin, "A Comparative Typology of Civil-Military Relations," Government and Opposition, Vol. VI, (1971), pp. 8-9.

imperative that society create a strong and stable political order. This will insure the resiliency of the political and social sectors, should the military attempt to extend its influence. The strength and resiliency of the political and social order will enable these sectors to aggregate more political power than the military can muster. The general strike is often an awesome political weapon. Secondly, and closely related to the first method, society must make certain that the military supports and adheres to the political values current within society. There is less chance of the military creating a nuisance when its political values are complementary to those of society. Hence, the regime must pay close attention to the type of officer chosen to lead the military, the selection to and the rules of participation in the military, both for officers and enlisted men, and the type of political training and indoctrination received by members of the military.

Briefly, this study contains one major theme: how is it possible to reduce the political role of the military and create conditions where the military has a clearly defineable role and area of expertise out of which it is difficult to venture? The study will contain an analytic framework which will discuss and elucidate the major factors which contribute to military politics. This framework will be applied to the problem of civil/military relations in twentieth century Germany. Germany was chosen for a number of reasons. In the first place, Germany has a rich history of military participation in politics. The

German Army was intimately involved in the Government of Imperial Germany and it contributed in no small measure to the collapse of the Weimar Republic. This leads directly to the second reason why Germany was chosen. Germany is once again governed by a democratic regime. However, Germany's past democratic experience leaves a great deal to be desired. The Weimar Republic was weak and inefficient creating ample opportunities for a military, which needed little encouragement, to intervene. Given the past performance of the German Army and the weakness of democratic values in German history, a comparative study of the politics of the German Army in the twentieth century is not without merit. Today, Germany is, once again, governed by a democratic regime. The question is, what are the differences between Bonn and Weimar? Also, given the facts of German military history, the question is what is the difference, if any, between the Bundeswehr and the past military institution? Certainly, a comparative analysis of military politics in the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and the Federal Republic will offer valuable insights into contemporary German politics. Finally, military politics in twentieth century Germany has taken place under the auspices of three political regimes: the ill-fated Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and the contemporary Federal Republic. Thus, a longitudinal study of the politics of the German Army in the twentieth century contains case studies dealing with military politics in an unstable democratic regime, a fascist-totalitarian regime, and a

stable democratic regime. Moreover, Germany was chosen because she was a major participant in two of history's most destructive wars, as well as an important factor in European politics. Today, West Germany is once again armed, and is an important factor in European politics. Consequently, a study which considers both the antecedents of German military politics and the contemporary situation may shed some light on the role of the military in West German politics as well as the role of the Federal Republic in European politics.

The Problem of German Militarism

The political role of the military is a central problem in German history and one can safely suggest that the history of the German Army is, in many respects, the history of Germany. The German Army³ contributed in no small measure to the rise of Prussia as a state, and its emergence as a major power. The Army was, also, the instrument which forged the German nation during the Wars of Unification (1866-1871). In the twentieth century, the Army aided and abetted Hitler's rise to power, thus contributing to the disastrous episode of the Third Reich. The influence of the Army was due not only to a series of events which enabled it to exercise political

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For a number of reasons which cannot be extensively dealt with here, the history of Germany is tied intimately to that of Prussia. In this chapter, unless otherwise specified, the term "Army" will mean both the Prussian Army and the German Army after unification.

power, but, more importantly, it was due to the very nature of the Prussian-German state. For the key to understanding the political influence of the German Army lies in the way it reflected the social and political organization of Prussia.

The rise of Prussia as a great power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is an interesting and exceedingly complex historical episode. Prussia, through the effective leadership of a series of monarchs, rose from a collection of poor and disorganized territories to become a great power. Prussia obtained the status of a great power through the development of a strong and efficient standing army.

During the period of Prussia's rise, the Hohenzollern rulers realized that if their territories were to play more than a minor role in European politics, they must be wielded into a strong and efficient state. However, to accomplish this task meant the subduing of the Junker aristocracy. This conflict was successfully fought during the reign of Frederick William, the Great Elector (1640-88), when the standing army was created and the nobles and townsmen were subdued. The standing army became an important weapon in the development of the centralized Prussian state, and was used to defend its territorial integrity as well as being a vehicle through which more land was acquired. However, these conflicts caused two additional developments of consequence for the subsequent history of Prussia and Germany. In the first place, although the nobles lost some ground to the monarchy, they still retained many of their

rights and privileges as nobles. And, since they had lost some of their independence vis-a-vis the monarchy, it became profitable for them to assume influential positions within the army and the civil bureaucracy. Though the Junkers were, to some extent, defeated in the conflict with the monarchy, they certainly were not eliminated as a political force in Prussia. The government did not touch the position of the noble within his private estate; his power over his property and his peasants remained absolute. Also, the creation of the standing army, though it was at least a partial defeat for the nobility, developed a strong corporate feeling within the aristocracy which could be used to bring pressure on the monarchy. Even though the nobles never again were able to effectively challenge the monarchy, their influence was not absent within the Prussian state.⁴ As Prussia flourished, the Junkers became more and more involved in the army and the bureaucracy, enabling them to continue to assert and defend their aristocratic privileges.

In the late seventeenth century, Prussia emerged as a centralized, authoritarian, and militaristic state. As these trends continued into the eighteenth century, the role of the Junkers increased further. As Prussia developed, the monarch became more powerful and the role of the aristocracy increased because of their positions within the army and

⁴ Carsten, F. L., The Origins of Prussia, (The Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1954), pp. 201, 227-228.

the bureaucracy. During this period, Prussia developed a large and strong standing army, and in the latter half of the eighteenth century in the reign of Frederick the Great (1740-86), Prussia attained power and prestige in international politics. Her Army, officered almost exclusively by aristocrats, was a match for any of the European powers, as she demonstrated on a number of occasions. And it was in the army where the full weight of the aristocracy was felt. In Prussia, the king and the aristocracy ruled. In exchange for service and loyalty, the king granted privileges, power, and position. As a result, the Junkers took their place as the highest and most privileged class within the Prussian state. Above all, they were determined to protect, defend, and wherever possible, extend their position and influence in Prussian politics and society. As has been observed so many times, the army became a "state within a state."⁵

Prussia emerged in the nineteenth century, therefore, as an absolute monarchy, where the aristocracy represented the very apex of society. This was especially true within the army with its semi-feudal characteristics. The Army was essentially a caste society, where the aristocratic officer held the highest and most influential positions,

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As the Comte de Mirabeau remarked in 1788: "La Prusse n'est pas un pays qui a une armée, c'est une armée qui a un pays." This passage was quoted in Wheeler-Bennett, John W., The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics: 1918-1945, (St. Martins Press, New York: 1954), p. xiii.

such as the cavalry and the guards divisions. His position within the army gave him power, privilege and prestige not only at court and within the army, but also within society. In the Nineteenth Century, the army and the monarchy were intimately connected. So long as absolute monarchy reigned supreme, the power and position of the aristocracy was insured. Consequently, the military, with its aristocratic officers, became the bulwark of absolutism in Prussia. In one sense, Nineteenth Century German history may be characterized as the army and the monarchy united singlemindedly to prevent and forestall any loss of their power and prestige. If the power of the monarchy was in danger, so was the power and status of the military. If the position of the military was challenged, it indirectly threatened the monarchy. For if the aristocratic army lost power and position, the monarchy was exposed to a similar fate.

Absolutism dominated the German political scene for much of the Nineteenth Century. Democratic ideas, though not completely absent from central Europe, were weak and circumstances prevented their full development. In Germany, they were, however, secondary to more pressing political problems, primarily the problem of German unification. Between the Napoleonic Wars and the Wars of Unification, the desire for a unified Germany clearly dominated German politics and eclipsed all other problems, including that of democracy. Initially, it was hoped by many that the rising of the German people during the

Napoleonic Wars would propel the disorganized German states toward unification. This attempt died at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, but the dream of unification remained. It continued to smolder for 33 years until, in 1848, it reemerged; this time connected with democratic ideas.

The Revolution of 1848 began in France and quickly spread to the smaller German states and to Prussia. Frankfurt am Main became the focal point of the German phase of this revolution. The delegates, assembled at the Frankfurt Assembly, desired to unify Germany under the auspices of a liberal democratic constitution. As the Revolution spread to Berlin, the Prussian King Frederick William IV (1840-61), considered accepting, but eventually rejected, the Imperial crown from the assembly. As a monarch, he was weak and vacillating. Had the revolutionaries the political accumen to press the issue, the revolution just might have succeeded. Their problem was that they were weaker and more vacillating than the monarchy. Apart from some minor skirmishes, there were no major political conflicts in Germany during the Revolution of 1848. The so-called revolutionaries did not want to press the issue; they wanted a peaceful revolution. What they desired was the absolute Prussian monarchy to unify Germany and grant political rights and freedoms--a rather naive and questionable strategy, given the nature of the Prussian state. As the scare of the first days of revolution passed, and as it became increasingly apparent that the revolutionaries were not serious, the king and his army reasserted them-

selves. The German phase of the Revolution of 1848 was crushed through the force of Prussian arms.⁶

The idea of a democratic and unified Germany died in the inept Revolution of 1848. However, the desire for unification remained very much alive, but it would have to wait 23 more years and the method of unification would have serious repercussions for the history and politics of Germany. The dream of a unified Germany was eventually realized in the Prussian Wars of Unification, which culminated in the creation of the German Empire after Prussia's final victory over France in 1870-71. Through the use of a daring political and military plan, Bismarck succeeded in unifying Germany under the Prussian monarchy and the Junker aristocracy.⁷ In a series of quick and daring moves, the Iron Chancellor succeeded where the democrats failed. The Prussians had achieved the dream of unification. Now, after three victorious wars, the power, prestige, and position of the Officer Corps was acknowledged by the entire

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Mann, Golo, The History of Germany Since 1789, (Frederick A. Praeger, New York: 1968), pp. 95-97.

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In preparing his plan for the unification of Germany, Bismarck, during the 1860's, offered Germany a glimpse of politics in the future empire. Bismarck succeeded in carrying out a rearmament program which was rejected by the Prussian Diet. "Refusing to be discountenanced by the Chamber's refusal to approve the budget for 1863, (Bismarck) blandly informed the enraged deputies, at the end of the session for 1862 and again at the opening of the new session in January 1863, that the Crown had no intention of allowing the whims of parliament to disrupt the process of government." Craig, Gordon A., The Politics of the Prussian Army - 1640-1945, (Oxford University Press, London: 1955), p. 164.

society.⁸ The Army, dominated by the Junkers, was looked upon with awe and surrounded by an air of invincibility.

Though Germany was now unified, the method was not without consequence. In fact, after unification, Prussia dominated Germany to the point where Germany merged into Prussia. "He (Bismarck) left Prussia untouched--that is to say, the King and the military aristocracy retained all authority--and he raised an Imperial constitutional edifice from which Prussia ruled the Empire, and not the Empire Prussia."⁹ The new German Empire was ostensibly a constitutional monarchy, but the character of Prussian absolutism was everywhere. The Imperial Constitution provided for an upper house called the Bundesrat, and a lower house called the Reichstag. The Constitution, however, provided for representation so that Prussia maintained the largest numerical representation of all the states of the Reich. Moreover, in Prussia, elections to the Landtag were on the basis of the infamous three-tier system, where votes were apportioned according to the amount of taxes paid. This insured that Prussia remained under the control of the conservative aristocracy. Furthermore, in the Bundesrat, Prussia controlled 17 votes; only 14 were necessary to veto changes in the Imperial Consti-

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Ritter, Gerhard, The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of German Militarism, Vol. II, (University of Miami Press, Coral Gables: 1970), p. 100.

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Rosenberg, Arthur, Imperial Germany: The Birth of the German Republic, (Beacon Press, Boston: 1964), p. 4.

tution.¹⁰ The Reichstag, though it was elected on the basis of universal suffrage, was also incapable of effectively challenging the Prussian-dominated Imperial government. Since the government was responsible to the Emperor and not to the legislature, the Reichstag could not force any policy upon the government. Also, under the Imperial Constitution, foreign policy and military policy, two crucial policy areas, were excluded from the responsibilities of the Reichstag. Prussia dominated the Empire. Within Prussia, the aristocracy, entrenched in the Army, dominated Prussian politics and, therefore, Imperial politics.

The road traversed by Germany in the quest for unification resulted in the extreme weakness of democratic ideas.¹¹ Germany was unified through the daring action of authoritarian Prussia which dominated German politics until its collapse in 1918. Although the Imperial Regime collapsed in 1918, the effects of the Prussianization of Germany and the power and position of the aristocracy influenced Germany politics well into the Twentieth Century. During the Imperial period, under the guidance of an authoritarian and paternalistic social order, Germany industrialized rapidly. It became a world power, both economically and politically, under the direction of a state whose major attributes were developed in pre-industrial

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Morrow, Ian F. D., Bismarck, (Collier Books, New York: 1967), p. 80.

¹¹
Dahrendorf, Rolf, Society and Democracy in Germany, (Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York: 1969).

society. It achieved this status in a society which was dominated by the aristocracy, whose power and influence were centered primarily within the officer corps.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICS OF THE MILITARY: A FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

Today, it is almost universally accepted that politics consists of the interaction of numerous political actors. Since politics may be defined fundamentally as "the authoritative allocation of values" or "who gets what", it seems reasonable to assume that many actors will be deeply involved in the distribution of political rewards. Whether one consults the literature analyzing the western democracies, the modernizing nations or communist societies, the evidence shows numerous groups engaged in political conflict. The western democracies are usually classified as pluralistic, where, due to the complexity of both society and government, many political actors compete in the political

arena according to democratic norms.¹ Among the revolutionary aspects of modernization is the expansion of political participation. As man's relation to the world changes and as society becomes more complex, a greater number of political participants are available within the political arena.² Similarly, in communist countries, primarily the Soviet Union, analysts are becoming increasingly aware of the impact of organized groups on the political process.³

Although the participation of numerous groups is acknowledged as a universal aspect of politics, there exists in the literature a double standard regarding the political participation of the military. Although politics is a game any number can play, politics is assumed, not only in the general political analyses but

¹ The literature which falls into this category is too extensive to cite here. However, representative of this interpretation are Truman, David, The Governmental Process, (Alfred A. Knopf, New York: 1951); Dahl, Robert, Who Governs?, (Yale University Press, New Haven: 1961); and Beer, Samuel, British Politics in the Collectivist Age, (Alfred A. Knopf, New York: 1967).

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The modernization literature is also extensive. Representative of this point of view are Dahl, Robert, Polyarchy, (Yale University Press, New Haven: 1971); Huntington, Samuel, Political Order in Changing Societies, (Yale University Press, New Haven: 1968); and Rustow and Ward, eds., Introduction in Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1964).

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Representative of this point of view are Skilling, Gordon H., and Griffiths, Franklyn, eds., Interest Groups in the Soviet Politics, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1971); and Hough, Jerry F., "The Soviet System: Petrification or Pluralism," Problems of Communism, (March-April, 1972).

also many of those dealing exclusively with the military, as a game for civilian participants. While military participation is in fact widespread, it is considered unhealthy aberrant behavior which should be curbed and eliminated. Moreover, since most overt political behavior of the military is found in the nations of the Third World, it is assumed that these societies suffer from chronic political pathologies. The problem of military political participation is localized to these areas; and to eliminate this dreaded disease, the prescription for political health must contain massive doses of political modernization and institutionalization.

As a result, most discussions of the political process of modern societies, whether democratic or non-democratic, do not view the military as an important political actor. Instead, analytic efforts are considered more fruitfully concentrated on interest groups (civilian, of course), parties, legislatures, and other traditionally accepted political actors.⁴ In short, a reading of both this literature and the modernization literature leads to the

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Most standard texts on American Government usually mention the military in terms of the President's Constitutional power as Commander-in-Chief. While these analyses explain in varying amounts of detail the behavior of parties, interest groups, bureaucracies and other accepted political actors, they pay relatively little attention, if any attention at all, to the military. Similarly, even though the French Army has had an intermittent, but by no means insignificant, impact on French politics, in many publications on France, such as Ehrmann, Henry, Politics in France, (Little, Brown, Boston: 1968), the military is totally neglected. A similar situation is encountered in the literature on Soviet politics. The

conclusion that the problem of military political participation is exclusively a problem of modernization.

The development of the conventional wisdom on the political behavior of the military has not only created a serious neglect in the study of military organizations in the modern societies, but, more importantly, it forces the study of military organizations into an analytic framework of marginal utility when applied to the study of military politics in modern societies. Since blatant military political participation is not endemic to modern society, most analyses of the military focus on the modernizing nations, where the political role of the military is most apparent. The result is a conceptual straight jacket. The nature of military politics in the Third World is violent. The technique used by the military is the coup, which is the most obvious example of military political participation. The conclusion reached is that military politics is conceived exclusively in terms of the application of violence. When circumstances permit violent behavior on the part of the military, they will be a major political force. When circumstances prevent the violent

major analytic focus is on the party. The standard work on the military is Kolkowicz, Roman, The Soviet Army and the Communist Party, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1967). While it is informative and well done, it deals primarily with the control of the military by the party and the secret police. From his analysis, it is easy to glean the impression that under present circumstances the military does not act politically, but is always acted upon.

behavior of the military, they will be a negligible political factor.

While a great many students of the military view military politics in this fashion, Samuel Finer and Samuel Huntington are the most notable proponents of this approach. Finer has developed a theory of military politics based on a trichotomy of inverse relationships between the military's potential for violent behavior and society's ability to prevent these outbursts.⁵

"(T)here is a common assumption, an unreflecting belief, that it is somehow 'natural' for the armed forces to obey civil power. Therefore, instances which show civilian control to have broken down are regarded, if at all, as isolated disturbances, after which matters will again return to 'normal'. But no reason is adduced for showing that civilian control of the armed forces is, in fact, 'natural'. Is it? Instead of asking why the military engages in politics, we ought surely to ask why they ever do otherwise. For at first sight the political advantages of the military vis-a-vis other and civilian groupings are overwhelming. The military possesses vastly superior organization and they possess arms."⁶

In analyzing the military, Finer concludes that there are only three possible political attitudes the military may

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Finer, Samuel, The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics, (Pall Mall Press, London: 1962); Comparative Government, (Penguin Books, Middlesex: 1974); "The Man on Horseback: 1974", Armed Forces and Society, Vol. I, No. I, (November, 1974), pp. 15-19.

6

Finer, Samuel, The Man on Horseback, p. 4.

hold: interventionist, aloofness, and nonpolitical.⁷ The interventionist attitude characterizes a military that is continually desirous of participating in politics by applying, or threatening to apply, organized violence for political ends. An aloof military is either disengaged because it does not desire, at least temporarily, to actively participate, or it is neutral because society does not give it the opportunity to create a nuisance. A nonpolitical military not only lacks the desire to participate, but exists in a well-developed political system which does not afford the military the opportunities to intervene.

Regarding the societal variable, Finer has also developed three categories. In states where there is a low level of political consensus and organization, not only are there ample opportunities for the military to apply organized violence, but in these societies the military will constantly desire to do so. In more developed societies, while the level of consensus and organization is greater than the nations in the low category, the society still has not achieved a high degree of political stability. These societies, therefore, are characterized by periods of political polarization which enables the military to apply political violence. In the mature nations, the level of consensus and organization has reached the point where it is highly developed. In

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Finer, Samuel, "The Man on Horseback: 1974."

these societies, highly unstable conditions are almost non-existent and the military is never given the opportunity to exercise political influence. Therefore, according to Finer, there is a relationship between the nature of society and the nature of the military based on the desire and the opportunity of the military to apply organized violence. Where political development is low, the opportunity for military violence is high and an interventionist military will result. When a society has reached a median stage, the opportunities for military violence are less frequent. As a result, the military will remain aloof and participate intermittently when the circumstances are favorable. When society has finally arrived at modernity, the situation changes completely. Under modern political circumstances, not only will the military lack the opportunity to participate violently, but, more importantly, it will be transformed into a totally domesticated apolitical organization which does not possess any political desires. In short, Finer concludes that military political participation is exclusively violent and limited to the developing world where this sad state of affairs may be exorcised only through successful modernization and development.

Samuel Huntington views the problem of military political participation in a way strikingly similar to Finer. Like Finer, Huntington conceives of military politics as the relation between the ability of the military to apply organized violence and the ability of society to

prevent the military from capitalizing on its resources of weaponry and organization. The central idea in Huntington's analysis is institutionalization, which he defines as the ability of the political system and its institutions to keep pace with developments in the political environment.⁸ As society becomes more complex and more participants become politically aware, they demand access to the political system. To achieve stability, the scope of the political community must increase, and political institutions must mediate political conflict and integrate the new participants into the political process. In institutionalized societies, whether western democracy or communist societies, politics is peaceful. In non-institutionalized societies politics is praetorian.⁹

"In all societies specialized groups engage in politics. What makes such groups seem more 'politicized' in a praetorian society is the absence of effective political institutions capable of mediating, refining, and moderating group political action. In a praetorian system social forces confront each other nakedly; no political institutions, no corps of professional political leaders are recognized or accepted as the legitimate intermediaries to moderate group conflict. Equally important, no agreement exists among the groups as to the legitimate and author-

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Huntington, Samuel P., Political Order in Changing Societies, (Yale University Press, New Haven: 1968), p. 8.

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The term praetorian was used originally by David C. Rapoport, "A Comparative Theory of Military and Political Types" in Huntington, Samuel P., Changing Patterns of Military Politics, (The Free Press of Glencoe, New York: 1962), p. 72.

itative methods for resolving conflicts....
 Each group employs means which reflect its
 peculiar nature and capabilities. The
 wealthy bribe; students riot; workers
 strike; mobs demonstrate; and the military
 coup."¹⁰

In a praetorian society, the military will almost automatically become politicized because the political power of the military is postulated on its ability to employ organized violence and the nature of praetorian politics gives the military a golden opportunity to flex their political muscles. Consequently, the only way to prevent the military from actively engaging in politics is to institutionalize the political system. Once this is accomplished, the military is destined to return to the barracks and remain there.

Since Huntington is aware that numerous actors are engaged in the political arena, a reasonable interpretation of his analysis in Political Order in Changing Societies is only the violent aspects of military political participation will be absent in an institutionalized polity. However, in a later analysis, he explicitly states that military politics is possible only in praetorian societies; and the only way to prevent the military from influencing political events is the development of legitimate and effective political institutions.¹¹ Huntington, therefore,

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Huntington, Political Order, p. 196.

¹¹

Huntington, "Civil-Military Relations", in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. II, p. 493.

agrees with Finer: the political power of the military is based exclusively on force and violence.

Political Order in Changing Societies discusses the factors which contribute to chaotic political conditions, which not only allow the military to intervene violently and effectively but also which almost invariably draw the military into the political arena. In an earlier work, The Soldier and the State, Huntington develops what he considers the techniques and mechanisms of effective political control of the military. If the politics of praetorianism is the result of the inability of society to control the military, the view presented in The Soldier and the State is one of society at peace with its armed forces.

In The Soldier and the State, Huntington develops a theory of civil-military relations which he believes will enable the military to maximize its contribution to national security while minimizing the threat of the military to the political and social fabric of society. The central concept in this analysis is professionalism.

"The modern officer corps is a professional body and the modern military officer is a professional man. This is, perhaps, the most fundamental thesis of this book. A profession is a peculiar type of functional group with highly specialized characteristics. Sculptors, stenographers, entrepreneurs, and advertising copywriters all have distinct functions but not one of these functions is professional in nature. Professionalism, however, is characteristic of the modern officer in the same sense in which it is characteristic of the physician or lawyer.

Professionalism distinguishes the military officer of today from the warriors of previous ages. The existence of the officer corps as a professional body gives a unique cast to the modern problem of civil-military relations.... (And) (t)he distinguishing characteristic of a profession as a special type of vocation are its expertise, responsibility, and corporateness."¹²

The professional officer is, according to Huntington, more than a technician of violence. He must spend a great deal of time not only learning the techniques of warfare, but also the values associated with professional soldiering. The professional soldier operates in a world similar to other professions. There is a body of knowledge that must be mastered and standards for the use of expert knowledge must be internalized before an individual may enter the world of the professional. In addition, after the professional has mastered the technical knowledge and the conditions for its use, he enters a corporate world. By being a professional he is set apart from the remainder of society, those who are not members of his profession.

Huntington, however, asserts that the development of military professionalism must be viewed positively, and also encouraged, if society is to reduce and eliminate military political participation and realize civilian control. As a professional group, the officer corps not only commands technical knowledge, but has inculcated within its professional values the attitude that technical

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Huntington, Samuel P., The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations, (Vintage Books, New York: 1957), p. 7-8.

knowledge may only be used for the benefit of society. Should the professional use his knowledge for goals other than professional ones, he is no longer a professional but a charlatan subject to the discipline of the profession. The military profession possesses a distinct belief system which, according to Huntington, is especially conducive to the functioning of the Officer Corps as a professional body. The "military mind," as he calls the professional attitudes of the military, can best be described as Clausewitzian in nature. Professional soldiers believe in: the nation state as the highest form of political organization; power as a necessary factor in international politics; the maintenance of strong military forces; the use of warfare as a political technique which should be used only when circumstances require; and the inability of the military to define political reality which renders the armed forces subservient and obedient to the civilian government. In short, the military is a political instrument and the decision to use force is political and not military.¹³

The concept of professionalism enables Huntington to lay the foundation for his theory of civil-military relations. Since the military is a professional group, it is concerned with service to society, not with using

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Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 62-79. Page 79 is an excellent summary of Huntington's conception of the content of the "military mind".

its knowledge for anti-social reasons. As a professional body it is self-regulating, a profession similar to lawyers and physicians. The problem for society is to create the institutional mechanism that would allow military professionalism to emerge and therefore reduce the influence of the military in the political arena. This raises the question of the relationship between the military and the civilian sectors of society--the problem of civilian control. According to Huntington, there are two mutually exclusive methods of civilian control: subjective and objective. Subjective control of the military is when one particular group is more powerful than the military and is able to force its will and beliefs on the military.

"The simplest way of minimizing military power would appear to be the maximizing of the power of civilian groups in relation to the military.... (T)he maximizing of civilian power always means the maximizing of some particular group or groups.... The general concept of civilian control is identified with specific interests of one or more civilian groups. Consequently, subjective civilian control involves the the power relations among civilian groups. It is advanced at the expense of other civilian groups.... In its various historical manifestations, subjective civilian control has been identified with the maximization of the power of particular governmental institutions, particular social classes, and particular governmental forms."¹⁴

¹⁴

Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 80-81. Civil-military relations in the Soviet Union is an example of this type of control.

When subjective civilian control is operating, the autonomy of the military is circumscribed. It is weaker than some civilian groups, thus reducing the military's maneuverability and latitude of action. The growth of professionalism is retarded because the military is forced to accept the values of the groups controlling it.

Directly opposed to subjective control is objective control.

"Civilian control in the objective sense is the maximizing of military professionalism. More precisely, it is that distribution of political power between military and civilian groups which is most conducive to the emergence of professional attitudes and behavior among the members of the Officer Corps. Objective civilian control is thus directly opposed to subjective control. Objective control achieves its end by militarizing the military, making them the tool of the state.... The essence of objective civilian control is the recognition of autonomous military professionalism, the essence of subjective control is the denial of an independent military sphere."¹⁵

When objective civilian control is in operation, the military is not restricted by political controls; it is autonomous. Thus, objective control is, by far, the best form of civil-military relations. By allowing the military to operate as a self-regulating profession, it will not be a mischievous organization, but will be in a better position to develop its competence in the areas of military science and national security.

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Huntington, The Soldier and the State, p. 83.

The analyses of Finer and Huntington are representative of the numerous discussions of military politics which implicitly or explicitly contain the familiar civil-military dichotomy. Implicit in the way the term is used is the assumption that when the civilians rule, the military is not a political factor of any consequence; and when the military is ascendent, not only are the civilians losing their grip on society but the political health of the nation may be in jeopardy. However, by focusing on the most obvious manifestation of military political participation (the coup), this approach makes an unwarranted leap to the conclusion that military politics deals exclusively with violence or the threat of violence. While this may be a useful though limited way of understanding some aspects of military political behavior, violent activity is not the only method of political action available to the military. By using violence as the crucial variable, Finer and Huntington conclude that there are two mutually exclusive categories of military political behavior: participation and non-participation. Therefore, in societies which are chronically unstable and where violence is the dominant political rule, the military will be inextricably drawn into the political arena. In societies characterized by domestic political peace and tranquility, the armed forces almost never applies organized violence. In these societies, the military is relegated to the barracks,

where they are destined to remain as political non-participants. Although these analyses must not be dismissed, they do contain useful insights which we will have occasion to use later on. There exists, however, entirely too much empirical evidence to support their thesis that military politics is intimately and exclusively connected to the ability to use violence. Indeed, in some societies where the military may not be in the business of making and unmaking governments, it does not follow that the military is non-political. Instead, it may very well be that in these societies the military possesses ample opportunities to achieve their political goals, making it not only unnecessary for the military to reorganize the government, but politically foolish to even try. Even though the military does not appear to be openly involved in politics in these societies, it may be, nevertheless, involved; and under certain circumstances their participation may be as pernicious as the politics of the military coup.

The conceptual frameworks which treat violence as the crucial variable in military politics, regardless of their utility in explaining certain aspects of military political behavior, are far too narrow to be useful as universal approaches to the study of military politics. Military organizations, like any other politically active group, have a variety of political techniques available to them other than simply the use of violence. Violent political participation is certainly one means available to the

military, but it may be useful in only a limited number of circumstances. In addition, those who emphasize the violent nature of military politics, especially Finer, prefer to view the military as somehow existing outside of the political system poised to strike at the very heart of the polity. However, empirical evidence does not substantiate this assumption. Instead,

"(i)t is more empirically accurate and theoretically useful to recast the analysis of the role of the military in politics in terms of the military as a political institution, subject to many of the pressures experienced in the polity at large. At the same time, (it is useful to use) institutional information to try and determine how the military's special characteristics help shape the style, range, and capabilities of its political response to these pressures."¹⁶

In other words, in order to obtain a more balanced and accurate picture of the nature of military politics in any nation, various institutional and environmental factors must be considered. The interaction between the institutional and environmental variables will determine the scope of available political techniques as well as the range of possible political goals for use by the

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Stepan, Alfred, The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1971), p. 8. For an approach similar to Stepan's see also Luckham, A.R., "A Comparative Typology of Civil-Military Relations," Government and Opposition, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1971, especially pp. 8-10. For a useful study on the role of institutional variables see Bienen, Henry, "Military and Society in East Africa: Thinking Again about Praetorianism," Comparative Politics, Vol. 6, No. 4, July, 1974, pp. 489-519.

military. The values and political beliefs held by the armed forces, the pattern of military recruitment, and the availability of skilled political leadership will contribute to the institutional aspects of military politics. Environmentally, what comes quickly to mind as the most crucial variable is the relative strength and legitimacy of the regime and the influence these factors have on the political opportunities available to the military. However, there is more to understanding the relationship between the military and its political environment than merely the political strength and stability of the polity. In societies where the legitimacy of the government is not seriously questioned and the regime is fairly secure, the military may be a highly significant political actor if military-related issues such as national defense and internal security are salient political issues. While this list of politically relevant factors is not exhaustive, it represents the most obvious factors which contribute to the political role of the military. We will now discuss each of these factors individually. However, it would be useful to keep in mind that the interrelationships among these factors are highly complex.

Political Values and Beliefs

The values and beliefs, not only political but also military, held by the military play an important role in determining their political behavior. Most analysts,

however, conceive of the role of values and beliefs in determining military politics as a relationship between the military's conception of its role in society and society's conception of proper military behavior. When these conceptions are in conflict, there is ample potential, if the proper conditions are present, for the military to participate dramatically and attempt to organize society according to their ideas and values. When these ideas are complementary, therefore, the military will be virtually eliminated from politics. While there is a good deal of evidence to suggest the utility of this outlook, it renders the problem of the role of values overly simplistic. The problem is more complex than simply a question of compatibility or noncompatibility of values. Military organizations, like any other organizations, or for that matter individuals, have a variety of attitudes and beliefs present within their values scheme. Furthermore, not only may the attitudes be contradictory, but they may not be ranked in any particular order of importance. Therefore, the salience of any particular attitude is not fixed but is a product of both the internal dynamics and politics within any given military institution and environmental conditions which may contribute to the rise, within the military, of representatives of particular aspects of the institutional value scheme.

The military mind presented by Huntington is an

excellent illustration of this point.¹⁷ The values of order, hierarchy, and division of function may come into conflict with the value of civilian supremacy, especially in a democracy undergoing a period of transition. In addition, the values of national security and civilian supremacy may cause conflict in a period of international arms reduction. Indeed, on the basis of attitudinal conflict alone, there are ample grounds to question Huntington's conception of a complacent military. Therefore, at any given time, the salience of any one or combination of attitudes held by the military will be a result of what groups representing specific attitudes will be dominant within the military and how their behavior will be influenced by environmental issues.

A more empirically grounded example of value conflict was present in the Brazilian military prior to the 1964 coup which ousted Goulart. Existing within the attitudinal scheme of the Brazilian military are two mutually exclusive views of the role of the military. One, the legalist attitude, views the military as legally responsible to carry out the commands of the state. The other, the

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Huntington, Samuel P., The Soldier and the State, p. 79. While empirical evidence documenting the existence of Huntington's outline of the military mind is not extensive, it was tested on the Swedish military and found to be fairly accurate and representative. See Abrahamsson, Bengt, "The Ideology of an Elite: Conservatism and National Insecurity: Some Notes in the Swedish Military", in Van Doorn, Jacques, ed., Armed Forces and Society: Sociological Essays, (Mouton, The Hague: 1968).

moderating view, holds that the military is the legitimate heir to be the "moderating power," a power originally exercised by the emperor. This presented a difficult internal political situation for the anti-Goulart forces within the military. Before they could stage the coup, they had to at least make sure that the legalists would remain neutral. At first, it was not clear that this would be the case. But after Goulart successively blundered, the interventionists gradually gained the upper hand and the coup was successfully staged.¹⁸

Military professionalism is another value which contributes to the political participation of the armed forces. Military professionalism has been viewed by students of the military as both a restraint on military political activity, as well as a cause.¹⁹ According to Huntington, the development of military professionalism will act as a restraining force. As professionalism develops, the military will gradually withdraw from political participation, submit to the desires of the governmental leaders, and become a benign organization incapable of threatening the political process. Other students of the military have

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For a summary of the events leading to the ouster of Goulart, see Schneider, Ronald M., The Political System of Brazil: The Emergence of a "Modernizing" Authoritarian Regime, (Columbia University Press, New York: 1971), pp. 35-38.

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Huntington, Samuel P., The Soldier and the State, views professionalism as a restraining force. Finer, The Man on Horseback, and Comparative Government, and Blondel, Jean, An Introduction to Comparative Government, (Praeger, New York: 1969) view professionalism as a cause of intervention.

focused on the development of professionalism as a factor contributing to military political participation.

Professionalism, they contend, creates an esprit de corps, a sense of solidarity and commitment which enables the military to be receptive to interventionist policies. Others see the military as the most professional and and technologically advanced sector of society which forces them to intervene in order to advance the development of society.²⁰

Military professionalism is the result of two conditions: the level of technological sophistication required to function within the military organization; and the process through which individuals are socialized to accept the organizational values of the military and trained to fulfill the necessary technological requirements.²¹ The first aspect of professionalism deals with the gradual development of military organizations from part-time employment and (by present standards) primitive military technology into technologically sophisticated organizations requiring full-time employment. The second aspect of professionalism is important because individuals are socialized into already established and

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Johnson, John J., The Military and Society in Latin America, (Stanford University Press, Stanford: 1964), p. 261; and Janowitz, Morris, The Military and the Development of New States, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1964).

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Abrahamsson, Bengt, Military Professionalization and Political Power, (Sage Publications, Beverly Hills: 1972), p. 16.

functioning organizations, and it is only in the armed forces where a person can legally participate in the profession of arms. This is in marked contrast to other professions, such as medicine and law, where members of those professions are not subject to the total discipline of the professional organization. The development of modern military organizations has created the conditions where the member of the profession must be a member of a bureaucratic organization whose only client is the state.²² Contrary to Huntington's analysis, professionalism is, in fact, a source of conflict between the military and the government. The development of a professional military organization

"has created a politically powerful and often highly independent social structure; and (professional socialization) molds the individuals who are going to man it. To the extent, then, that military professionalization in the above sense is effective--and to the extent that there are differences between civilian values and objectives--civilian control of the military will be impaired. In other words, in a situation where civilian authorities want to pursue policies that are in disagreement with those preferred by the military, those authorities will meet greater resistance from a high-professionalized than from a low-professionalized Officer Corps. Or again: military men are not and cannot be neutral and objective servants of the state: they hold certain beliefs, have certain corporate interests and can be expected to favor and pursue political actions that are consistent with those beliefs and interests."²³

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Van Doorn, Jacques, "The Officer Corps: A Fusion of Profession and Organization," European Sociological Archive, Vol. VI, 1965, p. 273.

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Abrahamsson, Bengt, Military Professionalization and Political Power, p. 17. *Italics in the original.*

Essentially, the development of professionalism exacerbates rather than reduces the potential for political conflict. There is an inherent tension between the military organization and those organizations which must deal with the formulation of military policy. It is not a question of whether or not the military is politically active or passive; it is a question of degree. Abrahamsson, in the above quotation, has focused on the most obvious and extreme form of conflict between the military and non-military groups--where the values of the military and the civilians are completely at odds. While this is the most extreme case, the military and the civilians may oppose each other in more mundane matters such as the size of the military, types of weapons systems and the location of military installations. However, this point is important; there are ample grounds for military political participation. It is, perhaps, not a question of whether or not the military participates; most likely it is a question of degree.

Most studies of the military which deal with the role and impact of professional and political values on the behavior of military organizations focus almost exclusively on the attitudes of the officer corps. For the most part, it is reasonable to analyze the leadership cadres of the armed forces, since the military is organized on strict hierarchical and authoritarian lines. However, the analysis of only the officer corps sometimes presents a stilted, formal and artificial interpretation of the internal

dynamics of military organizations. Although the military is often presented as a monolithic institution formally organized with tight supervision and discipline, lower level personnel often exercise an important influence on the nature of military politics. This is most likely to occur when the armed forces are subject to long and excessive amounts of stress. In periods of normalcy, it is far easier for the officer corps to maintain their authority and have their commands accepted as legitimate and carried out by lower echelon personnel. At other times, the attitudes and beliefs of the enlisted personnel, especially the noncommissioned officers, may circumscribe the maneuverability of the officer corps.

This situation existed in the Imperial German Navy (Kriegsmarine) during the First World War. At the outset of the war, the enlisted men supported the war effort and their superior officers. Under the impact of a prolonged war, severe deprivation, and rigid military discipline, the enlisted personnel gradually became alienated from and opposed to their officers. No doubt the turnip winter of 1916-17 contributed to attitudinal changes among enlisted men. During this time, rations for the enlisted personnel were poor and insufficient, while the officers dined on an adequate and varied diet.²⁴

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Horn, Daniel, The German Naval Mutinies of World War I, (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick: 1969), Chapter III.

The poor diet, coupled with the harsh discipline of the Imperial German Navy, contributed to successive naval mutinies, culminating in the mutiny of November 1918, which frustrated the plans of the Naval High Command and sparked the German Revolution. Life in the Imperial German Navy during World War I is graphically presented in the diary of Richard Stumpf. Stumpf was a German seaman who initially supported the war effort and the naval officer corps. But as the war dragged on and life in the navy deteriorated, his attitude changed from one of support to one of antagonism. This dramatic change is well illustrated by the February 26, 1917 entry in his diary.

"Today I was unbearably humiliated and annoyed. We were harassed unmercifully at battle practice in the morning. On top of all that, we had the devil's own grandmother as our Turret Officer. I had to suffer all sorts of unspeakable insults.... All this in the presence of the gun captain. Truly, if I still possessed even a shred of honor, I would have had to jump at the scoundrel's throat. There may come a day when I shall lose control over myself. If it were not for my parents and relatives, I would long since have vented my wrath on one of these fellows who has done everything in his power to destroy my ideal, my love of the Fatherland and my sense of justice. Our military system has accomplished what no book, no newspaper and no Socialist could ever have done. I have learned to hate and dispise its authority more than anything else in the world. This authority is not based on any distinctive superiority but relies solely on fear of the paragraphs of the naval code of justice. August Bebel, for all your efforts on behalf of the poor, suppressed soldiers, I wish to thank you even in your grave. I misunderstood you and considered all your speeches on the military budget as vile exaggerations. Now, however, I look upon them as an act of patriotism for which all German

mothers and sisters should bless you...."25

Similarly, in Argentina, the noncommissioned officers have, at times, played an important role in military politics. In 1951, the noncoms refused to aid retired generals in an anti-Peron coup. In 1956, a coup designed to reinstate Peron was staged primarily by N. C. O.'s. When the attempted coup failed, the military regime took drastic action against the N. C. O.'s in the Argentine army. There was a wholesale discharge of these people and, in some cases, executions. Recently, there have been incidents of enlisted men aiding guerrilla organizations in gaining access to military installations.²⁶ In other words, although the attitudes of the officer corps are the most important, one should not be oblivious to the attitudes of enlisted men, especially the non-commissioned officers. At certain times, primarily during periods of political and social turmoil, they may have an important impact on the behavior of the military.

Recruitment

Numerous studies of military politics have as their point of departure the assumption that the social origins

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Stumpf, Richard, War, Mutiny and Revolution in the German Navy: The World War I Diary of Seaman Richard Stumpf, Daniel Horn Tr. & ed., (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick: 1967), p. 297-298.

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Conversation with Prof. Robert Potash, Dept. of History, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, June 11, 1975.

of the armed forces, primarily the officer corps, is the most important determinant of military political behavior. The central point in the argument is that since certain groups contribute their members to the officer corps, these groups have an inside track in influencing the behavior of the military because their political views are already present within the armed forces organizations.²⁷ Other studies suggest that social origins bear little, if any, relationship to the political behavior of the military. Since the military is an organization capable of socializing and imparting to its members acceptable standards of behavior and norms, bureaucratic or professional norms and attitudes are more important than social origins in determining military political behavior. Abrahamsson contends, "The prediction of political behavior seems to profit little (from the study of) the social origins of officers."²⁸ Alfred Stepan, in his study of Brazilian military, arrives at a similar conclusion.²⁹ Both of these

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The classic and most extreme statement of this point of view is Mosca, Gaetano, The Ruling Class, (McGraw-Hill, New York: 1939), Chapter ix. Also in this vein is Demeter, Karl, The German Officer-Corps in Society and State: 1650-1945, (Frederick A. Praeger, New York: 1965); Craig, Gordon, The Politics of the Prussian Army: 1640-1945, (Oxford University Press, New York: 1955); and Waldman, Eric, The Goose-Step is Verboten, (Free Press, New York: 1958).

28

Abrahamsson, Military Professionalization and Political Power, p. 58.

29

Stepan, p. 58.

approaches demonstrate the pitfalls of assigning excessive weight to any particular variable in attempting to explain the political behavior of not just the military, but any politically active organization. Analysis must proceed further. Although "(t)he findings of (the studies of social origins) show rather clearly that a study of backgrounds can furnish clues for the study of political performance,...the first cannot substitute for the second.³⁰ The social origins of the officer corps do not determine behavior, they only suggest possible behavior. They indicate which societal groups the military could possibly ally themselves with and whom they may defend themselves against. The study of social origins is one possible way to determine the connections between the military and the rest of society. One must proceed further than merely the social bases of recruitment at least to the internal dynamics of the military itself if one is to understand which groups dominate the military and how the interaction between institutional values and societal values take place.

The relationship between recruitment and behavior in the German Army is a case in point. In the Prussian officer corps in 1860, 60% of the officers were of noble origin while only 30% were recruited from the bourgeoisie. In 1913, the nobility contributed only 30%, while 70% were

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Rustow, Dankwart, A., "The Study of Elites: Who's Who, When, and How," World Politics, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, July 1966.

of bourgeois origin.³¹ Judging from the statistics, and without further investigation, one could easily conclude that the role of the aristocracy and their military influence were waning. However, that most certainly was not the case. The nobility still held the major military appointments and, therefore, were able to maintain their control of the military. Aristocratic officers commanded the prestigious Guard's Regiments, and it was these units which set the tone for the entire army. In addition, the General Staff remained predominantly aristocratic, and becoming a staff officer was essential to a successful military career.³² The position of the aristocracy in the military reflected their role within Imperial Germany, even though the officer corps was not exclusively or even predominantly aristocratic. The institutional values and norms of the German army were clearly aristocratic and the army was able to contribute to the achievement of the political goals of the German aristocracy--namely, their continued domination of Imperial German society. Therefore, the situation within the Imperial German Army is a clear case of the connection between recruitment and political

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Demeter, The German Officer-Corps, pp. 28-29. Appendix 2 is even more instructive. Kitchen, Martin, The German Officer-Corps: 1890-1914, (Oxford University Press, New York: 1967), p. 24. Breit, Gotthard, Das Staats und Gesellschaftsbild deutscher Generale beider Weltkriege im Spiegel ihrer Memoiren, (Harald Boldt Verlag, Boppard/Rhein: 1973), pp. 8-11.

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Demeter, p. 29. Kitchen, p. 24.

behavior. However, in order to reach this conclusion, it is necessary to go beyond mere statistics and analyze the internal dynamics of the German Army as well as the nature of politics in Imperial Germany.

Alfred Stepan makes a contrary argument in his study of the political role of the Brazilian Army.³³ Stepan minimizes the role of recruitment in determining the political behavior of the military by taking issue with the argument of José Nun. Nun argues that since the Latin American middle classes are so heterogeneous, it prevents them from ruling effectively and causes chronic political instability. In addition, even though the middle classes cannot rule, because of the nature of recruitment to the Latin American militaries, they still have an institution to articulate their interests.³⁴ Stepan contends that this does not explain the politics of the Latin American militaries because "(a)nalyzes of military regimes in power suggest that the military often acts primarily to defend itself as an institution from articulate criticism from middle class sectors."³⁵ This is, perhaps, an overstatement because the military is most active in Latin America when the society is

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Stepan, Chapter 3.

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Nun, José, "A Latin American Phenomenon: The Middle Class Coup," Zeitlin, Maurice, and Petras, James, eds., Latin American Politics: Reform or Revolution, (Fawcett Publications, Greenwich: 1968).

³⁵

Stepan, p. 47.

threatened by the mobilized lower classes. No doubt the group which would be most affected by the entrance and political participation of the lower classes in Latin American politics is the middle class. Therefore, the recruitment pattern of the Latin American militaries is suggestive of their overall behavior.³⁶ Stepan's commentary on recruitment indicates that institutional norms and values are a more useful indicator of military behavior than recruitment patterns, even though he adds the following disclaimer: "This is not to argue that class origins is irrelevant in determining political behavior, but rather to suggest that by itself it is almost never the determinant of political behavior...."³⁷ Although this statement does not follow from the thrust of his analysis, it is essentially correct. Recruitment is only suggestive; it is not the determining factor. Other factors, in addition to recruitment, contribute to the behavior of the military. Furthermore, recruitment can give an important insight into organizational values and norms. Stepan insists upon making an artificial distinction between organizational norms and societal attitudes. While there are certainly attitudinal distinctions among organizations, it must be kept in mind that the process of

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Imaz, José Luis de, Los Que Mandan, (State University of New York Press, Albany: 1970), details the recruitment of the Argentine military from the middle classes, (Chapters 3 and 4), which helps explain why the Argentine military usually behaves in an anti-labor and lower-class fashion.

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Stepan, p. 53.

socialization is always incomplete and a residue of earlier experiences remains. This may indicate the connection between patterns of recruitment and institutional norms and values.

Leadership

Although military organizations possess value schemes and recruitment patterns which influence their political behavior, these factors only determine the political potential of the armed forces. Value systems and recruitment patterns alone cannot explain the political behavior of the military; they can only indicate potential political behavior. In order for the military to effectively capitalize on its political potential, skilled political leadership must be present. Furthermore, since the armed forces are complex organizations which manifest numerous and contradictory values, the problem of political leadership becomes one of the most intangible and also crucial variables in the analysis of military political behavior. The very complexity of the military creates factions within the armed forces. Not only are the more obvious service rivalries present, but within any particular branch intra-service antagonisms exist. These antagonisms are often the result of technical rivalries among the different subgroups of a particular branch such as the infantry, armored units and artillery. Often, since the military also possesses contradictory political views, one particular faction of the military may not interpret a given political

situation in the same way as other units. Therefore, in order for the military to overcome the divisions within its ranks, skilled and effective political leadership must exist so that these divisions can, at least, be neutralized (if not overcome). To view the armed forces as totally united and integrated organizations capable of always acting in unison is unrealistic. Indeed, the political role of the military is as much a product of the vicissitudes of institutional politics as well as the result of the environmental situation, where the most successful military faction is one that possesses the most skillful political leadership.

The politics of the military coup is probably the most striking illustration of the role of leadership in military politics. Indeed, the successful coup is impossible without effective political leadership. In addition to the external factors which contribute to a successful coup, such as the lack of legitimacy on the part of the existing government, the leaders of the conspiracy must insure the possession of a force capable of executing the coup and the neutrality, if not the active support, of the remainder of the armed forces.³⁸ Without adequate and effective leadership, these factors will remain in doubt, whatever the environmental situation. The actual seizure of power

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Goodspeed, D. J., The Conspirators: A Study of Coup d' Etat, (Laurentian Library, Toronto: 1967), p. 227. Goodspeed's analysis contains excellent examples of the central role of political leadership in a successful coup.

is a tactical and limited, but by no means unimportant, aspect of the coup. Without the seizure and elimination of the government, a change in governmental leadership is impossible. However, in understanding the phenomenon of the coup, the planning stage and the post-coup political situation become even more important. In planning a coup, the conspirators must insure that the conspiracy has the support or neutrality of the dominant political groups within the country. In addition, the conspirators must pay particular attention to the timing of the actual seizure of government, not only to insure that all governmental leaders are eliminated in one swift operation, but also to insure that the coup itself is carried out at the optimal political moment. After the successful execution of the coup, leadership is equally important in consolidating the political position of the new government and quickly returning society to normalcy. If the post-coup political situation is not consolidated, the new government may be as vulnerable as the old with a new coup or revolution as possible results. Therefore, the presence of capable and astute political leadership is essential to a successful coup d' état, especially in the planning and consolidation stages.

The Argentine military coups of 1930 and 1945 amply illustrate this point. In 1930, the leadership of Generals Justo and Uriburu facilitated the swift execution and consolidation of coup. In 1945, although the coup was

swiftly executed, the new government was unable to consolidate political power because the armed forces contained numerous factions and rivalries. With the new government continuing to demonstrate their inability to take firm hold of the political situation, Colonel Juan D. Perón began to lay the foundation for his eventual rise to power. Taking the rather insignificant post of Minister of Labor in the new government, he began to cultivate an alliance with the working class. When the leaders of the government realized that Perón was making a bid for power, they imprisoned him. However, not only was this belated, but a half-hearted action. As soon as the news of Juan Peron's arrest became known, his wife Evita rallied a workers demonstration. When the government was presented with a large public display of support for Perón, they vacillated, relented, and finally freed him, thus insuring his accession to power.³⁹

Environment

Most analyses of military politics which move beyond institutional to environmental factors, focus on the ability of the political system to prevent the military from intervening and seizing the government.⁴⁰ Depending

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Potash, Robert, The Army and Politics in Argentina, (Stanford University Press, Stanford: 1969), passim.

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Most notably the work of Samuel Finer, Samuel Huntington and A. R. Luckham. For a useful discussion of the "regime vulnerability hypothesis," see Thompson, William R., "Regime Vulnerability and the Military Coup," Comparative Politics, Vol. 7, No. 4, (July, 1975), pp. 459-489.

on the nomenclature of the particular author, the prescription for the prevention of military political participation varies from the development of political culture, to the capacity of the regime to effectively handle political problems. Finer contends that nations which have developed mature political cultures are strong enough to prevent military political participation.⁴¹ In a similar vein, A. R. Luckham suggests that political systems which can aggregate more political power than the military are in an excellent position to curtail and eliminate the military from the political process.⁴² Huntington argues that institutionalization strengthens the commitment of the population to the regime, thereby eliminating the political opportunities of the military.⁴³ Political order curtails the military; political disorder increases their opportunities to participate. Jaguaribe, in a recent attempt to synthesize most of the modernization literature, implies that a developed country, one with the capacity to deal effectively with its political problems, will not be vulnerable to the politics of the military.⁴⁴

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Finer, The Man on Horseback, Comparative Politics, and "The Man on Horseback Revisited."

42

Luckham, A. R., "A Comparative Typology of Civil-Military Relations."

43

Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, Chapters 1 and 4.

44

Jugaribe, Helio, Political Development: A General Theory and A Latin American Case, (Harper & Row, New York: 1973).

With some modification, all of these approaches, though using different terminology, are saying pretty much the same thing. Finer's use of the term "political culture" is similar to Huntington's use of the term "community" and "institutionalization." Gabriel Almond defines political culture as, "the pattern of individual attitudes and orientations towards politics among the members of a political system. It is the subjective realm which underlies and gives meaning to political action."⁴⁵ Sidney Verba defines political culture in a similar way. "(P)olitical culture...consists of the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which define the situation in which political action takes place. It provides the subjective orientation to politics."⁴⁶ While both definitions focus on the individual, most students of comparative politics agree that the collective beliefs of a nation's population often combine to form a general, all-encompassing political culture, as well as subcultures. Political culture implies that within a society the population entertains beliefs about the values, goals, processes and institutions of politics. Political culture legitimizes the policies, programs and political rules of a given polity,

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Almond, Gabriel, and Power, G. Bingham, Jr., Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach, (Little, Brown, Boston: 1966), p. 50.

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Verba, Sidney, "Comparative Political Culture," in Pye, L.W., and Verba, S., eds., Political Culture and Political Development, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1965), p. 513.

as well as assigning political roles, not only to governmental institutions, but also to specific nongovernmental participants and the population in general. In short, political culture prescribes behavior.

According to Huntington, political community is composed of three factors: the mutual compatibility of interest; a "definition in terms of general principles or ethical obligations of the bond which holds society together"; and "the creation of political institutions involving and reflecting the moral consensus and mutual interest."⁴⁷ Huntington is concerned with how to create a stable functioning political system; how to bring order out of chaos. The way he uses the terms "community" and "institutionalization" is not very different from the way others use the term "political culture". Ethical obligations clearly fall within the purview of the term "political culture"; however, so do his ideas concerning the compatibility of interests and the acceptability of institutions. However, Huntington goes beyond the psychological realm into the actual operation of rules and institutions. He makes explicit the implications of political culture analyses; for implied in the term "political culture" is the assumption that there is a congruence between political attitudes and actual political behavior. Huntington, in a sense, bridges the gap between socio-psychological and political institutional analyses.

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Huntington, Political Order, pp. 8-10.

Regardless of the utility of these analyses in understanding important political problems, the major focus is still on the transition from political instability to political stability. A stable society is one which possesses a stable and dominant political culture, agreement on rules of political conduct, institutionalization, and the capacity to deal with political problems. In short, a stable society is nonviolent. Political actors do not regularly engage in violent conduct because all political actors support the regime along with its rules of political behavior. Should any politically active organization attempt a violent confrontation, their actions would violate the rules of political conduct and would, therefore, be resisted by the collective weight of society. In a stable society, consequently, military violence against the regime would be highly unlikely, not only because the civilian population would view behavior of this type as illegitimate, but also because the military itself accepts the legitimacy of the regime, the rules of political conduct, and the existing political institutions for conflict resolution. Stable societies, however, do not eliminate military political participation, just as they do not eliminate civilian political activities. In stable societies, politics, both civilian and military, are characterized by the acceptance of the legitimacy of the regime, where consensus exists and each politically active group pursues its narrow interests on the basis of accepted rules of political

behavior. In societies which possess consensus and legitimacy, military political participation is not eliminated. Rather, it changes from violent tactics to pressure group politics, just as civilian politics changes from violent confrontation to interest group politics.

If the development of a general, all-encompassing political culture, institutionalization, and the capacity to deal adequately with political problems creates one type of political behavior for both armed forces and civilians, the absence of these qualities will result in an entirely different mode of political participation. Societies lacking these qualities are usually characterized as fragmented, where there is "a fundamental division in the values and aspirations of different groups in society."⁴⁸ These are also the societies which lack institutionalization and the capacity to deal effectively with political problems. In these societies, the nature of political participation escalates. Society does not possess agreement on peaceful rules of conduct and legitimate institutions capable of mediating political conflict. As a result, violence becomes the only rule; and when politics is predominantly violent, the military, the technicians of violence, will participate violently. To conceive of these societies as lacking political rules is mistaken. Politics is always carried out on the basis of

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Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics, p. 110.

rules. These societies simply do not possess peaceful rules. Often, when the government has lost what little legitimacy it possessed, groups take to the streets precisely to precipitate a crisis so the military will act and remove the government. In addition, in societies where instability and chaos are chronic conditions, the military often develops a value system which legitimates the seizure of the government in time of crisis.⁴⁹ In unstable societies, just as in stable societies, the military and civilians are politically active. The only difference is that rules of political intercourse are in marked contrast.

To restate the original point, military organizations are not intermittent political actors whose only political recourse is the use of organized violence. The armed forces are integral parts of a political system constantly concerned and involved in politics. What distinguishes the political participation of various military institutions is not only the type of participation--violent or pressure group--but also the level of participation--whether it plays a central role in the political system or a less important one. Too many analysts of military politics assume that if the military is not out of the barracks and in the streets coercing people, they are in the

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For example, the view held by the Brazilian military that it is the moderating power in Brazilian politics. Similarly, the Argentine military has an image of itself as the guardian of the state and the repository of patriotism, which is used as justification for their periodic political escapades.

barracks and uninvolved politically. However, military organizations who remain in the barracks and appear to be docile may be as involved politically as those armed forces who are in the business of constantly making and unmaking governments.

In societies where military violence is not prevalent, the amount of military political participation and influence is determined, for the most part, by the salience of the issue of national defense. In societies where pressure group politics is the dominant form of political behavior, the influence of any particular group is determined by the political importance of the issues that group is concerned with. It follows that where there is an emphasis on national security, those groups interested in this issue will increase their political activity and political role. This point is implied in Harold Lasswell's "garrison state hypothesis."⁵⁰ While the entire argument need not be accepted, (it is only an hypothesis), it does contain some useful and suggestive ideas. Lasswell suggests that in international circumstances characterized by "conditions of chronic war and threat of war or violent revolution,"⁵¹

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The hypothesis was originally presented in the American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLVI in 1941. However, Lasswell clarified and expanded his ideas in Lasswell, Harold, "The Garrison State Hypothesis Today," in Huntington, Samuel P., ed., Changing Patterns of Military Politics, (The Free Press of Glencoe, New York: 1962). All citations are from this presentation.

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Lasswell, p. 54.

national security organizations will increase their political participation. Decision-makers will begin to rely increasingly on personnel from national security organizations for the purposes of gathering intelligence, recommending policy options, and often implementing the policy decisions.⁵²

What results, therefore, is the gradual encroachment of not only the military but other security agencies in areas not strictly within their expertise. In other words, under the conditions outlined by Lasswell, the military gradually increases its political power without having to apply violence on society or the government.

In an interesting analysis of the inherent tension between the military and society, Bengt Abrahamsson outlines two categories of factors which contribute to the political influence of the military.⁵³ The first category is the structural factors which "refer to the relations of the military with the organs of the state, with other politically significant groups, and to the relationships among military subgroups and cliques."⁵⁴ Among the most significant aspects of this category, according to Abrahamsson, are the location of the military in relation to the major governmental organizations and the effective-

⁵²

Ibid, pp. 60-63.

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Abrahamsson, Military Professionalization and Political Power.

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Ibid, pp. 141-143.

ness of their access to the legislative, judicial, and executive agencies; the nature of the relationship between the military and the major civilian groups; and the existence of paramilitary organizations, if any, their effectiveness, and the relationship between the military and these groups. The second category of military political factors is concerned mainly with the impact of the military on the economy and includes such areas as the amount of GNP and the proportion of industrial production allocated to the military or military related projects.⁵⁵ There is, however, a slight problem with Abrahamsson's analysis. It is clear that the structural resources can, depending on the particular case in question, enhance or inhibit military political behavior. What is not clear is whether the quantitative resources are, in fact, resources or the results of the shrewd use of existing political resources, which are then used to increase the role of the military. To put it another way, the increased control of additional economic resources may be the result of the deliberate manipulation by the military of international and domestic conditions which not only increases the political power of the military but is also the result of already favorable conditions. The history of military politics in the United States usefully illustrates some of the above points. Prior to the Second World War, the U. S. military was not particularly active

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Ibid, pp. 142-143.

in the political arena. For the most part, the armed forces spent their time lobbying for armaments and manpower, and often these activities went unrewarded. However, with the entrance of the U. S. into World War II, the influence of the military was expanded and its political role increased through the post-war period on into the present.⁵⁶ As the issues of national security and the role of the U. S. in world politics increased in importance, the political influence of the military and allied groups expanded. As the budget of the military grew, its role not only in heavy industry and technological industries increased, but so did its role in local and state economies in general. Congressmen, being well aware of the importance of constituency influences in their political careers, seek out those committees in Congress which will increase their chances for reelection. Therefore, districts heavily dependent on defense installations or defense related industries invariably find their representatives on the Armed Forces Committees of Congress.⁵⁷ As late as 1969, Lewis Anthony

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For a useful discussion of the factors contributing to this development see Barnet, Richard, The Roots of War, (Atheneum, New York: 1972), Part I, pp. 13-95.

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For a discussion of the process of assigning committee seats see Masters, Nicholas A., "Committees Assignments in the House of Representatives," in Wolfinger, Raymond E., ed., Readings on Congress, (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs: 1971), pp. 109-132. For a useful discussion of the interaction between interest groups and Congressional Committees, see Lowi, Theodore, "How the Farmers Get What They Want," in Lowi, Theodore, and Ripley, Randall, Jr., eds., Legislative Politics U. S. A., (Little, Brown, Boston: 1973). While Lowi's analysis deals with agricultural policy making, it is equally applicable to military policy making.

Dexter concluded that his interviews with congressmen "indicated that they were not inclined to raise or consider questions of military policy in terms of its meaning for some national or international political objectives or goals."⁵⁸ As a result, Congress has shown little capability of oversight in military matters, which leaves only the executive branch in the dubious position of controlling the massive military bureaucracy. Contemporary American politics has witnessed the gradual expansion of the role of the military from the pre-war years, where the military exercised relatively little political influence, to one where its influence has grown tremendously.

To summarize the above discussion, it is possible to hypothesize at least four possible political situations. Since military organizations are an integral part of the political system, both organizational and environmental developments have an impact on the nature and scope of military political participation. The contribution of each of the major factors (environmental and institutional) to military politics, however, will depend upon the particular case in question. Under conditions of chronic political instability, there are essentially two types of military political behavior: direct and indirect rule. The choice of technique will depend upon the nature of the environment and the political goals of the military. In some cases,

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Dexter, Lewis Anthony, "Congressmen and the Making of Military Policy," in Wolfinger, ed., Readings on Congress, p. 372, italics in the original.

the military may gain more by direct rule; in other cases, the military may gain more by maintaining the facade of civilian rule. When the environment demonstrates a high degree of political instability, the military may execute a coup d' etat and substitute a military regime in the place of civilian rule. As an alternative, the military may choose not to rule directly. Instead, it may install a civilian government which rules upon the sufferance of the armed forces.

Under conditions of political stability, two additional hypothetical situations are possible. When the polity is stable and national security is a major issue, the political role of the military will increase because of the saliency of their professional interests. In fact, the increased role of the military is the result of the congruence of values (national security) between the military and society.

Finally, under conditions of political stability, where national security is not a major political issue, the military will not be absent from politics; its influence, however, will be greatly reduced. One important reason why military politics is not eliminated is the fact that military organizations possess professional goals which they will attempt to realize. Indeed, as soon as military organizations become professional and distinguish themselves from other sectors of society, conditions for political conflict are present. Although the military will not be in the business of making and unmaking governments, it will not be absent

from the political arena.⁵⁹ (It must be pointed out that international factors often have an impact on the military. However, a detailed analysis of these factors would unduly complicate this study).

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Although the amount of influence is substantially different in hypothesis 2 and 3, the political techniques available are similar to the military interest group politics outline in Janowitz, Morris, The Professional Soldier, (Free Press, Glenco: 1960).

CHAPTER III

IN SEARCH OF THE PAST: MILITARY POLITICS IN THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

The parameter and foundation of civil-military relations during the Weimar Republic were established under what can only be called the most inauspicious circumstances possible: military defeat and domestic turmoil. By October, 1918, it was unmistakably clear to the Supreme Command, (Oberste Heeresleitung, OHL), that the war was lost and any possibility of further resistance was extremely doubtful. In view of the critical situation on the Western Front, the Supreme Command prevailed upon the Kaiser to initiate peace feelers on the basis of President Wilson's Fourteen Points, to conduct these negotiations under the auspices of the civilian government, and to liberalize the govern-

ment according to parliamentary principles.¹ It was assumed that this policy was crucial for the preservation of the political institutions of the Second Empire. Consequently, a new government was formed under Prince Max von Baden and peace negotiations were begun in earnest.² It soon became clear, however, that this policy was doomed to failure. President Wilson responded in his third peace note that he was unable to conduct negotiations with an authoritarian regime. Now, the major stumbling block to the termination of hostilities was the Emperor and the institutions of the Empire. With the crucial issue revolving around his Imperial Majesty, the situation at Supreme Headquarters took on the atmosphere of a dream-world. The Emperor, determined to remain on his throne, refused to abdicate. At the same time, some of his advisors unrealistically suggested a strategic retreat to the Rhine, the consolidation of defensive positions, and the continuation of the struggle.³

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Prior to this development, the government was responsible exclusively to the Emperor and not to the Reichstag.

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Ryder, A. J., Twentieth Century Germany From Bismarck to Brandt, (Columbia University Press, New York: 1973), pp. 181-184. This is often referred to as the "Revolution from above." Yet, given the past attitude and behavior of the Prussian monarchy towards democracy and parliamentary government, the sincerity of this gesture is, to say the least, suspect.

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The atmosphere and events at Supreme Headquarters during these fateful days are ably described in Wheeler-Bennett, John W., Hindenburg the Wooden Titan, (William Morrow, New York: 1936), pp. 178-205.

While the Kaiser and his court were deliberating upon these futile plans, momentous outside events sealed the fate of the Emperor and determined the future course of German politics. In late October and early November, the sailors of the High Seas Fleet mutinied, and by early November, the Red Flag was flying over Kiel and Wilhelms-haven.⁴ What began as an isolated sailors' mutiny quickly gained momentum and became the German Revolution. Soon revolutionary unrest spread throughout the Reich. Workers and soldiers/sailors councils were organized and discipline in the home garrisons collapsed. Insubordination and revolution were now threatening the Field Army, and, more importantly, the position of the Emperor was being challenged not only internationally, but also domestically. It was becoming increasingly more apparent that support for the Kaiser had eroded and, perhaps more importantly, domestic politics could very easily parallel the political situation in Russia the previous year.

General Wilhelm Groener, who replaced Ludendorff as First Quartermaster General on October 26, was one of the few realistic and clearsighted personalities at Supreme Headquarters. He realized that if 1) the Army, especially the Officer Corps, could prevent total collapse, 2) civil war could be prevented, and 3) the Army was to remain an effective political instrument and the position of the

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Ryder, Twentieth Century Germany, p. 186, and Horn, The German Naval Mutinies of World War I, Chapter VII.

Officer Corps was to be maintained, then the Kaiser must abdicate and leave Germany.⁵ In audience with the Emperor, he bluntly informed His Majesty that abdication and exile were essential in order to save the situation. The Kaiser at first refused and suggested that he would be at the head of his troops on their return to Germany. Groener retorted: "The Army will return home orderly and peacefully under the command of its leaders and commanding generals, but not under the command of Your Majesty. The Army no longer stands behind Your Majesty."⁶

As far as Groener was concerned, the Emperor had become a liability to Germany and to the reemergence of the Army as a major political force. In addition, so had an armistice concluded by Army officers. The Army had become a highly respected and prestigious institution in

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Kitchen, Martin, A Military History of Germany from the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day, (Indiana University Press, Bloomington: 1975), p. 235.

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Groener, Wilhelm, Lebenserinnerungen: Jugend, Generalstab, Weltkrieg, (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Goettingen: 1957), p. 460. To understand completely the full impact of Groener's actions, it must be remembered that the Kaiser was the Supreme War Lord (Bundesfeldherr) and all officers swore a personal oath of allegiance to him. Therefore, Groener's act, in the face of military and political disaster, was tantamount to a coup d'etat. It also brings into perspective the unconvincing defense of many German officers as to why they did not resist Hitler. The Army violated its oath in 1918 when the future of that institution was in question. If they could do it once, they could do it again, especially when the fate of the Army was at stake. See Nelson, Walter Henry, Germany Rearmed, (Simon and Schuster, New York: 1972), pp. 47-48, for a more detailed analysis of this point.

the Second Empire after it successfully prosecuted the Wars of Unification.⁷ Because of this, many officers could not face the prospect of a tarnished image by acknowledging responsibility for Germany's total defeat in World War I. As far as they were concerned, the outcome of the war, and more importantly, the Armistice and the Versailles Treaty, must not be blamed on the Generals. For this reason, civilians were made to conclude both the armistice negotiations and the Versailles Treaty. These ideas were clearly in General Groener's mind as he began the arduous task of laying the foundation for the eventual reemergence of the Army and the Officer Corps in German politics. "The High Command deliberately adopted the policy of refuting the responsibility for the armistice and all later steps. Strictly legally seen, it did so without justification, but to me and my associates it was vital to keep the armor shining and the General Staff free of burdens for the future."⁸ Groener's policy is quite clear. It was his desire (and later developments bear out that it was also the desire of many other officers) to have the Army adopt a policy which would not hamper its political maneuverability. In his crucial position,

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Ritter, Gerhard, The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany, Vol. II, (University of Miami Press, Coral Gables: 1970), p. 100.

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Groener, Lebenserinnerungen, p. 466. Also quoted in Carsten, F. L., The Reichswehr and Politics, 1918-1933, (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1973), p. 6.

General Groener laid the foundation for the politics of the German Army throughout the Weimar Republic. He and the leading military figures were concerned throughout the Weimar Republic with guiding Germany to her rightful position as a world power, and above all, with securing once again the power and position of the Officer Corps that was theirs in the Second Empire. Throughout its history, the Army never tolerated democratic ideas.⁹ From the beginning, the Army was against the Weimar Republic simply because democracy was a direct challenge to the power and privilege of the Officer Corps. After 1918, the Army, because of its total collapse and the unwillingness of the allies to tolerate its quick reemergence, was forced to live, at least temporarily, with a republic. In order to achieve their goals, therefore, the leaders of the German Army after the First World War had to recreate the Army in the Imperial mold and slowly and gradually undermine the Republic. For the most part, the Republic, throughout its turbulent existence was extremely accommodating, almost to the point where the conditions for the successful realization of the political goals of the Army were presented to its leaders by the

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The Senior Officers, especially Graf von Waldersee, considered the possibility of a preventive coup d' etat in 1889 to prevent the Reichstag from pressing for the very dangerous principle of parliamentary control and oversight of the military. Goerlitz, Walter, The History of the German General Staff, (Frederick A. Praeger, New York: 1953), p. 119.

ineffectiveness of the Republic. All that was required of the leaders of the Army was the tailoring of their political tactics to the prevailing domestic political situation in Germany which varied during the three major periods of the Weimar Republic: 1918-1923; 1923-1929; and 1929-1933. Although the goals of the Army remained the same throughout the Weimar Republic, the primary condition for the realization of military supremacy remained elusive and contributed to both the final collapse of the Republic and the ultimate failure of military policy. In the Empire, the political and social position of the Officer Corps depended entirely on their relationship to the Emperor. This created one of the most difficult political problems facing the Officer Corps from 1918 to the rise of Hitler, namely, who would fill the void left by the forced departure of the Supreme Warlord.¹⁰

The political behavior of the military and other groups as well was directly related to the political atmosphere present in Germany, not only in the early months and years but throughout the entire life of the Republic. For the most part, the political situation in Germany throughout the inter-war years was a direct result of the circumstances under which Germany made the transition from monarchical politics to democratic politics. In Germany, the transition from monarchy to democracy did not satisfac-

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Kehr, Eckart, "Zur Soziologie der Reichswehr," Neue Blaetter Fuer den Socialismus, Vol. 1, 1930, p. 160.

torily, let alone permanently, eliminate the conflict between monarchical and democratic rule. Indeed, the major impetus for organizing Germany democratically came not from within Germany, but externally from the Allies. The Republic was proclaimed because the monarchy had collapsed and was no longer capable of controlling internal and external events. While it is true that Germany experienced a revolution, there is serious question as to how revolutionary the situation really was. In fact, the events of November, 1919, were, at best, inconclusive. The revolutionary period was unleashed by two totally different and unrelated events: the liberalizing of the regime by the government and the sailors' mutiny. The first did not proceed very far because the Allies would not accept it; the second was nothing more than a protest against a militarily ridiculous action on the part of the Senior Officers of the High Seas Fleet. With the exception of the extreme Left, the entire series of events called the German Revolution was more the result of war weariness than a desire to alter the form of government. What resulted was more a political vacuum left by the inability of the Imperial Regime to exercise effective political control than it was a revolution. The revolution 1) did not end in the victory of one group of political ideas over another, 2) did not result in the victory of one group of political actors over another, and 3) did not result in the acceptance of agreed-upon rules of political intercourse by sizable portions of the

population or their political leaders.¹¹ In short, the German Revolution was simply the collapse of the Imperial Regime followed by the release into the political arena of the pent-up tensions contained in Imperial Germany.¹² This meant that domestic politics would be characterized by the clash of numerous opposing and unreconcilable political ideologies and political groups vying for the opportunity to fill the political void and control German politics.

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Arend Lijphart suggests that in situations where society is deeply divided ideologically, religiously and linguistically, democracy may be successfully achieved if the political elites agree to cooperate on the basis of democratic rules. See his discussion of consociational democracy in "Typologies of Democratic Systems," Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, (April, 1968), pp. 17-30, and The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands, (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1968), especially pp. 200-211.

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For a useful discussion of the impact of these factors on politics in the Weimar Republic see Bracher, Karl Dietrich, Die Aufloesung Der Weimarer Republik, (Ring-Verlag, Stuttgart: 1958), especially pp. 15-21, "Probleme der Neuordnung von 1918" and Chapter VI, pp. 150-174, "Ideologie und Sozialstruktur." In addition, for a useful discussion of some of the factors necessary for the transition to stable democratic politics see Rustow, Dankwart A., "Transitions to Democracy," Comparative Politics, Vol. 2, No. 3, April, 1970. In this article, Rustow argues that stable democratic politics is the culmination of three stages: conflict, choice, and habituation. The first stage is the conflict among opposing forces and ideologies. When all contending groups finally realize their inability to eliminate their opponents, they organize politics according to democratic rules. After the first two stages are completed, over a period of time democratic rules and procedures become a part of the political process stable democratic politics is achieved. Clearly, the Weimar Republic was an unsuccessful reversal of the process, where democratic procedures were instituted at the outset of the conflict, and not the final result, and where substantial portions of the population, let alone the political elites, were ideologically against democracy.

The Politics of Confrontation, 1918-1923

During the first four years of its existence, the Weimar Republic experienced a series of internal disorders which severely weakened any attempt to put democracy on a firm foundation. Almost immediately after the proclamation of the Republic and the abdication of the Emperor, the fledgling Republic was challenged. Surprisingly, the first series of crucial tests came from the Left and not from the Right. In the period immediately following the termination of hostilities, the German Right was exhausted and politically bankrupt. It was the Right which joyously received the news of the outbreak of war in 1914. It was the Right, the Pan-German League, and the Navy League,¹³ which conceived of many of the grandiose plans for German expansion and domination after the war was successfully concluded. Above all, it was the Right, the Emperor, and his Army, who handled the prosecution of the war. They had to admit their total inability to arrive at a realistic war policy, not by their words, but by their acceptance of the Allied Armistice terms.¹⁴ In short, the Right abandoned the political field to the Left in the early months of the Weimar Republic.

Yet, the Left was in no position to accept political leadership and firmly establish the new Republic. The inability of the Left to agree on some kind of basic policy

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Eyck, Erich, A History of the Weimar Republic, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge: 1967), Vol. I, p. 2.

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See above, p. 5.

and the continual internecine warfare in the early months enabled the Right to recover quickly and become a major factor in domestic politics. Almost as soon as the German Revolution broke out, the different elements of the Left began vying with one another for control of the revolution.¹⁵ The German Left, for the most part, was divided into three major opposing factions: the majority Socialists, the Independent Socialists, and the Spartacists, who would shortly become the German Communist Party (KPD). The government was initially a coalition led by the Majority Socialists, Friedrich Ebert and Phillip Scheidemann. Both wanted to consolidate the political gains already achieved and establish Germany on a firm constitutional and parliamentary foundation. The remainder of the Left, primarily the Spartacists led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, wanted to continue the revolutionary period and consolidate the power of the workers and soldiers' councils. The experience of Russia just one year before was vividly in their minds. Lenin demonstrated the possibility of continuing the revolutionary period and achieving greater political gains than were thought possible in the initial

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The political divisions within the Left have their roots in the transition of the German Social Democratic Party from a revolutionary to a parliamentary evolutionary party. Another source of these conflicts was the vote for war credits in 1914 and the acceptance by the party of the Burgfrieden. Some Left-wing members felt that by these actions the party had abandoned its historic mission as spokesmen of the working class. Kilroy-Silk, Robert, Socialism Since Marx, (Taplinger, New York: 1972), pp. 33-52.

revolutionary surge. Consequently, they began to adopt many of Lenin's tactics. Not only did they agitate among the revolutionary workers, soldiers and sailors, and demand the continuation of the revolution, but they also began to organize a workers and soldiers militia. Just as Lenin had his Latvian Rifles and Kronstadt Sailors, so too the Spartacists had their Volkmarine Division and worker's units.

Soon after the abdication of the Emperor and the proclamation of the Republic, the extreme Left challenged the Moderates for the control of Berlin, the government, and Germany's political future. On the evening of November 10, 1918, the extreme Left demonstrated in front of the Reich's Chancellery. Ebert was in a precarious position. The extreme Left was both agitating and actively recruiting and organizing armed forces, and Ebert had nothing with which to prevent what appeared to be an imminent takeover. While he was contemplating his position in his office at the Chancellery, the telephone linking his office with Supreme Headquarters rang. It was General Groener.

"In the evening I phoned the Reichskanzlei and told Ebert that the Army put itself at the disposal of his government. In return (for this) the Field Marshall (Hindenburg) and the Officer Corps expected the support of the government in the maintenance of order and discipline in the Army. The Officer Corps expected the government to fight against Bolshevism and was ready for the struggle. Ebert accepted my suggestion for the union (Bund) (between the Army and the government). From then on, in a secret administration between the Reichskanzlei and the Supreme Command, we discussed, every evening, the

necessary preventive measures."¹⁶

The domestic situation and the resulting pact could not have served better the interests of the Army, even if events were tailor-made by the High Command. From the beginning, General Groener desired the emergence of the Army as an unencumbered political force in Germany. The Groener-Ebert conversation, resulting in the participation of the Army in government on an equal footing with the civilians, launched the Army on the road toward achieving this goal. For the most part, Ebert, in a most unenviable position, was running out of alternatives. Surely he needed an effective military force to prevent the imminent takeover by the extreme Left. He, no doubt, could not foretell that future events would prove the Left-wing threat minimal compared to the resiliency of the Right.

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Groener, Lebenserinnerungen, pp. 467-468. For the most part, my translation is similar to Carsten, F. L., The Reichswehr and Politics, 1918-1933, (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1973), p. 11. However, Carsten does not include Groener's comment about the secret administration in his translation. His analysis of the impact of the phone conversation is similar to Craig, Gordon, The Politics of the Prussian Army, (Oxford University Press, London: 1955), p. 348. Both conclude that it was an alliance of equals. Implicit in their analysis, however, is the conclusion that not only was it temporary, but all that took place was a simple exchange of promises. The fact that a secret administration was established is more than a simple political deal. It made the High Command, and therefore, the Army, full-fledged members and equal partners in government. As a result, the High Command, especially in the early years, constantly reminded the government of the military's political position: a relationship which enabled them to realize many of their political goals. The impact of this conversation lends credence to John W. Wheeler-Bennett's observation that the pact was "destined to save

All he knew was that he needed a military force which would protect his weak and defenseless government from any Left-wing threat. Ebert was in need and the High Command was obliging.¹⁷ Moreover, by concluding this secret dual government, Ebert put democracy under the protection of the most anti-democratic institution in the now defunct Imperial Regime. The Army benefited the most by this, and continuously reminded the civilians in the early years that not only was the Army the protector of the government, but it was also a part of the government. And, as part of the government, it had certain demands which must be realized in order to guarantee the survival of the Regime. This is clearly illustrated in a series of letters between the members of the former High Command and Ebert. In a letter to Ebert dated December 8, 1918, Hindenburg (referring to the phone conversation of November 10), reminded Ebert of the latter's remark during the conversation that

both parties from the extreme elements of revolution but, as a result of which, the Weimar Republic was doomed at birth." Wheeler-Bennett, John W., The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics, 1918-1945, (Saint Martins Press, New York: 1954), p. 21. Or, as Jacques Benoist-Mechin suggests, "The episode was a startling abridgement of the years which followed." Benoist-Mechin, Jacques, Histoire de L'Armee Allemande, (Editions Albin Michel, Paris: 1936), Vol. I, p. 70. As Golo Mann suggests, Ebert detested revolutionary situations because, as far as he was concerned, nothing positive could result from revolutionary chaos and turmoil. Therefore, he wanted to establish a solid foundation for the new republic. Mann, Golo, A History of Germany Since 1789, p. 332. Consequently, the pact with the generals was almost a necessity. Unfortunately, while the foundation may have been solid, it surely was the wrong one for the democratic edifice.

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When these conditions occur and the military possesses clear goals and astute leaders, the power and influence of the military will increase. See above, Chapter II.

"a breakdown of organization in these difficult times would deliver (ausliefern) Germany into anarchy and frightful misfortune." And "if the Army was to be a tool of the government, the authority of the Officer Corps must be reestablished, politics within the Army (the workers and soldiers councils) must be eliminated, and a decree to that effect clearly made by the government."

In addition, Hindenburg went on to state a number of important military and political demands:

- "1) The power of command lies only with the commanding military authorities.
 - 2) The military authority of the officers and the chain of command must be completely rebuilt.
 - 3) The complete elimination of soldiers councils.
- Only the Vertrauensraete can remain for the purposes of transmitting to the military authorities the wishes and desires of the troops...."¹⁸

General Groener, corresponding with Ebert on July 27, 1919, bitterly commented on Germany's disastrous political misfortunes, primarily in the east and the south (East Prussia and Bavaria). He suggested that the only possible method of preventing further misfortune was for "Prussia (to) become Germany and this Germany must begin the domestic politics of a modern Frederick William I. Moreover, the complete reassertion of the authority of the state and the

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Hindenburg to Ebert, letter dated December 8, 1918, in Groener-Geyer, Dorothea, General Groener: Soldat und Statsmann, (Societaets Verlag, Frankfurt am Main: 1955), pp. 377-378. Carsten suggests that Groener wrote the letter, in Carsten, The Reichswehr, p. 14. From what we know about Hindenburg and Groener and from the content of the letter, this is probably true. The institution of Vertrauensraete was an attempt by the High Command to counterbalance the soldiers councils. They had limited responsibilities for only economic and social questions. Carsten, The Reichswehr, p. 10.

restoration of the economy is primary."¹⁹ Commenting further on the role of the Army, Groener remarked: "You know from the first weeks of the revolution better than anyone else how necessary governmental power is, and (the Reichswehr with the help of the officers is prepared) to secure the authority of the state." Groener closed his letter with an additional, though veiled, reminder of the political relation of the Army vis-a-vis the civilians resulting from the conversation of November 10, 1918. "I hope that our correspondence will not end,...your excellency Mr. Reichspraesident, and (I) sincerely thank you for the trust and support which you conferred upon the High Command during the disastrous November days."²⁰ In a letter to Defense Minister Gustav Noske, dated August 24, 1919, Groener relates his distaste for the damaging remarks circulating about the General Staff and argues that Staff Officers, because of their central and unique position, should be considered first for positions in any reorganized Army. Once again, Groener is reaffirming the role of the Army, in this case the General Staff. It was his "last wish (and possibly that of many Staff Officers)" (that they be the first to be included in any new army because) "(i)t is not

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The Weimar Republic never evolved a policy that in any way paralleled the policies of Frederick William I both in content or success. The Republic was most unsuccessful in developing any kind of coherent policies due to the extremely short time governments were in office. No doubt, this further contributed to the disillusionment of the Officer Corps and reinforced their desire to return to the successful methods and institutions of Imperial Germany.

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Groener-Geyer, Dorothea, General Groener: Soldat

too much to say, when I was in command, that the primary thanks goes to the General Staff for bringing us out of the threat of Bolshevism."²¹

In addition to the lobbying efforts of former senior officers, were officers entrenched within the government itself continually presenting the military point of view. Colonel Walther Reinhardt, the Prussian War Minister, was constantly reminding the Cabinet of the views of the Army. In the Cabinet meeting of March 15, 1919, he was adamantly opposed to the dissolution of the High Command. Erzberger commented that "(t)he High Command always had its own policy," to which Reinhardt responded "Yes.... We do not want to conceal that we are earnestly against Bolshevism. In any event, the demobilization order has already been published and must be fabricated. Several service positions for the High Command can be found in Bavaria." Responding to Reinhardt's plea for the continuation of the High Command, Philipp Scheidemann stated that "(w)e must find a way to dissolve the OHL, in a way desired by many departing soldiers."²² While the military leaders were maneuvering for position within the government, the extreme Left was also politically active. On December 23-24, 1918,

und Statsmann, p. 386.

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Ibid, p. 387.

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Schulze, Hagen, ed., Akten der Reichskanzlei, Weimar Republik, Das Kabinet Scheidemann, 13, February bis 20, Juni, 1919, (Harald Boldt Verlag, Boppard/Rhine: 1971), pp. 53-54.

because the government failed to pay the sailors their salaries, elements of the peoples Naval Division surrounded and occupied the former Imperial Stables. Almost immediately, the extreme Left increased their propaganda and began to reinforce the sailors. Once again, the political situation in Berlin was volatile. Ebert, who was determined to prevent revolutionary activity by the extreme Left, decided to make an example of the sailors. After consultations with General Groener, units under the command of General Lequis were ordered to enter Berlin and restore peace. The operation was a complete failure. For the first time since 1848, the German Army was unable to quell domestic disorder. Now it appeared that the government was indeed without an effective military force, save what the Spartacists had been able to muster. The situation for the government was now even more precarious because, without an effective military force of its own, the Spartacists could control the political situation and remove the government at will.

Appearances, however, were deceptive. During this crisis, two factors worked to the advantage of the government: the lack of effective political action on the part of the Spartacists, and the existence of a large reserve of trained former members of the Imperial Army. Had the Sparatacists been astute politicians, they would have seized the initiative immediately after General Lequis' abortive operation, at a time when the government was most vulnerable. But Luxemburg and Liebknect were not as

astute as Lenin and Trotsky, and they let their most advantageous opportunity slip by. At this time, the government was temporarily without an effective fighting force. If the Spartacists had pressed their advantage swiftly and resolutely, they might have successfully executed their "October Revolution." But they chose to wait, and their indecision gave the government just enough time to organize a new and more effective fighting force.

Immediately after the war there was a large, trained military reserve throughout Germany with relatively little to do. After the conclusion of the Armistice, the General Staff was able to maintain control over the discipline and organization of the Field Army only as far as the German border. While this by itself was no small accomplishment, the Army dissolved almost immediately upon reaching the German Frontier, with most of the soldiers returning home without waiting for their demobilization orders.²³ Upon returning home, many of the war veterans found that not only was the society politically and economically exhausted and incapable of assimilating them, but also, after a long and brutal war, it was difficult for them to readjust to the routine of peace and civilian life.²⁴ Soon, they

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Rosinski, Herbert, The German Army, (Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York: 1940), p. 168.

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The gulf between the life of the soldier and civilian life was dramatically portrayed in Remarque, Erich Maria, All Quiet on the Western Front, (1929) and the problems of readjustment are vividly presented in his Der Weg Zueruck, (1931), and Drei Kameraden, (1936).

longed to return to the structure and discipline of military life and to be, once again, with their former comrades.

In response to the serious domestic political situation, Major Kurt Von Schleicher suggested that the government organize volunteer units composed of former soldiers and under the command of former Imperial officers. If this were done, Schleicher reasoned that the Supreme Command could control these units but would be sufficiently detached so that in the event of failure they would not be compromised further. If these volunteers (Freikorps) were successful in defeating the extreme Left, the Supreme Command would then be in a good position to control these units.²⁵

Gustav Noske, the Defense Minister, agreed to the plan and began to advertise throughout Germany for volunteers. It was his hope that the vast majority of recruits would be Social Democrats and therefore loyal to the government. However, for many Social Democrats volunteer duty was totally unpalatable. In general, social democracy is anti-military, and the German Social Democrats were anti-military in particular because of the role of the Army as an instrument of reaction in Imperial Germany.²⁶ Noske knew this was an idealistic venture but he had to try. The government needed

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Waite, Robert. G.L., The Vanguard of Nazism: The Free Corp Movement in Postwar Germany, 1918-1923, (W.W. Norton, New York: 1952), pp. 11-13.

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For a useful discussion of the early development of the Freikorps and the content of the governmental appeals to the population see Waldman, Eric, The Spartacist Uprising

an army and fast.

"(T)he complete collapse of the German situation at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919, made the formation of a peoples army impossible. After a long war, a great part of the population wanted nothing to do with military preparedness.... The Republican Army, which was formed in Berlin before I became involved in military administration, was terrible....The only useful people available were career soldiers, N.C.O.'s and officers, who were unable to find civilian careers."²⁷

Since there was little time to reeducate the population and take painstaking care in the formation and organization of these units, Noske and the government were forced to rely on rightwing and dangerous military organizations, the Freikorps. These units were composed of individuals who were the product of pre-war, war and postwar influences. Many were imbued with the Volkish Ideology, a belief which originated in the Nineteenth Century and reached its zenith in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. One of the central components of Volkish thought was the desire for the organic unity of the German people. Prior to the First World War, many German romantics and followers of the Volkish beliefs were disillusioned with German unity under the Imperial Regime. The Wars of Unification, as

of 1919, (Marquette University Press, St. Louis: 1958). For a discussion of the competing ideas within the SPD on the question of the social role of the military see Casper, Gustav Adolf, "Die Sozialdemokratische Partei und das deutsche Wehrproblem in der Weimarer Republik," Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau, Beiheft 11, (October, 1959), especially pp. 12-13.

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Noske, Gustav, Aufstieg und Niedergang der deutschen Sozialdemokratie: Erlebtes aus Aufstieg und Niedergang einer Demokratie, (Aeroverlag, Zurich: 1947), p. 114.

far as they were concerned, achieved only superficial unity because the desired social and political gemeinschaft (community) was not realized. After the war, German disunity was even more pronounced. Not only was the Reich geographically truncated, but the culture and society was also in chaos, due to the fragmented political system and the extreme competition of the many ideological groups. Perhaps, more importantly, Bolshevism loomed as Germany's most serious problem. For most believers in the Volkish Ideology, Bolshevism represented a totally un-German and alien political creed and one which had to be purged from Germany at all costs.²⁸

In addition, the experience of war contributed greatly to the development of the Freikorps. Many of the members of the volunteer units had been war-time storm troopers. These units were "superlatively conditioned, well-trained, elite troops whose task it was, literally, to 'storm' enemy lines and force a breakthrough for the regular infantry...."²⁹

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For a discussion of the contribution of Volkish thought to the rise of National Socialism, see Mosse, George L., The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich, (Grosset & Dunlap, New York: 1964); "Fascism and the Intellectuals," in Woolf, S.J., ed., The Nature of Fascism, (Random House, New York: 1968); Stern, Fritz, The Politics of Cultural Dispair: A Study of the Rise of the Germanic Ideology, (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1961); and Bracher, Karl Dietrich, The German Dictatorship, (Praeger Publishers, New York: 1970), pp. 28-50. For the contribution of the Volkish Ideology to the development of the Freikorps, see Waite, pp. 17-21, and Carsten, F.L., The Rise of Fascism, (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1969), pp. 30-31 and 86-98.

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Waite, pp. 27-28.

Tactically, these units were required to operate independently of the regular army and army chain of command and, as totally independent units, they were required to submit completely to the leadership of the commanding officer of the storm troop unit.

"To summarize, it may be said that the postwar volunteers learned a great deal from the storm trooper system. From it they received their organizational form, that of small self-sufficient combat units; they received much of their leadership and with it the 'new' discipline which was an extension of the Fuehrer principle...."³⁰

Finally, the Freikorps were products of postwar experiences. Upon their return to Germany after the war, they were unable to make necessary readjustments to civilian life. Their most formative experience was the brutality of modern warfare; an attitude best described in Herman Goering's description of them as "fighters who could not become de-brutalized."³¹ Furthermore, these men subscribed completely to the legend of the "stab in the back." Victory, as far as they were concerned, had been within the grasp of the German Army but it was snatched from them by the "men of November," the "profiteers of the revolution."³² Former First Quartermaster General Erich Ludendorf is an excellent example of this mentality. While Ludendorf was not formally

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Ibid, pp. 23-24.

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Quoted in Waite, p. 29.

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Carsten, F. L., The Rise of Fascism, p. 86.

a member of any Freikorps unit, he did participate in two of the more well-known and notorious right-wing activities: the Kapp Putsch in 1920 and the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich in 1923. As far as Ludendorff was concerned, the Army was never defeated.

"The strength of the Army lasted several months longer, even though its allies had collapsed. Then came the betrayal of the fatherland--brought about by the disintegrating influence of enemy propaganda, by revolutionary agitation, and finally by the outbreak of the revolution itself; and all of this made it impossible for the nation to put forth its full strength and therewith support the army. This betrayal forced the army to conclude an ignominious armistice. After an honorable retreat to its own country this army was disbanded by the revolutionary authorities in Germany, at the same time the fleet was surrendered. These were acting in accordance with that damnable precept of German social democracy, which runs as follows--'It is our firm intention that Germany shall lower her banner once and for all, without ever bringing it home victorious for the last time.'"³³

After the war, Germany was in economic, social, and political chaos. The security and stability of the Empire was gone and above all the Army, the symbol of Imperial Germany, was emasculated. These conditions led Ludendorff and other members of the extreme Right to engage in a wide variety of hairbrained schemes. "The distress of the people (Volk) and the Army, finally lead me into Geheimrat Kapp's and General von Lüttwitz's undertaking of March 13, 1920."³⁴

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Ludendorff, Erich, "Germany Never Defeated," These Eventful Years: The Twentieth Century in the Making, (Encyclopedia Britannica, London: 1924), Vol. I, p. 283.

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Ludendorff, Erich, Auf Dem Weg zur Feldherrnhalle:

This, then, was the composition and political outlook of the military force which would save Germany from the alleged Bolshevik menace.³⁵ And save Germany they did, at least from the extreme Left. In January, 1919, the Spartacists went to excessive lengths in Berlin. They increased their revolutionary agitation and continued to arm workers and soldiers units. On January 5, 1919, Spartacist units occupied the Spandau district, where munitions factories were located, and the Belle-Alliance-Platz, where the offices and presses of the major Berlin newspapers were located. In December, 1918, the Army proved incapable of subduing Spartacist units. Perhaps the extreme Left was unaware of the existence, fervor, and efficiency of the new governmental defense force and figured that this attempt to seize power would require little effort. Surely, they could not have known that on the previous day, January 4, Noske and Ebert reviewed the new volunteer units outside Berlin. During the review, Noske said to Ebert, "(D)o not worry. Everything will be all right."³⁶ As far as the immediate future was concerned, Noske was quite right. On the very next day, the Freikorps entered Berlin and brutally and zealously suppressed the Spartacists and in their exuberance murdered Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Lebenserinnerungen an die Zeit des 9. 11. 1923 mit Dokumenten in 5 Unlagen, (Ludendorf Verlag, Muenchen: 1937), p. 7.

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The composition of the Freikorps brings into sharp relief the organization and political attributes of the Nazi S.A.

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Quoted in Goodspeed, p. 121.

The counter-revolutionary activities in Berlin signalled a general action by the Freikorps against the extreme Left throughout Germany, especially in Bavaria. By May, 1919, not only was Berlin safe from the extreme Left, but the socialist regime of Kurt Eisner in Bavaria was also brutally and gleefully suppressed by the Freikorps.³⁷

Although the Freikorps were willing to support the government by brutally suppressing the Communists, this by no means indicated their acceptance of the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic. In fact, the contrary was the case. But, so long as these units were occupied with protecting the eastern Provinces from the Poles and the government from the Communists, they did not pose an immediate threat to the democratic regime. However, even

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It is during the suppression of the Eisner regime by the Bavarian Freikorps that a certain nondescript Austrian corporal by the name of Adolf Hitler first began his political activities. Heiden, Konrad, Der Fuehrer, (Beacon Press, Boston: 1944), pp. 19-36, especially 22-23. The activities of the Spartacist (KPD) in early 1919 were not the last attempts by the communists to seize power in Germany. However, in the two subsequent attempts, March 1921, and October 1923, they were brutally and eagerly suppressed by the Freikorps. For more detailed information and an analysis of the KPD during the Weimar Republic see, Angress, Werner T., Stillborn Revolution: The Communist Bid for Power in Germany, 1921-1923, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1963) passim; Carr, Edward Hallett, German-Soviet Relations Between the Two World Wars, (John Hopkins Press, Baltimore: 1951) passim; Eudin, Zenia Joukoff, and Fisher, Harold, eds., Soviet Russia and the West, 1920-1927, (Stanford University Press, Stanford: 1957) passim; Fisher, Ruth, Stalin and German Communism, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge: 1948) passim; Deutscher, Isaac, Stalin: A Political Biography, (Vintage Books, New York: 1949) passim; Nollau, Guenther, International Communism and World Revolution: History and Methods, (Frederick A. Praeger, New York: 1961) passim; and Ulam, Adam, Expansion and Coexistence: A History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1919-1967, (Frederick A. Praeger, New York: 1968) passim.

though the Freikorps were extremely effective in protecting the government from the Communists, an efficient military organization did not exist under the Freikorps system. In fact, relatively little organization existed at all. The Freikorps system was nothing more than a conglomeration of motley units varying widely in terms of strength, organization, and discipline. In March of 1919, the government attempted to rectify the organizational chaos of the Freikorps system by enacting the Provisional Reichswehr Law. This law, which created the Reichswehr, provided essentially for the incorporation of Freikorps units into the Reichswehr and attempted also to create an effective chain of command. Administrative responsibility for command and organizational effectiveness of the Army became the responsibility of the Reichswehrminister, unless the President of the Republic (legally the Commander-in-Chief) desired to exercise his authority.³⁸ For the most part, the law was intentionally vague regarding the numbers, control, and organization of the Reichswehr. The legislature and the government realized that the peace treaty would contain some military provisions, and, therefore, all that was required in the interim was a loose legal framework.³⁹ In fact, the legal framework was much looser than was anticipated, leaving the Freikorps system intact.

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Gordon, Harold J., The Reichswehr and the German Republic, 1919-1926, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1957), p. 55.

³⁹

Ibid, p. 54.

The ineffectiveness of the Provisional Reichswehr Law in creating an effective chain of command and a military organization responsible to the government is clearly demonstrated by the right-wing Kapp Putsch. By May, 1919, the extreme Left was virtually eliminated as a serious internal threat. Although the communists would attempt twice more to seize power, the last two revolutionary actions were even more unrealistic than Spartacist Week and only served to inflame the already virulent anti-communism of many Germans. With the threat of a communist takeover virtually eliminated, anti-governmental politics now fell to the Right and they were quite willing to raise their standard. All they needed was an issue.

They did not have long to wait, because on May 7, 1919, the Allies presented their terms for the conclusion of a peace treaty. During the period between the armistice and the presentation of the peace terms, the Germans labored under the illusion that, although they would have to concede something, the foundation of peace would be Wilson's Fourteen Points.⁴⁰ The actual terms of the Versailles Treaty were totally unexpected and their presentation was a domestic political bombshell, to say the least. The Treaty provided for a substantial loss of territory in the east, the creation of the infamous Polish Corridor and the demilitarization and occupation of the Rhineland and the Saarland. Economically, Germany was required to turn

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See above, this chapter.

over to the Allies a large amount of domestic wealth, including rolling stock and coal, as well as the payment of huge reparations. Militarily, she was forced to demobilize and was permitted only a small 100,000-man army, which was precluded from maintaining tanks, airplanes, and other types of weapons. In addition, the Germans were required to acknowledge total blame for the outbreak of the war and to accept the branding of the Kaiser and other war leaders as war criminals. Outrage over the Diktat⁴¹ was almost universal, but saner minds realized that further resistance was impossible and the Treaty had to be accepted regardless of its Carthaginian terms.

The acceptance of war guilt, the branding of the Kaiser as a war criminal, and the territorial and military provisions of the Treaty infuriated the Right, especially the Freikorps. Many had fought bravely and defended Germany in the war; and after the formal armistice, they defended their nation, once again, in the east against the Poles. Now, they had to accept the idea that Germany was responsible for the war and must cede territory which they twice defended. Furthermore, the provisions for the 100,000-man army jeopardized the careers of both officers and enlisted men. This only confirmed and reinforced their belief in the "stab in the back."⁴² The November

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See above Ludendorff quotation, p. 23-24.

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Ryder, pp. 203-205.

criminals not only betrayed the war effort, but now also sold out the fatherland. The acceptance of the treaty meant that Germany was morally reproachable, territorially truncated, and militarily defenseless. The acceptance and signing of the Treaty of Versailles was the underlying cause of the Kapp Putsch. By accepting the shameful Diktat, the "precarious and temporary alliance between the Free Corps and the civilian government was now finally and irreparably shattered."⁴³ What actually precipitated the attempted putsch was the government's effort to fulfill its treaty obligations and demobilize part of the Provisional Reichswehr. The behavior of some of these units in the face of their imminent demobilization shows clearly the ineffectiveness of the military chain of command. Regardless of the legal appearance of a clear military chain of command, when the government decided to attempt to exercise its legal rights and issue orders to the Reichswehr, it became quite clear that Germany did not have an army. Instead, it had a series of private armies.

The government specifically chose the Erhardt Brigade as one of the first units to be disbanded. It was known that this unit harbored anti-government attitudes and that Captain Erhardt (the Brigade's immediate commander), General von Luettwitz (the commander of the Berlin Military District), Wolfgang Kapp (an insignificant governmental official), General Ludendorf and others were members of the right-wing

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Waite, p. 142.

and anti-government National Union and conspiring against the government. As a result, the government desired the immediate elimination of this potential threat and issued demobilization orders. Not unexpectedly, the demobilization order was received by the conspirators as a signal for a march on Berlin.

When the government was informed of the impending coup, an emergency meeting was convened, a meeting which has been called "one of the most decisive conferences in the history of the Weimar Republic."⁴⁴ Some members of the government, primarily Defense Minister Noske, desired immediate action. Others were unsure of the proper course. Finally, the situation was crystallized by General Hans von Seeckt, who refused to commit Reichswehr units to the defense of the government. Seeckt knew that there were at least three factions within the Officer Corps: pro-Kapp, pro-government, and neutral. The use of military units in the defense of the regime would certainly destroy the solidarity of the Officer Corps, which was its most precious political commodity. Therefore, when questioned by Noske about the use of Reichswehr units against the Putschists, Seeckt replied:

"Troops do not fire upon troops! Do you, Herr Minister, have the intention of countenancing a battle before the Brandenburg Gate by troops who have fought side by side against the enemy.... I know the tragic consequences...and perhaps I alone know what combat would bring. If Reichswehr clubs down Reichswehr, then all comradeship in the Officer Corps is at an end. When that occurs, then the true catastrophe, which was avoided with so much difficulty on November 9, 1918, will

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Waite, p. 154.

really occur."⁴⁵

Since support from the Army was not forthcoming, the government had no alternative other than fleeing Berlin. However, before they did so, they proclaimed a general strike, and, since the leaders of the government were also leaders of the SPD, they were assured of a great deal of support for the strike. With the government gone, and the Army unwilling to oppose them, the Erhardt Brigade entered Berlin unopposed. However, they were totally unable to operate the government agencies and exercise the authority of the state. The governmental bureaucracy refused to aid them and the population was totally uncooperative. After five days, the attempted coup collapsed and the Erhardt Brigade marched sullenly out of Berlin.

The failure of the Kapp Putsch eliminated one right-wing political contender in Germany--the Freikorps. Now the way was clear for General von Seeckt to begin the task of reorganizing and molding the Reichswehr into an Army with very definite political goals. In addition, 1923 witnesses the emergence of a new and more dangerous right-wing element after the demise of Hitler's abortive Beer Hall Putsch. The Nazis, who were nothing more than a small insignificant extremist group in 1923 were, by 1930,

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Rabenau, Friedrich von, Seeckt-Aus seinem Leben, 1918-1936, (Hase & Koehler, Leipzig: 1940), pp. 221-222. On the surface, Seeckt was, no doubt, suggesting that civil war must be avoided at all costs. However, as his subsequent behavior demonstrates, he was well aware of Groener's goals and Seeckt attempted to fulfill these.

a major political force in Weimar politics. However, more will be said about this group later.

Illusory Stability--1921-1929

Although the government was saved from the clutches of the Freikorps by a general strike, it immediately found itself in a situation reminiscent of November, 1918. The general strike is, for the most part, a tactic of the Left. After the government called the general strike, the communists seized the opportunity to continue the strike and turn the situation to their advantage. The government, unable to end what they began, was left with no other alternative but to request, once again, the assistance of the generals. Seeckt, who only a few days before had refused to actively support the government, was not only requested to assist the government, but was, in fact, promoted from his position as Chief of the Military Administration (Chef der Truppenamt) to the position of Chief of the Military Command (Chef der Heeresleitung).⁴⁶ Seeckt

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According to the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was forced to disband the General Staff, and the Truppenamt was organized in its place. The organizational parallels, as well as the behavior and recruitment of the military leaders, suggests, however, that the change was cosmetic and the Truppenamt was the General Staff in disguise.

Comparison between the military organization of the Imperial Army and the Reichswehr:

Imperial Army	Reichswehr
Kaiser	Reichspräsident
Supreme Command (Oberst Heeresleitung)	Minister of Defense
First Quartermaster General	Chief of the Military Command
General Staff	Allgemeiner Truppenamt

immediately ordered the reactivation of all Freikorps commanders, and the Freikorps set off in hot pursuit of the extreme Left.⁴⁷

Once again the Republic was without sufficient respite to carry out a reorganization of the Army along democratic lines. Prior to the accession of Seeckt to the post of Chef der Heeresleitung, the Reichswehr was a legal fiction. During the period between 1919 and 1921, Germany did not have one unified military structure but a series of private armies recruited mostly from the Right.⁴⁸ Yet, it had always been the desire of former Imperial officers, especially General Groener, to reestablish the organization, efficiency and position of the Army within German society and politics. This was eventually achieved under the capable leadership of General von Seeckt. The Army was unable to participate in

<u>Section</u>	<u>Duty</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Duty</u>
I	Operation and concentration	I	Operations
II	Foreign Armies	II	Organization
III	Instruction	III	Foreign Armies
IV	Fortresses	IV	Transport

For a discussion of the organizational parallels between the Imperial Army and the Reichswehr see, Benoist-Mechin, Vol. I, pp. 126-127 and Goerlitz, Walter, History of the German General Staff, (Frederick A. Praeger, New York: 1953), pp. 217-218.

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While it is true that almost all military organizations demonstrate a certain amount of factionalism, still most maintain a semblance of order, efficiency, and command. The Reichswehr and military affairs in this period were completely chaotic, especially if this period is compared to the past unity and efficiency of the German Army. Also, see above, Chapter II.

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Waite, pp. 170-171. Also, see above, Chapter II.

politics as a coherent force prior to his work. It was the responsibility of Seeckt to realize Groener's goals, and in doing so he was not only eminently successful but he created the conditions which contributed greatly to the future demise of the Army and Germany.⁴⁹

General Hans von Seeckt, a distinguished former Imperial Officer, was deeply distressed over Germany's international and domestic political situation. He had witnessed thus far in his life Germany's achievements as a world power, and her total defeat and relegation to the status of a second-rate power. It was his desire to create the circumstances by which Germany could achieve once again her rightful position and status. However, when he came to the post of Chief of the Military Command, Germany was economically exhausted, geographically truncated, and militarily defenseless. Certainly, these were not attributes of a great power, and he sought to remedy what he could. Until such time as Germany achieved "great power" status, it did not matter what kind of government she had, so long as that government was capable of ruling. Anything (except communism) was better than the internal bickering and political chaos of the last four years. In addition, as far as Seeckt was concerned an army was essential to Germany, as it had been since the time of

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While discussing this point with Generalleutnant a.D. Wolf Graf von Baudissin, Baudissin related that he had the opportunity to speak with Seeckt just prior to the latter's death, and that Seeckt informed him that the worst thing he had done was to create the Reichswehr the way he did. Interview, January 6, 1976.

Frederick William. However, any army would not do, it had to be an army molded on the Prussian-Imperial tradition, because it was this type of army which enabled Prussia and Germany to achieve greatness. Thus, for Seeckt, military politics and organization, and international politics were his primary concern. It did not matter a great deal, at least temporarily, what kind of government ruled Germany, so long as it did not interfere with what he considered his exclusive areas. However, from the perspective of the Republic, military policy was of great importance, yet the Republican government was ineffective and powerless to alter events.

When Seeckt assumed the position of Chief of the Military Command after the Kapp Putsch, his major responsibility was the reorganization of the Reichswehr in accordance with the Versailles Treaty. Although he was not particularly enamored with the outcome of the First World War and the military provisions of the Versailles Treaty, he was realistic enough to appreciate that Germany was not in a position, at least temporarily, to alter the situation. In addition, he was shrewd enough to understand that the military provisions of the Treaty, if used correctly, gave him an excellent opportunity to create a military organization with a military and political potential far superior to what its size might suggest.⁵⁰

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For a discussion of the influence of recruitment on military politics, see above, Chapter II.

The Versailles Treaty limited the size of the German Army to 100,000 men, of which 4,000 were officers, and a Navy of 15,000 men including 1,500 officers. Since the size of the Army was limited, the type of soldier recruited was of particular importance, and the Army could be highly selective because of the large manpower pool available. Seeckt saw to it that only the best educated and most efficient officers and men were permitted to serve in the Reichswehr. While paying close attention to the letter of the Treaty, Seeckt, in effect, used the provisions of the Treaty to eliminate those elements he considered undesirable. Special attention was paid to the requirement that former officers with General Staff training would have first priority in the Army because they were considered the best trained and qualified. However, the result was that the personnel recruited were mostly members of the aristocracy and upper middle classes.

The most immediate factor preventing Seeckt from achieving his goal of a tightly disciplined and well-organized military organization was the Freikorps system. This system of individual units, with their total allegiance to their leader, prevented any centralized organization and discipline. Although Seeckt did not support the government during the Kapp Putsch, and probably harbored sympathies favorable to the goals of the Putschists, he realized that harebrained schemes such as this were detrimental to the Army and to Germany, since both needed a period of relative tranquility. Consequently, the Freikorps system had to be

eliminated and a disciplined army created. This Seeckt proceeded to do almost immediately after the attempted Putsch because "a new structure needs a solid foundation,"⁵¹ and the Freikorps were totally undependable.

In organizing his efficient and disciplined army, Seeckt employed "strict and exceptionally stiff qualifications for acceptance as an officer."⁵² In order for a candidate to qualify as an officer, he had to demonstrate competence in technical military matters as well as present "proof of thorough intellectual preparation, namely a certificate acceptable for entrance to a university (Reife fuer die Universitaet)."⁵³ These requirements gave first priority to former General Staff officers who had attended the higher military schools and were the best educated and technically qualified officers in the Army. In addition, the recruitment policy realized General Groener's desire to incorporate former General Staff officers in the reconstituted German Army.⁵⁴ Finally, the recruitment policy of the Reichswehr, under the leadership of Seeckt, gave particular preference to the old aristocratic military families. In addition to the administrative units of the

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Seeckt, Generaloberst Hans von, Die Reichswehr, (R. Kittler Verlag, Leipzig: 1933), p. 15.

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Demeter, p. 103.

⁵³

Ibid, p. 103.

⁵⁴

See above, Chapter III.
Groener to Noske.

Letter from

High Command and the military administration, the Reichswehr was organized into two group commands, six infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions.⁵⁵ Of the forty-five senior officers who held various positions in this group from 1921-1930, thirty-two were of the old military families such as Leeb, Rundstedt and Stuelpnagel, while only thirteen officers were of non-aristocratic backgrounds.⁵⁶ Similarly, the number of aristocratic officers in the Reichswehr was approximately twenty-five percent.⁵⁷

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Zapf, Wolfgang, Wandlung der deutsche Elite: Ein Zukulationsmodell deutscher Fuehrungsgruppen, (R. Piper & Co. Verlag, Muenchen: 1966), p. 89.

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Ibid, Table VIII, "Generalitaet."

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According to Demeter, in 1920, 21% of the officers were nobles, in 1926, 20.5% and in 1932, 23.8%. Wolfgang Saurer cites the same statistics but adds that the aristocracy comprised only 14% of the total population, "Die Reichswehr," in Bracher, p. 258. Herbert Rosinski claims that in 1913, 25% of the officers came from the traditional aristocratic officer families and "no less than 67% in 1930..." p. 185. Rosinski's statistics are somewhat excessive. However, when the recruitment statistics of the officers who were the sons of officers and sons of the educated and landowning groups are considered, the numbers increase significantly. In 1926, 44.34% of the officers were the sons of regular and reserve officers and 41.51% were the sons of the higher officials, civil and military, doctors and professionals. Demeter, p. 54. These two groups combined account for 85.85% of the Officer Corps. If one adds to these statistics the fact that these groups plus the aristocracy were the leading groups in Imperial Germany, and the fact that special preference in the Reichswehr was given to former Imperial officers, the cumulative effect is the same--the Reichswehr was a highly anti-democratic, though militarily efficient organization. "Compared with the last years before 1914 (the) recruitment figures for the Reichswehr show(s)...(t)he lower classes, which contributed very few young officers even before the war, had become rare to the point of vanishing," Demeter, p. 53. Clearly the effect of the recruitment procedures was to prevent SPD and other supporters of democracy from entering the Reichswehr.

The recruitment policy outlined by Seeckt permitted the simultaneous realization of two important goals. By recruiting the most intelligent and the most competent officers available, Seeckt, in the tradition of General Staff officers such as Scharnhorst, the Elder Moltke and Schlieffen,⁵⁸ was able to fashion a conservative though innovative military organization.⁵⁹ Although Seeckt paid close attention to the pattern of recruitment into the Reichswehr, this was not his exclusive concern. While recruitment patterns are important in determining military politics, the socialization into the military organization is equally, if not more important.⁶⁰ Seeckt paid close attention to the fundamental organization and political ideas of the Reichswehr. Seeckt was well aware that those persons selected would be predisposed, for the most part, to the type of military he desired to create.

Whatever else Seeckt might have been, he was a conservative molded in the school of the great General Staff. Given this type of background, plus the fact that, historically, Germany reached her political zenith under

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Holborn, Hajo, "Moltke and Schlieffen," in Germany and Europe: Historical Essays, (Doubleday, Garden City: 1970), passim. Also, Demeter, pp. 105-106.

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Like all organizations, the Reichswehr had both conservative and innovative members in terms of military questions. Although this was the case, conditions were present which allowed the development of important innovations in both tactics and weaponry. See Guderian, Heinz, Panzer Leader, (Ballantine Books, New York: 1957), pp 7-28.

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See above, Chapter II, for a discussion of the influence of values and recruitment on military politics.

the domination and leadership of Prussia and the Prussian military, it is small wonder that he desired to ultimately reestablish a similar political order. Since Germany had become politically important under the tutelage of the Imperial Regime with its emphasis on the military, Seeckt concluded that something was seriously wrong with the internal political organization of the Reich, because now she was a second or third-rate power governed by a democratic regime. In fact, as far as Seeckt was concerned, the experiment in democracy was doomed to failure because of the political traditions of Germany. According to him, the Weimar Republic was essentially an attempt to organize a democratic regime in Germany modeled after the British parliamentary system. It neglected to take into account the fact that Germany lacked the British historical experience.⁶¹ Therefore, if Germany was to be governed successfully, she must return to the traditional governmental forms. "History teaches us to differentiate between what is ephemeral and superficial and what is of everlasting worth,"⁶² and since "(t)he tradition of the earth is primeval, where different generations, known and unknown, are joined, live and build themselves in different forms out of the same soil,"⁶³ therefore, "we propose to derive

⁶¹ Seeckt, Hans von, The Future of the German Empire, (E. P. Dutton, New York: 1930), p. 22.

⁶² Ibid, p. 22.

⁶³ Seeckt, Die Reichswehr, p. 7.

our form of government from German idiosyncrasies, our future from the German past."⁶⁴ According to Seeckt, German history was a process of incorporating and dominating second- and third-rate German states by Prussia, the most powerful German state. Prussia was ruled by the Emperor with the aid of the aristocratically dominated Army,⁶⁵ and it was Seeckt's opinion, therefore, that all truly patriotic Germans must attempt to reestablish traditional forms of government. In addition, any attempt to emasculate Prussia, such as the Versailles Treaty and the constitutional democracy, could not be condoned because they were contrary to history.⁶⁶

However, Seeckt was sufficiently realistic to understand that conditions were not ripe for a dramatic seizure of power and reconstitution of the Imperial regime. This was his major criticism of the Kappists. He was well aware of the fact that the army had to live, at least temporarily, with the democratic regime, until such time as it was strong enough to realize its goals. In order to realize his goal of an effective army, both militarily and politically, Seeckt forged the Reichswehr into a Fuehrerarmee or Leader Army. In the first place, the Reichswehr became a small cadre army, of highly trained and skilled profess-

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Seeckt, The Future, p. 26.

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See above, Chapter I.

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Seeckt, The Future, pp. 98-101.

ional soldiers, capable of training and leading a rapidly expanding national army.⁶⁷ Secondly, since it was a highly disciplined and professional army, the Reichswehr would not only be under the effective military control of its leaders, but would also be an effective political instrument in the hands of the military leaders. In order to insure his control of the military, Seeckt demanded that the Officer Corps adopt a strict code of military conduct. In addition, although the members of the Reichswehr were required to pledge their allegiance to the Republic, Seeckt sought to undermine and minimize this. As far as Seeckt was concerned, the officer was required to base all his activities in terms of service to the state, and not necessarily to the particular regime in power at the moment. It was their duty to devote all their energies to creating the conditions for German power,⁶⁸ and therefore, each officer should pursue his duties in the Prussian tradition of service to the state.⁶⁹ What Seeckt required was the transfer of the allegiance of the military from the Emperor to the state, where the state "embraces far more and connotes something other than the conception of a state. It does not stand for the institutions of today."⁷⁰ In Imperial Germany, the monarchy represented

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Goelitz, p. 223.

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See Breit, Chapter IV, "Die 'Seeckt Schule'", Section ii, Die Grundlagen fuer die Pflichtauffassung der Reichswehroffiziere, pp. 144-149.

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Ibid, pp. 145-146, 149.

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Seeckt, The Future, p. 23.

the state and the Army swore allegiance to the Kaiser.⁷¹ After Seeckt had defined where the allegiance of the officers lay, "the attitude of the officers (toward the Republic) was problematic."⁷²

With regard to recruitment and ideology, Seeckt was able to create the Reichswehr in the image of the Imperial Army--a technologically efficient organization in service to the state. However, one problem still remained. The role of the Army and the Officer Corps in Imperial Germany rested on the relationship between the Officer Corps and the Kaiser. Under the Weimar Constitution, Germany was without a monarch for the first time in its history, which made the commitment of the Officer Corps to serve the state an insufficient foundation for the reestablishment of its former role. Yet, Seeckt was able to overcome this problem, at least temporarily.

The military establishment which Seeckt created was molded in the Prussian tradition of tight discipline, where sub-alterns were under the authority of their superiors. This meant that the Army, as a whole, was under the control of its senior officers, of whom the Chief of the Army Command was the most important. Therefore, Seeckt, in his position as Chief of the Army Command, was capable of

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Endres, Franz Carl, "Soziologische Structure und ihr entsprechende Ideologien des deutschen Officierkorps vor dem Weltkrieg," Aerchiv Fuer Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, (1927). Endres labelled the Imperial Regime a "Ritterzeit," pp. 286-287.

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Breit, p. 141.

interpreting the role of the Army and the meaning of "service to the state." As far as he was concerned, service meant paying close attention to one's duties and unquestioningly following the directives of superiors. Therefore, in the eyes of many officers, Seeckt became their leader and, in effect, a surrogate Emperor.⁷³ As a result, Seeckt successfully created a Fuehrurarmee capable of rapid expansion, and, due to both its beliefs and recruitment, an important political actor under the leadership of the senior military commanders.

In addition to paying close attention to the organization and ideology of the Reichswehr, Seeckt realized that in order for the Army to reestablish its previous political status, parliamentary control had to be eliminated because it was democratic, and democracy was an alien idea in Germany. With the demise of Noske as Defense Minister after the Kapp Putsch, Dr. Otto Gessler became Defense Minister. With his appointment, the Army had a pliable figure as Defense Minister and a man who was quite willing to accept military directives

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Kehr, pp. 160-161. This was transferred to General von Hindenburg when he was elected Reichspräsident in 1925. Emke, Horst, "Militaerischer Oberbefehl und Parlamentarische Kontrolle," Zeitschrift fuer Politik, (1954), pp. 343-344. Gessler evaluated the influence of Seeckt in the following way: "(T)he support of the troops is not attached to their political minister; it depends, in the first place, on its military leader.... General von Seeckt as Chief of Staff was a political factor of the first magnitude." Gessler, Otto, Reichswehrpolitik in der Weimarer Zeit, (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart: 1958), p. 287.

and defend the interests of the military in Parliament.⁷⁴ Since Gessler was so accommodating, Seeckt was able to reverse the roles of Chief of the Army Command and Reichswehr Minister. Instead of the Reichswehr Minister controlling the Army, the Army (through Seeckt) controlled the Reichswehr Minister. Furthermore, Seeckt, was able to maneuver himself into the position where he was able to circumvent the control of both the Reichswehr Minister and the Reichschancellor, and directly present his views to the President. Curiously, this process began in an atmosphere of trust between Ebert and Seeckt.⁷⁵ However, when Hindenburg was elected President, this became so institutionalized that it was equivalent to the direct access (Immediatevortrag)⁷⁶ of the Imperial Regime.⁷⁷ As a result of his political and military activities, Seeckt, as the leading figure in the creation of the Reichswehr, was successful in creating an army in the Imperial image. By circumventing parliamentary and, therefore, democratic control, and securing direct access to the Chief of State, the Army became one of the

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Carsten, p. 122.

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Saurer, p. 250.

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Immediatevortrag was the right of Imperial Officers to have an audience with the Emperor without the presence of the Defense Minister or the Imperial Chancellor.

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In fact, the political behavior of Seeckt closely parallels the behavior of the General Staff during the constitutional crisis of the 1870's, when the Imperial Reichstag attempted to assert parliamentary control over the Army. See Craig, pp. 219-232.

most important political forces in Germany.⁷⁸

1929-1933

The year 1929 was a bleak one for Germany. In that year, Stresemann, one of Germany's ablest leaders, died, and the depression struck. The depression gave the National Socialists the ammunition through which they rose from a minor party to a mass party, and which eventually catapulted Adolf Hitler into the Chancellorship. Finally, it began the period of presidential cabinets--first Bruening, then Schleicher, Papen, and finally, Hitler. In short, this was the period when German democracy had reached its most crucial crisis, one that would pave the way for the seizure of power by the National Socialists. Under the provisions of the Weimar Constitution, the Reichspraesident was responsible for summoning and dissolving the Reichstag, and under Article 48, he could declare a state of emergency and rule by Presidential decree. When Friedrich Ebert was Reichspraesident, the German nation was assured that Article 48 would be used selectively and in the best interests of democracy. After the death of Ebert, General Paul von Hindenburg was elected Reichspraesidnet. With Hindenburg, a monarchist and antidemocrat, in office, there was no such

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For a discussion of the role of Seeckt in recreating the Army as a state within a state from not only the Marxist perspective but also from the understandable Russian fear of German militarism, see Jerussalimski, A. S., Der Deutsche Imperialismus: Geschichte und Gegenwart, (Dietz Verlag, Berlin (East): 1968), p. 670.

assurance that Article 48 would be used in the best interests of German democracy. In 1930, when Germany was in the throes of a severe economic crisis and a rising extremist movement, a military triumvirate held important positions in the government. General von Hindenburg was Reichspraesident, General von Schleicher was Chief of Staff, and General Groener was Interior Minister. General Schleicher was determined to rid the Reich of parliamentary government, which, in his opinion, was leading the Reich to ruin. Also, Hindenburg allowed his advisors to push him further along the road to authoritarian and extra-parliamentary experiments. In March, 1930, Hindenburg, advised by Schleicher, appointed the Bruening Cabinet. The Reichspraesident threatened to dissolve the Reichstag if they did not comply, and in July, 1930, the Reichstag was dissolved for not supporting Bruening.⁷⁹ So began the authoritarian experiments of Bruening, von Papen and Schleicher. The vicious circle of Reichstag elections that started with the Bruening government, in an attempt to gain the support of the Reichstag, strengthened the National Socialists. In almost every election, the Nazis gained Reichstag seats, while the Democratic parties lost ground. This further eliminated the Reichstag as a viable institution, because the parliamentary game for the Nazis was one which attempted to sabotage the workings of that institution.

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Bracher, Karl Dietrich, The German Dictatorship, (Praeger Publishers, New York: 1970), p. 172.

When Bruening could not obtain Reichstag support, Schleicher had von Hindenburg dismiss the Bruening government and install von Papen. When von Papen did not achieve the desired goals, a semi-authoritarian government that was free of parliamentary problems, Schleicher had von Papen dismissed and himself installed. Von Papen, wise to Schleicher's game, worked to sabotage him.

Throughout the entire episode, the Nazis did not limit their activities to parliamentary politics. The S. A. was active in creating street disorders and other acts of violence and terror. It became clear that they were a threat to the Reich. At one point, Hindenburg, Schleicher, and Groener felt that the S.A. must be suppressed.⁸⁰ Groener devised a series of plans to accomplish this, but vacillated in carrying them out. He hoped that a breakthrough could be achieved on the diplomatic front which would lessen the appeal of the Nazis. This did not happen, and Groener was forced to act. He was able to convince the old Field Marshal von Hindenburg that a decree suppressing the S. A. was necessary. At this point, Schleicher was able to dissuade Hindenburg from issuing the decree, and convinced the Reichspräsident to dismiss Groener. It was Schleicher's opinion that "(i)f the Nazis did not exist, it would be necessary to

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Wheeler-Bennet, The Nemesis of Power, p. 259.

invent them.⁸¹ He believed that Hitler could be divorced from the National Socialist movement and the movement dominated by the Army.

According to Schleicher's analysis, the Army would be the crucial factor in the confrontation with the Nazis. If Hitler was given cabinet posts and eventually dominated the government, the Army in the end would dominate the Nazis. This in effect would be the crowning point in the politics of the German Army during the Weimar Republic. They would have destroyed parliamentary and republican government in Germany and substituted a government more to their liking: a strong and authoritarian government would have put the Army back into its traditional role as the primary institution in the Reich.⁸² Needless to say, General Schleicher miscalculated. The Nazis, not the Army, won the last battle. But Schleicher was not alone in underestimating the strength of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi movement. Many people, both in Germany and abroad, underestimated Hitler.

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Matthias, Erich, Introduction, in Matthias, Erich ed., Path to Dictatorship, 1918-1933: Ten Essays, (Anchor Books, Garden City: 1966), p. 10. In June of 1934, the Nazis, perhaps, suspected Schleicher of trying to uninvent them and they eliminated him.

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According to Manfred Messerschmidt, "(T)he soldiers desired, as did many others, the strengthening of the military power of the Reich, to eliminate the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty...the consolidation of domestic politics...and a new order in which military thought should (sollte) enjoy universal recognition." Messerschmidt, Manfred, Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat: Zeit der Indoktrination, (R.v. Decker's Verlag, G. Schenck, Hamburg: 1969), p. 1.

Democracy in Weimar

There is more to understanding why the Army was able to accomplish its goals than pointing to the Groener-Ebert phone call, which enabled the Army to gain a foothold in the difficult process of realizing its own political goals. At the outset, the government was dependent on the Army for support, but that is only a small part of the story. The infant Republic was challenged at birth and had to move from one ad hoc solution to another. Throughout the life of the Republic, the government was unable to formulate a clear policy concerning the Reichswehr. From the beginning, the Republic did not have the support of the majority of the people. The Revolution of 1918 must be viewed in this light. For the most part, the Germans did not want to overthrow the Kaiser; they simply wanted to end the war. Driven by considerations of immediacy rather than a long term outlook, they sacrificed their Kaiser for peace. Yet, they did not support the type of government which resulted from their actions. After only 18 months of statehood, and only 10 months after the promulgation of the Constitution, the founders and supporters (SPD) of the new Republic became a minority, never again to achieve a Reichstag majority.⁸³ Throughout the life of the Republic, the country was governed by either unpopular minority cabinets, by internally weak Grand Coalitions, or by extra-parliamentary

authoritarian presidential cabinets. The average life span of the twenty cabinets of the Weimar Republic was eight and one-half months. Furthermore, the Social Democrats, the founders of the Republic, were outside the government, in opposition for almost 10 years. If democracy was to have a fighting chance in Germany during the Weimar Republic, it was imperative that the SPD cooperate and participate actively in the government.

More importantly, however, the high turnover of governments played into the hands of the High Command. Governments were not in power sufficiently long enough to accomplish much. If they assumed power with a specific military program, they were either never in power long enough to see it through (i.e., SPD), or the government was threatened and needed the Army for support.

For the most part, the military was never seriously threatened by the Republic. Therefore, the military did not have to seize the government in the 1920's, but could work with it and through it. The Army needed time and tranquility to rebuild and strengthen itself. If it seized the reins of government, that would have precipitated an internal crisis. But more importantly, it might have been catastrophic on the international scene. Perhaps France would not have tolerated a military takeover and a resurgent Germany as her European rival. After all, the French never hesitated to occupy parts of Germany (Ruhr, 1923), if she was dissatisfied with the policies of the German Republic. If one morning the French government

found the German military in power, she would have an excuse to finish the job started at Versailles. That is why von Seeckt decided to work with, but was not committed to, the Republic. The Seecktian concept of the Army being above politics (neutral) was, in reality, a benevolent neutrality. Implicit in the Reichswehr politics under Seeckt was, at the most, a seizure of power; and the very least, the military acting as the power behind the throne. This would have to wait for a time when the internal and external situations were conducive. Von Seeckt was never involved with the final phase; he was removed in 1926. But his onetime protege, Kurt von Schleicher, attempted to see the politics of the German Army through to its final conclusion.

We have discussed above the situation with regard to those factions that made numerous challenges to the Weimar Republic, throughout its life. Now, we must inquire into the state of democracy in Germany in an effort to understand how strong democracy was in fighting off these repeated attacks. In the first place, it is difficult to argue that in the elections of the Weimar era, save the 1919 National Assembly election, that the German electorate made a clear choice for democracy. In the election of 1919, the three parties of the so-called Weimar Coalition (SPD, DDP, Center) received a three-quarters majority (76.2%).⁸⁴ However, throughout the period from 1919 to 1924, the

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Bracher, The German Dictatorship, p. 74.

democrats consistently lost ground. In 1919 and 1920, the SPD lost one-third of its seats in the Reichstag. In the election of 1920, the Weimar Coalition shrank from 76% to 47%.

The trend continued, and by 1924 it was clear that the electorate was deserting the pillars of the Republic and that the democratic parties were in retreat.⁸⁵

Clearly, the political situation in Germany in the Weimar period corresponds most closely to the second hypothetical situation discussed in Chapter II. While the German Army did not attempt a coup d'etat, it was eminently successful politically. On the one hand, the political environment was incapable of successfully domesticating and organizing a military that would accept and support the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic. And on the other hand, the military was left on its own to develop, through shrewd leadership and recruitment, an organization founded on anti-democratic principles.

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Bracher, The German Dictatorship, p. 123.

CHAPTER IV

PYRRHIC VICTORY: THE NATIONAL SOCIALISTS AND THE MILITARY

The rise of National Socialism in Germany is, in the final analysis, tied inextricably to the degeneration of the Weimar Republic. Without the confused and tumultuous political atmosphere present in Germany during the inter-war years, Hitler would have been denied the conditions necessary for the growth and development of his fanatical, nationalistic and destructive political skills. From the very beginning the Weimar Republic was on the defensive, and it suffered numerous attacks from elements of both the Left and the Right.¹ The Left, though it ultimately manifested its political weakness, attempted on a number of occasions to replace the republic with a Communist regime. The non-military elements of the Right,

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See above, Chapter III.

though at the outset equally ineffective, contributed their share to anti-republican activities during the Weimar era. Although the efforts of the Right initially went unrewarded, the political atmosphere remained conducive to its radical activities. Numerous elements of German society continued to remain not only unresponsive but, in many cases, downright hostile to the Republic. Furthermore, the republican regime, by demonstrating its governmental incapacity, contributed in no small measure to the lack of support for democratic politics. All that remained necessary for a successful right-wing attack on the Republic was the emergence of a properly led and organized group, capable of capitalizing on the prevailing discontent and unifying large segments of German society into a coherent political force.

Within this political atmosphere, Adolf Hitler began his active political life. Returning to Munich after the war, Hitler, along with many other veterans, was confronted with an extremely confused and fluid political situation.² Not only had the Wittelsbachs abdicated, but Kurt Eisner's socialist regime was in power. Clearly, politics in Bavaria, like politics throughout the Reich, was in chaos. Beginning his political career as an agent for the Reichswehr, Hitler soon discovered others who held extremist views. Not one to miss an opportunity, he quickly became active in right-wing nationalist politics.

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See above, Chapter III.

The Development of the NSDAP

At the time of Hitler's return to Munich, the Bavarian Right was in disarray. The existence of numerous, competitive groups prevented effective political action by the Right. One of the many Bavarian right-wing associations was the fledgling German Workers Party (Deutsche Arbeiterpartei--DAP). This group, founded in January 1919, was in the beginning nothing more than a discussion club. Soon after its founding, however, a struggle developed between the Party's two co-founders, Anton Drexler and Karl Harrer. Harrer was content with allowing the Party to remain a simple discussion club. Drexler was adamantly opposed to this strategy. As far as he was concerned, Harrer's strategy would produce a moribund group. Drexler believed that the only way the Party could survive and prosper was through the popularizing of its ideas, the recruitment of new members, and the transformation of the Party into a dynamic organization. Although Drexler's views ultimately prevailed, the Party still face a major shortcoming. If the Party desired the creation of a dynamic organization and the attraction of new members, it had to develop some means of publicizing its views and distinguishing itself from the other right-wing organizations. However, none of the original leaders of the Party were effective propagandists. At this pivotal time in the development of the German Workers Party, Hitler became a member and entered the

Party leadership.³ Hitler contributed his oratorical and organizational talents to the Party, but at the same time the Party was developing to the point where it could be useful to Hitler.⁴ By February 1920, Hitler began the process of transforming this "timid, static group of club members into a noisy, publicity-conscious party of struggle."⁵

In February 1920, the DAP announced its first political program, which contained the germ of the future Nazi ideology. For the most part the program called for the politics of negation. Among other things, it was a program against the Jews, capitalists, Marxists and the "November Criminals." However, the more positive aspects of the program, though less specific, did call for policies which would protect the common man. Even though the program was vague and concentrated on the negative aspects of post-war Germany, it was, nevertheless, very shrewd. By presenting its political ideology in this fashion, the Party successfully united the two most important political ideas of the Nineteenth Century (nationalism and socialism), and thereby set the ideo-

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By 1921, the older, ineffective leaders of the Party were "replaced by a group of young extremists who were personally committed to Hitler." Noakes, Jeremy, The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony, 1921-1933, (Oxford University Press, London: 1971), p. 15.

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Orlow, Dietrich, The History of the Nazi Party, Vol. I, 1919-1933, (University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh: 1969), pp. 11, 13.

⁵
Fest, Hitler, p. 120.

logical foundation for the Party's eventual exploitation of many of the issues in Weimar politics.⁶

Although the Party developed its organizational and programmatic foundations during 1919 and 1920, it did not become a visible force in national politics until after the abortive Beer Hall Putsch of November 8, 1923. Prior to the ill-fated coup, Hitler and the Party were merely one of a number of politically active right-wing groups. However, at the first Party Congress in January 1923, Hitler began to emerge as an important factor in radical politics. Capitalizing on the success of the Congress, Hitler soon became head of the Working Group of Patriotic Combat Leagues, an association founded by Ernst Roehm and supported by some Freikorps units.⁷ Using these groups and the NSDAP as his political base, Hitler began his rise toward the political leadership of the radical nationalist movement.

In late 1923, conditions seemed most favorable for a seizure of power by the radical Right. Germany was humiliated once more by the French occupation of the Ruhr and the nation was in the midst of another one of its chronic economic crises. Furthermore, the German Right now had before it the example of Mussolini and the Italian

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The connection between nationalism and socialism was made stronger when, in February 1920, the Party changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP).

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Bracher, Dictatorship, pp. 114-115. For a discussion of the Freikorps, see above, Chapter III.

Fascists as a technique of the seizure of power. For many German nationalists, the time had come for the "March on Berlin", the removal of the "November Criminals", and the rebirth of the German nation.⁸

8

Hitler did not embark on his putschist activities in isolation from other right-wing groups. At this time, in fact, there was a movement afoot in Germany for a National Dictatorship whose prime candidate was General von Seeckt. This idea arose because of the separatist tendencies in the Rhineland and Bavaria, and the conflicts between the governments of Saxony and Thuringia with the national government. Seeckt refused to support these tendencies and did not participate in this venture. Regarding coups Seeckt remarked, "Gentlemen, no one in Germany can make a Putsch except myself. And I am telling you, I'm not making one." As far as he was concerned, the only way that the form of government could change was through a legal mechanism. This would prevent possible civil war and insure the strength of the national government. This is one reason why Hitler had no alternative but to choose the legal way. The Reichswehr was not against him as such; they were against his tactics in 1923. By 1933, not only had the Party grown and adopted a legalistic approach but the conservative Nationalists had demonstrated their political bankruptcy. Consequently, they had only three choices, two of which were completely unpalatable. They could have continued the republican regime, acquiesced to a communist one, or bring the National Socialists to power in the hopes of controlling them. Hansen, Reimer, pp. 12-14. See also, note p. 12.

According to Georges Bonnin, there was little disagreement between the Army and Hitler. In fact, many conservatives considered him a useful ally because of his skills in oratory and propaganda. What Seeckt and the Reichswehr did object to was the tactics of 1923 and what appeared to be a separatist putsch. However, as early as 1923, Seeckt viewed Hitler as a patriot, as a man who stood against the Versailles Treaty, and as an anti-communist. Bonnin, Georges, "Le Lecons du Putsch de Hitler de 1923," in A Century of Conflict: Essays for A. J. P. Taylor, Martin Gilbert, ed., (Atheneum, New York: 1967), pp. 202, 209, 212. Hitler certainly prepared his ground well after 1923, so that by 1933 he became the logical choice of the German Right. "To some people on the right, such as nationalist kingmaker Alfred Hugenberg, the Nazis were a godsend, for they could supposedly be used." Herzstein, Robert Edwin, Adolf Hitler and the German Trauma, 1913-1945: An Interpretation of the Nazi Phenomenon, (Capricorn Books, New York: 1974), p. 73.

Technically, the coup was a complete failure. Its leaders were so sure that the nation, as a mass, would rise in support of their actions, that they failed to develop a plan for the coup nor did they attempt to solidify their support. Furthermore, it was extremely naive to concentrate activities in Munich, when the seat of government was in Berlin.⁹ Consequently, the attempted coup collapsed in the face of serious resistance by local authorities.¹⁰

Although the coup was a technical failure, it turned out to be a political masterstroke. Because of his participation in the abortive Putsch and his subsequent trial for treason, Hitler emerged from the obscurity of Bavarian politics into national prominence. In the dock for his participation in the event, Hitler was able to turn the judicial proceedings into a platform for his propaganda. He did not deny his complicity. Instead, he turned the tables on the prosecution, by claiming that the actions of the "November Criminals" caused him to act in this way. He was not a traitor but a true patriot. Indeed, if anyone had participated in treasonous actions it was the government of the "November Criminals."

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For a detailed analysis of the technical aspects of a coup d' etat, see Goodspeed, The Conspirators.

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For a discussion of the events surrounding the Putsch, see Bracher, Dictatorship, pp. 108-121; Bullock, Alan, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny, (Harper and Row, New York: 1962), pp. 100-120; Heiden, pp. 183-209; and Fest, Hitler pp. 182-199.

Therefore, not only was he a great German patriot, more importantly he was a "Great Man" destined to come to power and as dictator lead Germany to greatness.¹¹ The audacity of his attack, coupled with the acquiescence of the court resulted in an exceedingly light sentence (5 years imprisonment) on a charge of treason.¹² Perhaps more important, however, was the fact that the trial was given widespread coverage by the press, thus insuring a large audience for Hitler's propaganda.

Once in prison, Hitler was treated very well. Being a prominent politician, he was not treated as a common prisoner but as an honored guest and was not required to follow the normal prison routine. He was given the cell of his choice, permitted visitors when he desired, and allowed a separate table for himself and his followers in the prison dining hall. Since he was not required to conform to the normal prison life, he found ample time to contemplate his political future and discuss politics with his prison retinue. Furthermore, because of his forced absence from active political life, he was able

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"Hitler (was a man) overwhelmed by his mission, by the grandeur of his plans. I think of our projects, of the hours over the drafting table, of our tours up and down Germany.... I think part of his success rested on the impudence with which he pretended to be a great man." Speer, Albert, Spandau: The Secret Diaries, (Macmillan Publishing Co., New York: 1976), pp. 14, 33.

12

In fact, Hitler spent only one year in prison, which lends credence to Konrad Heiden's remark that "(a)n unpunished Putsch is a victorious Putsch." Heiden, Der Fuehrer, p. 195.

to devote some of his time to the writing of Mein Kampf, an exposition of his political philosophy. In the course of this rambling and superficial book, Hitler presents his view of the world as nothing more than a jungle, where only the strong will survive and triumph. According to this perverted Social Darwinistic idea, society is constantly struggling against forces which undermine and sap the strength of a race (VOLK). If the nation and the Volk are to survive and be triumphant, they must recognize the means which will assure victory: a leader who knows who the enemies are and who is capable of dealing effectively with them and a party which will be the leader's faithful tool in these bitter conflicts.¹³ Hitler, the Great Man, knows the enemy. It is the Jews.¹⁴ All of the problems facing Germany (Marxism, economic crises, parliamentarianism) are the direct result of the Jewish conspiracy to rule the world. Therefore, since the world is faced with an impending catastrophe, brought about by the Jews, he and his party are destined to lead Germany and the western world out of the crisis of civilization into the new and progressive world of National Socialism.¹⁵

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Hitler, Mein Kampf, (Houghton Mifflin, Co., Boston: 1943), pp. 66-68, 377.

14

Ibid, pp. 61-65. See also Heiden, Chapter II, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

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In many respects, Mein Kampf is clearly in the mainstream of much of the literature of the Weimar Era. See for example Gay, Peter, Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider, (Harper and Row, New York: 1968), and Laqueur,

In addition to writing and discussing politics, Hitler paid little attention to Party problems while in prison.¹⁶ And in his absence, the Party all but disintegrated. As the fortunes of the Party deteriorated, members sent numerous entreaties to Hitler pleading for advice and direction. These were consistently ignored. Three factors seem to be the cause of his calculated rebuff of Party communications. In the first place, the political atmosphere had changed in the period immediately following the ill-fated Putsch. The economic crisis had subsided and the Republic began a period of relative stability.¹⁷ As a result of the development of this apparent stability, the Republic was now freed from the radical activity which was the hallmark of its early years. Secondly, Hitler's participation in the Putsch and his subsequent trial

Walter, Weimar: A Cultural History, (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York: 1974). For many, the Weimar period was one of the bleakest in German history. As Joachim Fest suggests, the atmosphere in Germany was one of "morose grayness." Conditions were present in Germany which were receptive to the man, the ideas and the movement. Albert Speer commented on Hitler's appeal as follows: "I think that I am more typical of one side of the regime than all these repulsive bourgeois revolutionaries. And in fact it does seem to me as though the Himmlers, Bormanns, Streichers, and their ilk cannot explain Hitler's success with the German people. Hitler was sustained by the idealism and devotion of people like myself. We who actually were the least inclined to think selfishly were the ones who made him possible. Criminals and their accomplices are always around; they explain nothing." Speer, Spandau, p. 8. See also, Fest, Hitler, Prologue, "Hitler and Historical Greatness."

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Noakes, Nazi Party in Lower Saxony, pp. 41-56.

17

Bracher, Dictatorship, p. 133.

catapulted him into the forefront of radical politics. By paying little attention to Party developments and refusing to direct Party matters, Hitler was able to maintain his stature within the movement. If he was the "Great Man" as he claimed, then he was absolutely indispensable to the National Socialist cause. However, if the Party was able to survive and flourish in his absence, then he was not the indispensable "Great Man." His neglect of the Party reinforced, therefore, the connection between his personal success and the fortunes of National Socialism. Finally, the period of imprisonment enabled Hitler to reassess his political strategy. The failure of the Beer Hall Putsch demonstrated the failure of extra-constitutional politics. Prior to the attempted coup, it was well known that both the Reichswehr and the police harbored anti-government sentiments. If the coup was to succeed, then the participation, or at least the benevolent neutrality of these organizations, was absolutely essential. Yet, it was the police and the Reichswehr who suppressed the Putsch. Therefore, the event demonstrated that these organizations, regardless of their political attitudes, supported law and order above everything else. Germany was not Italy. If the National Socialists were to come to power, they were left with no alternative other than a strategy of legality.¹⁸

¹⁸Bracher, Dictatorship, p. 130.

After his release from prison, Hitler once again turned his attention to politics. He began immediately to 1) reassert his authority within the Party, 2) convince Party members that his strategy of legality would be more fruitful than violence, and 3) attempt to broaden the Party's base of support. Originally, the Party was supported by two groups: 1) ex-servicemen and Freikorps fighters, who were against the Republic because of the "stab in the back," and 2) members of the upper middle class and professional groups, who had lost both their values and economic position with the demise of Wilhelmian Germany. However, the members of the Party who were veterans or Freikorps fighters (the S. A. -- Sturmabteilung) presented the most difficulty.¹⁹ Prior to the Putsch, these units were used during Party rallies and parades and occasionally for more violent activities. They were composed of men who had known violence as a way of life, either during the war or in the various actions of the Freikorps during the immediate post-war period. As a result of their experiences, they developed a mentality that viewed violence both as a way of life and as the only solution to political problems. In his effort to eliminate the S. A. as the most important section of the Nazi Party, he developed the Party's

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For a useful discussion of the S.A., see Fest, Joachim, "Ernst Roehm and the Lost Generation", in The Face of the Third Reich, (Pantheon Books, New York: 1970), pp. 136-156. Also, see above, Chapter III.

Political Organization (P. O.). This group took responsibility for the organization and administration of the Party's propaganda campaign and the recruitment of new members. Both were essential activities if the Party was to increase its support and gain power legally. Although the S.A. was removed from its position of primacy, and the P. O. was developed as a parallel organization, a latent tension remained between these elements of the Party. The S.A. soon developed the attitude that they were the neglected members of the movement. So far as they were concerned, they represented not only the earliest and most dynamic elements of National Socialism, but, through their sacrifices during the ill-fated coup, prominence and notoriety was brought to Hitler and the Party.

Although the Party had changed the focus of its strategy to an emphasis on nonviolence, the S.A. did not remain idle. These units continued to be used for outward manifestation of the Party as the wave of the future, and for occasional exercises in violence and terror. However, during the years between 1923 and 1929, the shift in emphasis meant that the Party would concentrate most of its efforts on recruitment, propaganda, and the development of a mass party. The reorientation of the Party toward legality was relatively unsuccessful during this period. There are two major causes for their lack of success. In the first place, since the Party was organized along strict hierarchical lines and required

a fanatical belief in its principles, it was limited in the kind of person who would be accepted into the Party. Mere membership in the Party was not sufficient for a good National Socialist. In addition to paying dues and carrying a Party card, a good Nazi was required to work constantly in Party matters. He was expected to visibly demonstrate his affiliation to Hitler and the Party, propagandize the Party program, and organize and participate in Party events.²⁰ The second factor which militated against the Party was the political situation in Germany. The period of instability which characterized Weimar politics between 1919 and 1923 had ended and the Republic experienced stability between 1923 and 1929. As a result of these factors, it was extremely difficult for the Party to emerge as a major force in Weimar Politics. However, through their ability to remain visible and spread their propaganda, the Nazis managed to insure that their ideology was known and kept before the public.

In 1929, the political situation deteriorated and circumstances began to favor the Nazis.²¹ Now the organi-

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On March 6, 1924, Haase, the NSDAP leader in Lower Saxony, received instructions from Munich directing him "to bring together and organize NSDAP groups in Hanover." In response to this directive, he issued a memorandum on March 26, which read in part: "Whatever happens we must not make the mistake of the Schutz-und Trutzbund which neglected this fundamental principle and in the end existed everywhere and nowhere.... A farmer's boy who has got complete control of his village is of more value to the movement than the so-called 'leading personalities' whose activity is practically worthless." Noakes, p. 36.

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See above, Chapter III.

zational activities of the lean years began to produce results. By focusing on its racial, economic, and anti-communist program, the Party made substantial gains in electoral politics. In the election of 1928, the Nazis received only 2.6% of the vote, whereas in 1933, their share was 43.9%.²² In the Reichstag of 1930, the Nazis controlled 107 seats, with only the SPD exceeding them with 143.²³ By 1933, the National Socialists had become an important force in Weimar politics. Through their strength in the Reichstag, they implemented their policy of parliamentary obstruction, which contributed to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany.

The Nazi Reorganization of Politics and Society

By 1933, the stalemate in German politics had reached explosive proportions. The successive semi-authoritarian governments in the years between 1930 and 1933 proved to be incapable of leading Germany out of the political and economic morass. The more the government demonstrated its incapacity, the more the Nazis and other radical causes increased their strength. Furthermore, during this period, the impact of the military on German politics was the most obvious and pronounced. During this most crucial phase of the Weimar Republic, members of the military controlled important positions in the

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Burkett, Tony, Parties and Elections in West Germany, (St. Martin's Press, New York: 1975), p. 9.

²³

Ibid, p. 8. In the election of 1930, the NSDAP polled only 18.3% of the vote.

government: former Field Marshall von Hindenburg was Reichspräsident, former General Groener was Interior Minister, General Kurt von Schleicher was the Chief of the Army Command (later Chancellor), and Major Oskar von Hindenburg was a special assistant to the President. It fell to these officers, especially General von Schleicher, to implement and arrange the final details of the organizational and political work of General von Seeckt.²⁴

Seeckt had created a conservative military whose goal was the reemergence and acquisition of its former political status. The leaders of the military decided that the time had come to dispense with the Republic and create an authoritarian regime, which would be conducive to the attitudes of the military and the political traditions of Germany. According to the analysis of the military leadership, Germany was inevitably heading toward an authoritarian solution to her political problems. The democratic parties had demonstrated their inability, and, as the election returns demonstrated, the population was abandoning democracy for the radical parties of both the Left and the Right.

The only group who might frustrate the plans of the military leadership was the Nazis. As a result, the government was faced with two options: suppress the Nazis or control them. Schleicher, over the objections of Groener, was able to convince Hindenburg that suppression

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See above, Chapter III.

was unwise and would only cause additional problems. He was sure that the Nazis would be useful to the military's plans. Even though the Nazis were crass ruffians, their aims, he argued, were similar to those of the military. They disliked democracy and desired to revise the Versailles Treaty and make Germany a Great Power.²⁵ In addition, they were well-organized and, so long as they did not threaten the military, their organization could be very useful. Furthermore, should the Nazis emerge as a threat, the Reichswehr could easily dispose of them. Therefore, Schleicher argued, why not let the Nazis deal the fatal blow to the Republic. After this was accomplished, the military would be the most powerful institution in Germany and could control a Nazi regime or simply remove it, if that proved more feasible.²⁶

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See below, Chapter IV.

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According to Schleicher, the political situation in Germany had changed drastically from the time when his mentor, General von Seeckt, was Chief of the High Command. When General von Seeckt was in power, the political problem facing the Reichswehr was whether Germany would be a monarchy or a republic. However, due to the mobilization of the population during the Weimar Republic, it was no longer possible to return to some previous form of government. The military, if it were to survive and accomplish its goals, had to come to terms with the fact that the population was destined to participate, in some way, in the political process. Therefore, Schleicher believed that it was no longer a question of republic or monarchy; it was now a question of what type of republic would be conducive to the goals of the Reichswehr. Consequently, Schleicher reasoned that it was necessary to reduce the political power of the Reichstag so that it would not be in a position to attempt to control the Reichswehr. By relying on the emergency provisions of Article 48 of the Weimar Consti-

What the generals did not realize was that their political plans had all the characteristics of a rigid war plan, which could succeed only against a most accommodating adversary. While the republican forces may have been pliable to the extreme, it was not clear that the Nazis would follow suit. It never occurred to the military leaders that Hitler might have his own political plans which did not necessarily assign the Reichswehr a central position within the state. Furthermore, the generals were so blinded by their belief in the inevitable success of their plans, that they failed to perceive Hitler as a consummate politician or to understand the

tution, this would enable the creation of a Presidential regime, where the President would become a substitute Emperor (Ersatzkaiser). This was attempted during the Cabinets from 1930 to 1933. When this approach failed, Schleicher believed that a similar solution could be found by attempting to control the National Socialists. No doubt this attitude on the part of Schleicher contributed to his execution by the Nazis during "The Night of the Long Knives." For an interesting discussion of this point, see Hansen, Reimer, "Militaer und Demokratie in der deutschen Geschichte", Heft 26 der Schriftenreihe: Gegenwartsfragen, (Amt fuer Staatsbuergerliche Bildung in Schleswig-Holstein, April, 1970), pp. 20-21. See also, the letter from Generalmajor Helmuth Stieff to his wife relating to the address of the then Colonel Blaskowitz concerning the politics of General von Schleicher in "Dokumentation: Ausgewaehlte Briefe von Generalmajor Helmuth Stieff," Viertelsjahrhefte Fuer Zeitgeschichte, Vol. 2, (1954), p. 297.

Similarly, Friedrich Hossbach is representative of those Army officers who supported Schleicher's policy toward the Nazis. "I frankly admit that I belonged to those Germans who, after the disintegration of the political and economic situation around 1930, placed their hopes for an improvement and consolidation of our condition on the chance of government effected on January 30, 1933 under the protectorate of Hindenburg; and I am not one of those who, as early as 1933 or even before, foresaw the trend of events to 1945." Hossbach, Friedrich, Zwischen Wehrmacht und Hitler, 1934-1938, (Wolfenbuettel and Hanover: 1946), p. 9.

true nature of the Nazi movement or ideology.²⁷ Hitler, on the contrary, was much more realistic in his view of the military. He was well aware of the attitudes and goals of the Reichswehr. Moreover, he understood what the generals believed to be their most important strengths and proceeded to turn these against the Reichswehr.

When it finally came time for the Reichswehr to deal with the Nazis, the military leaders had counted on four factors as their most important political assets: 1) the position of Reichspräsident von Hindenburg, 2) the solidarity of the Officer Corps, 3) the military's control over the organization and weaponry of the Reichswehr, and 4) the pliability of Hitler. In the beginning, Hitler conceded these points to the Reichswehr leadership and courted the Officer Corps, while at the same time he restructured German politics and society to the extent that the attributes of the Reichswehr proved to be useless or illusory.

According to the military's analysis of the political situation, "(T)he Hitler government of 1933 was built on the basis of an 'entente' between the traditional elite groups and the leadership of the fascist Hitler movement. As a

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While it may be argued that very few understood the true nature of National Socialism, because of the important position held by the senior officers of the Reichswehr, it was more incumbent upon them to have a clear picture of Hitler and his party. Naivete on the part of the average German may be understandable, it is inexcusable on the part of the nation's top leaders. See above, Chapter II for a discussion of the role of military leadership.

result, the Reichswehr had a special position (within the government)."²⁸ The military supported the consolidation of the regime and, in accordance with their political plans, did not show concern as the Nazis proceeded to eliminate the radical Left and the democratic parties in their attempt to centralize the political and administrative structure of Germany.²⁹ As far as the military was concerned, the Nazis were simply achieving the goals desired by the Reichswehr. Clearly, the military desired the elimination of the Left-wing threat to German politics as well as the democratic challenge to the position of the military in German politics. In addition, they reasoned that the centralization of the political and administrative structure of Germany would only make it easier for them to control the Nazis. Since the Nazis were a tightly organized and disciplined group, all that would be necessary to control Germany would be to dominate or eliminate the top leadership

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Mueller, Klaus-Jurgen, "Armee und Staat im Dritten Reich", unpublished paper, p. 4. See also Mueller, Das Heer und Hitler: Armee und nationalsozialistisches Regime, 1933-1940, (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: 1969), pp. 159-160.

29

Mueller, paper, p. 5. The behavior of the military in this period has many parallels with the period immediately after World War I, except that in this period, the military was not faced with additional problems from the radical Left and democratic forces. Indeed, the only problem facing the Reichswehr was party-military relations--a problem they felt well equipped to handle. See Mueller, Das Heer, Chapter IV, "Zeit der Spannungen und illusionen: Innenpolitische Probleme 1934-1937."

of the Nazi Party.

There can be no doubt that the military's analysis of the conditions immediately after January 1933 contained some merit. At the very beginning, Chancellor Hitler's Cabinet was composed of representatives of the traditional leadership groups along with a small number of Nazis. More importantly, the Nazis appeared to be operating slowly and timidly. Also, the military leadership believed they would control the situation because of their monopoly over weaponry and the solidarity of the officer corps. As far as they were concerned, these two factors plus President von Hindenburg, in his constitutional role as Commander-in-Chief, assured the Reichswehr of complete control over German politics. Given this analysis, the leadership of the Reichswehr was convinced that they were in a position to dominate the Nazis in any contingency, and consequently began their cooperation with the Nazis with an attitude of complacency and naivete.

The narrowness and rigidity of their political goals, the complacency and naivete with which they dealt with the Nazis, and the lack of effective political leadership are important in understanding the ultimate failure of the Reichswehr's policy toward the Nazis. The Reichswehr began their relationship initially in a stronger position vis-a-vis the Nazis. They foolishly believed that Hitler both understood and accepted the role assigned to him by the Reichswehr leadership. They did not realize that Hitler, for his part, had plans in which the relationship

between the Army and the Nazis would be the reverse of what the military desired. Similarly, the Reichswehr did not understand the true meaning of Hitler's political actions. Hitler, the consummate politician, would not only go to any lengths to achieve his goals, but, more importantly, was willing to take whatever the situation presented and then turn it to his advantage. In 1933, by allowing the creation of what was, in effect, another dual government, the military sealed their own fate.³⁰ In attempting to protect the narrow interests of the military, the Reichswehr leadership gave Hitler and the Nazis free reign in all non-military matters thereby enabling them to eventually neutralize the political resources of the military.

The government which was organized in January 1933 depended on a division between military and civilian responsibilities. The National Socialists and the other civilian members of the government were responsible for governing the civilian sectors, while the Army was given exclusive responsibility in defense and military affairs.³¹ This state of affairs was very useful to Hitler in preparing the groundwork for the ultimate domination of

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See above, Chapter III. The major difference between this dual government and the one immediately following World War I was that the Army was dealing with Hitler and the Nazis and not Friedrich Ebert and the Social Democrats.

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These were the same areas of military responsibility carved out by Seeckt. This might partially explain the military's lack of concern for the fate of the non-military sectors of German society.

Germany by the Nazis. In the first place, Hitler realized that the Reichswehr was still an important force in German politics, and that a direct assault on the Reichswehr at the very beginning would most likely mean a short tenure in governmental office. Secondly, since he was the civilian leader in this dual government, he was in a position to proceed rapidly against his civilian opponents so long as he did not go out of his way to antagonize the Reichswehr. However, by reorganizing and bringing the civilian sectors under his control, he would be strengthening his position vis-a-vis the Reichswehr while at the same time appearing to uphold his side of the bargain.³²

The Reichstag Fire of February 27, 1933 set the stage for the Nazi takeover of society and became a pretext for the repression and elimination of the enemies of National Socialism. On February 28, 1933, the government promulgated the Reichstag Fire decree and on March 23, 1933, the Enabling Act was approved by the Reichstag. These two acts, ostensibly to protect Germany from subversive and dangerous elements, created a state of emergency and were used by the Nazis to silence their opposition and radically transform Germany according to the ideas of National

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In the 1930 Leipzig Reichswehr Trial, Hitler told the Court: "The Constitution only maps out the arena of battle, not the goal. We enter the legal agencies and in that way will make our party the determining factor. However, once we possess the constitutional power, we will mold the state into the shape we hold suitable." Quoted in Bracher, Dictatorship, p. 193.

Socialism.³³ Very quickly the Nazis launched their policy of Gleichschaltung and organized society so that no group could exist openly unless it was controlled and dominated by Nazis. Now, all that remained in the way of Hitler's undisputed mastery of Germany was the aged Field Marshall and the Reichswehr.

The Party and the Reichswehr: Tactics of Control

In their appeal to the Reichswehr, the Nazis tried to convince the military that they were scrupulously adhering to the bargain implied in the dual government, that the goals of National Socialism were the same as those desired by the military, and that National Socialism would in no way interfere with military prerogatives.

"The National Socialist leadership began all questions regarding the military with...a cautious and adept application of the military vocabulary which would stress the existing affinity of the national consciousness and strengthen the exclusiveness of the Wehrmacht in military questions."³⁴

In addition, they shrewdly applied their propaganda to the military in an attempt to convince the Reichswehr that there was a continuity between their political goals and the goals of most of the German Nationalists.³⁵ Throughout

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"From the afternoon of March 23, 1933, Hitler was a dictator created by democracy and appointed by parliament...", Heiden, Der Fuehrer, p. 579.

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Messerschmidt, Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat, p. 5.

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Regarding the Reichswehr's views of National Socialism

the Weimar Republic, the Reichswehr and German Nationalist groups were angered over the emasculation of the Army and the reduction of Germany to a second-rate power. The work of many of the leading Generals, such as Hans von Seeckt, was in preparation for the time when the Army would be strengthened and Germany could rearm and regain her rightful position in the international arena.³⁶ The Nazis claimed that this, too, was their ultimate goal and attempted to demonstrate that their policies and goals were simply the continuation of the work done by preceeding patriotic German leaders.

Blomberg stated, "Before 1938-1939 the German Generals were not opposed to Hitler. There was no reason to oppose Hitler since he produced the results which they desired." Blomberg statement, Document 3704-PS, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. VI, p. 414.

Similarly, General Blaskowitz commented, "The at first (1933-1935) secret and later unconcealed rearmament of Germany was welcomed by me. All officers of the Army shared this attitude and therefore, had no reason to oppose Hitler. Hitler produced the results which all of us warmly desired." Affidavit of Colonel-General Blaskowitz, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. VI, p. 417.

Finally, at Nuremberg, the following exchange took place during the testimony of General von Rundstedt: "Question: Surely it is common ground, isn't it, that there was a lot in common between Hitler's policy and the general aspirations of you and your colleagues immediately after 1933? von Rundstedt: Yes; that is to say the equality aimed at by Hitler and achieved by him was welcomed by us, and that which was good in the National Socialist Movement, as I have already emphasized, and which was mostly taken over from old Prussian traditions, we, of course welcomed; but we all disapproved of the excesses...the older generation at any rate." International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, Vol. XXI, pp. 38-39.

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See above, Chapter III.

For example, prior to Hitler's appointment as Reichschancellor, the German Government was participating in the Geneva Disarmament Conference. The major thrust of German policy toward that conference was that any negotiations must be conducted on the basis of equal status of all nations. 1932 was a crucial year in the work of the Disarmament Conference. In that year, Germany insisted that equal status must be recognized if the conference was to be successful.³⁷ In a broadcast address, July 26, 1932, Reichswehr Minister Schleicher announced his defense policy:

"How can Germany obtain security? Theoretically, there are two ways:

1) The other powers could disarm to Germany's level, as they are legally and morally bound to do. After the course taken by the Disarmament Conference to date, few people in the world would believe in such a miracle...

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"The German Government is prepared to continue its collaboration in the work of the Disarmament Conference so as to contribute to the greatest possible extent to the efforts made with the view to a really decisive step towards general disarmament in accordance with Article 8 of the Covenant. Nevertheless, its collaboration is only possible if the subsequent work of the conference is based on a clear and definite recognition of the equality of rights between nations.

Equality of rights is the fundamental principle upon which the League of Nations and the Community of States is founded.... It (the German Government) must, therefore, urge... a recognition... of the equality of all states in the matter of national security and the application of the Convention." Final Declaration of the German Government on the July resolution, July 22, 1932. Documents on International Affairs, 1932, John W. Wheeler-Bennet, ed., (Oxford University Press, London: 1933), p. 183. See also, the letter from the German Foreign Minister (von Neurath) to the President of the Disarmament Conference, September 14, 1932, Documents on International Affairs, 1932, pp. 198-199.

2) We can attain this security if we so organize our armed forces by reorganization, not extension--that would give at least a certain degree of security, and I wish, in connexion (sic) with the German declaration at Geneva, to leave no doubt that we will take this course if full security and equality of rights are further withheld from us."³⁸

This goal, according to Schleicher, would be realized through the reorganization of the Reichswehr, which would provide for the shorter terms of service for its members, increase the number of trained men available, and at the same time the Reichswehr would be supplemented by a newly organized militia.³⁹

In the Five Power Declaration of December 11, 1932, it appeared that Germany had won her point on the equality of nations.⁴⁰ However, her hopes quickly faded when France balked at implementing the agreement.

When Hitler was appointed Chancellor, he continued to emphasize Germany's moral right to equality, and that Germany was essentially a defenseless nation. In a

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Documents on International Affairs, 1932, p. 184.

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Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series C, Vol. VI, (U.S. Government Printing Office: 1959), p. 19.

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"The Governments of the United Kingdom, France and Italy have declared that one of the principles that should guide the Conference on Disarmament should be to grant to Germany and to the other Powers disarmed by Treaty, equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations." This declaration was also agreed to by the United States. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1932, (U.S. Government Printing Office: 1932), Vol. I, p. 527.

speech on May 17, 1933, he denounced the Versailles Treaty as the source of all Germany's domestic problems and the cause of the present and future international tensions. The reasons

"lie in the division of the world into conquerors and conquered, which seems to be intended to form a permanent basis of all future order. The worst effect of the classification lies in the compulsory defenselessness of one nation as against the excessive armaments of others. If Germany has continued for years to demand the disarmament of all, it is for the following reasons:

- 1) the demand for equality of rights is a demand of morality, right and reason
- 2) Germany wants nothing for herself which she is not prepared to give to others."⁴¹

In addition, Hitler was quick to emphasize that Germany had only peaceful intentions. In a speech on September 3, 1933, Hitler took the opportunity to reiterate Germany's peaceful intention, while at the same time praising the Army.

"...The world must not see in the Nazi Revolution... the expression of a desire to win new laurels on the battlefield, because the German people know that no war could take place which would gain for their country more honor than was won in the last war. It is more honorable for one land to hold out four and a half years against superior odds than it is for twenty nations to conquer a single nation. Germany is not in need of rehabilitation on the battlefield, for there she has never lost her prestige."⁴²

Hitler's cautious policy toward the Army was severely jeopardized, however, by elements within the National

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Documents on International Affairs, 1933, p. 196.

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Documents on International Affairs, 1933, p. 406.

Socialist Party. Ever since the abortive Beer Hall Putsch and the ensuing strategy of legality, the recalcitrant S. A. posed a difficult problem for Hitler. Now that the Party was in power, the S. A. was even more rebellious. The S. A., led by Ernst Roehm, was composed of the most violent and militant members of the Nazi movement. Roehm and his followers were not content with merely the seizure of power. They wanted to continue the revolution and realize the more popular aspects of the National Socialist program. More importantly, they wanted to become the core of the Nazi nation in arms. As a result of the behavior of the S. A., Hitler was confronted with two potentially disastrous problems. In the first place, if Hitler satisfied the desires of the S. A., this would challenge directly the position of the Reichswehr and perhaps precipitate a crisis. In the second place, if Roehm realized his plans, the S.A. would be in a position to challenge Hitler for the leadership of the Nazi movement. At first, Hitler was unwilling to take action against Roehm and the S.A. In order to assuage Roehm's ambitions, Hitler elevated him to a cabinet post, hoping that this reward would curtail his grandiose military plans. At the same time, he continued to reassure the Reichswehr that they would remain the sole bearers of arms in the Reich.⁴³

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Baynes, Norman H., Speeches of Adolf Hitler, (Oxford University Press, London: 1942), *passim*, which contain a number of speeches where Hitler reassured the Reichswehr that its position would be respected. Furthermore, at a dinner party given by General Hammerstein-Equord, on February 3, 1934, Hitler emphasized that, unlike Italy,

Roehm was not pacified and continued to press for the control of the Army by the S.A. At this point, Hitler was forced to take action against Roehm and the S.A. On April 11, 1934, Hitler left Kiel on board the Cruiser Deutschland, accompanied by Generals Blomberg and Fritsch and Admiral Raeder. During this voyage, it appears that they reached an agreement whereby Hitler would succeed Hindenburg as Reichspraesident in return for the suppression of Roehm.⁴⁴ So on the night of July 2-3, 1934, members of the S.S., following Hitler's orders, executed Roehm and his associates on the grounds that they were conspiring to overthrow the regime. In addition, during the same operation, General von Schleicher, Frau Schleicher and General von Bredow were also eliminated.⁴⁵

there would not be an ammalgamation of the Army and the S.A. Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series C, Vol. I, p. 37. This is also confirmed by Admiral Raeder, who was present at the dinner party. See Raeder's statement, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington: 1946), Vol. VIII, p. 707.

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Bullock, p. 290. Papen also suggests that there was some kind of agreement between Hitler and the Army. Papen, Franz von, Memoirs, (E.P. Dutton, New York: 1953), p. 358. Although I have been unable to uncover any additional corroborative evidence, it seems reasonable to believe that such an agreement was made.

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According to Orlow, "The immediate Roehm Crisis was solely an intra-party affair...." Orlow, The History of the Nazi Party: 1933-1945, (University of Pittsburg Press, Pittsburg: 1973), p. 114. While it is true that Roehm gave Hitler and the Party difficulties, both the preceeding events and the assassinations had implications beyond purely party politics. If it was simply a party affair, why were the generals murdered? As far as the Army was concerned, one must agree that "(m)uch can be said for the view that thereafter the Army carried a crippling psychological burden because of its comparative

Now that the troublesome Roehm and the S.A. no longer posed a threat to Hitler, he was free to renew his efforts toward the Reichswehr. In the Reichstag Speech of July 13, 1934, Hitler directed the following remarks toward the Army:

"The highest leader (oberste Spitze) of the Army is the General Field Marshall and Reichspraesident. I have, as Chancellor, taken an oath to him. His position is, for all of us, sacrosanct. I have given my word, that the preservation of the army as an unpolitical instrument of the Reich is binding on me both as an inner conviction and as my given word.... (General von Blomberg) is truly loyal to the known principle, as I am until my last breath. (This principle is) that there is only one military force (Waffentraeger) in the state: the Wehrmacht, and only one bearer of the political will: the National Socialist Party. Then just as General von Blomberg, as Defense Minister in the National Socialist state... fulfills his duty, so does the remaining officers and soldiers. I cannot demand from them that they individually find their position in our movement, but none of them has lost his attitude of duty concerning the National Socialist State."⁴⁶

quiescence after the murder of two of its most highly placed members and the wife of one. Awareness of this left a self doubt that endured into and beyond the crisis of 1938. Once it had been so plainly violated, the proud tradition of comradeship in the Officer Corps was no longer unassailable. The hesitation, inner division, and eager rationalizations that were to paralyze the Generalitaet in the Fritsch affair were thus a carryover from the moral defeat it had suffered in 1934." Deutsch, Harold, Hitler and His Generals: The Hidden Crisis, January-June 1938, (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 1974), p. 19. In addition, the murder of Schleicher removed the only General who understood clearly the principles of Seeckt.

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Quoted in Briet, p. 165.

No doubt, many officers felt assured and secure with the elimination of the S.A. and the words of reassurance by Hitler. The Roehm episode reinforced in their minds the view that the Reichswehr was still the most important group in German politics and capable of protecting their interests in any circumstances. Now, they were convinced that there was an affinity between the ideas of Hitler and the Army and that the political arrangement of 1933 remained a useful foundation for the government of Germany. The incident clearly demonstrated that the Nazis were fulfilling their part of the bargain by eliminating the causes of tension in German society and working, both in domestic and international politics, toward a favorable settlement of the question of military armaments. Consequently, the officer corps returned very quickly to their previous attitude of complacency and were content to pursue their narrow military interests.

Hitler, for his part, was quite willing to lull the military along in their complacent mood. As long as they did not suspect that he was a direct threat to them, he was free to subtly undermine and manipulate the Reichswehr. Furthermore, there was a common ground between the Reichswehr and the Nazis. The officer corps desired a large and strong military because this was an important factor in the German military tradition. Hitler also desired a large and strong military organization because without it his imperial designs would be impossible. At this point, Hitler was in need of the officer corps to train and equip

an expanded military establishment. Although many of the older and high-ranking officers held him in contempt and were not controlled by him, there was nothing he could do for the moment except support the dual government. However, what escaped the generals, but was understood by Hitler, was that the military autonomy would be a temporary situation. Hitler realized that by giving the generals exactly what they wanted, would ultimately prove to be the end of the autonomy of the Army.

The ability of the Reichswehr to wield political power during the Weimar Republic was the result of two factors. In the first place, the Republic was never in a position to control the Army because of its dependence on the generals for protection. In the second place, the generals, especially Seeckt, were able to create a tight-knit military because the Reichswehr was small and recruitment was extremely selective.⁴⁷ Therefore, the ability of the military to influence politics was the result of the weakness of the regime and the solidarity of the officer corps. Hitler realized that in order to eliminate the Army as a source of opposition, it would be necessary for the Nazis to establish a strong position within society and at the same time expand the size of the army and neutralize the solidarity of the officer corps.

By following the tacit agreement contained in the dual government, Hitler, as Chancellor, began almost immediately to strengthen his position within German society, and at the same time undermine the military's political

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See above, Chapter III.

potential. During Gleichschaltung, the National Socialists began a policy of propaganda and indoctrination which continued throughout the life of the Third Reich. In this way, the Nazis increased their strength within society and, more importantly, they assured themselves of support in the Army after its expansion. Furthermore, they could count on the support of most of the veterans who were unable to serve in the Reichswehr but who would become a part of any military expansion program.⁴⁸

In addition to the senior officers who gave the Nazis provisional support within the Officer Corps, the sub-altern officers endorsed the Nazi ideology. Since the Reichswehr was small, promotion was difficult and an officer could expect to spend a long time in grade or perhaps not be promoted at all. However, the Nazis were also desirous of a strong and expanded military which, for many officers, could mean a chance for rapid promotion. Furthermore, the Nazi propaganda effectively exploited the latent antagonisms between front and General Staff Officers. The General Staff was the elite in the German Army ever since the military reorganizations in the period after the Napoleonic Wars. Members of the General Staff wore a more distinctive uniform and possessed more prestige and authority than any non-General Staff Officer, regardless of rank. The Nazi ideology, which glorified the Germans

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"If one takes as an idea the content of the publications of the veteran's organizations, it is clear that the Nazi ideology strongly reflected the veteran's views." Messerschmidt, p. 38, note 140.

and the front soldiers, had the greatest effect on the front officers. This helped to undermine the solidarity of the Officer Corps and the authority of the General Staff to the point where the homogeneity and compactness of the Officer Corps was no longer possible.⁴⁹ Consequently, the Nazis, by expanding the size of the Army and

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Messerschmidt, pp. 37-39. The attitude of the junior officers was often used as an excuse by the military leadership when they refused to consider the prospects of a coup against Hitler. Gisevius related that when he approached General Halder about the prospects of an anti-Nazi putsch, Halder agreed that it was probably necessary, but balked at participating. "Several times Halder referred to his four or five sons-in-law, all of whom were serving in the Army as captains. Their attitude, he believed, was fairly representative of the temper of the corps of officers; and that temper, he insisted, was pro-Hitler. The attitude of the generals was irrelevant; the decisive factor in any projected coup would be the attitude of the lower officers, because they had the closest contact with the bulk of the soldiers and, therefore, with the broad masses of the people." Gisevius, Hans Bernd, Bis zum bittern Ende, (Fritz & Wasmuth, Zurich: 1946), Vol. 2, p. 37. Similarly, "(t)he reasons for which Brauchitsch later refused to take part in a coup were, according to Halder's statement, as THOMAS (sic) reproduces them: The German Army did not stage coups; there was no personality to put in Hitler's place; the people needed an idea like National Socialism; Britain's struggle was aimed not only against the Hitler regime but also against the whole German people; and, finally, the younger Officer Corps was not reliable enough to execute such a political action. (*italics mine*) Halder, like Generals Stuelpnagel and Wagner, also had doubts about opposing a man with a record of unbroken success, for whom hundreds of thousands of young Germans would enter the lists without question and be ready to sacrifice themselves. Thomas's statement in a memorandum in Falkenstein of July 20, 1945." Quoted in Zeller, Eberhard, The Flame of Freedom: The German Struggle Against Hitler, (University of Miami Press, Coral Gables: 1969), p. 403, note 24.

shattering the unity of the Officer Corps, destroyed the monolithic Army of General von Seeckt.⁵⁰

Although neutralizing the political potential of the military through expansion and propaganda was necessary, it was not sufficient for the control of the military by the Nazis. These merely gave Hitler and the Nazis the potential to control the Reichswehr. In order for Hitler to obtain complete control over the military, he had to assume the formal control of the military as well as eliminate the senior commanders and install commanders who were loyal to him. Hitler was afforded the opportunity to assume formal control of the military upon the death of Hindenburg. In August, 1934, Hitler absorbed the presidential functions and prerogatives and through a plebiscite became "Fuehrer and Chancellor."⁵¹ No sooner was this

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Craig, p. 481. See also, Chapter II, Recruitment.

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"The combination of the offices of President and Chancellor was no more than a step in the process of accumulating governmental offices and with them governmental authority. (*italics in the original*) By officially designating himself 'Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor,' however, Hitler was claiming that his power to act in affairs of State rested upon something more than the authority conferred upon him by his governmental office (which carried with it the obligation to adhere to the limits imposed by governmental machinery and practice); he was laying the claim to an authority overriding and transcending that of the State, the basis of which was his mission before history, the will of the Fuehrer as a revelation of the German people's destiny and essence of the 'oath-bound' community formed by the National Socialist Movement. This was the underlying significance of the title 'the Fuehrer'." Buchheim, Hans, "The SS--Instrument of Domination" in, Anatomy of the SS State, (Walker and Co., New York: 1968), p. 127.

accomplished, then Hitler, with the aid of Blomberg, had the Officer Corps swear the following oath to his person: "I swear by God this sacred oath, that I will render unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, the Fuehrer of the German Reich and people, supreme commander of the Armed Forces, and will be ready to risk my life at any time for the oath."⁵² By 1934, Hitler was well on his way toward dominating the German army.

The Blomberg-Fritsch Affair

Although Hitler had achieved the formal and legal foundations for his eventual domination of the military, these factors by themselves were insufficient to insure Nazi domination of the military. So long as the Army remained small and under the domination of the older, more conservative officers, the Army would continue to possess political power in Germany. This situation began to change, however, in October 1934, when the size of the Army increased three-fold.⁵³ With its expansion, the Army was no longer the exclusive organization it was during the Seeckt era, but a more broadly based and socially representative institution.⁵⁴ Consequently,

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Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945,
Series C,

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O'Neill, Robert J., "Doctrine and Training in the German Army: 1919-1939," in Howard, Michael, ed., The Theory and Practice of War, (Indiana University Press, Bloomington: 1965), p. 157.

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See above, Chapter IV. Also, many of the techno-

Hitler was in a more powerful position vis-a-vis the generals, a situation that Hitler rudely demonstrated in the Blomberg-Fritsch affair.

The conflict between Hitler and Generals Blomberg and Fritsch originated in a meeting Hitler had with the Foreign Minister and the Chiefs of the Military Commands on November 7, 1937.⁵⁵ During this meeting, Hitler outlined his future plans for Germany's imperial expansion. At this time, it became clear to many of the participants, especially Fritsch, that Hitler was about to embark on an ambitious and highly dangerous policy which would only increase the likelihood of a war for which Germany was unprepared. Consequently, Fritsch felt that it was his duty to vehemently object. This only increased Hitler's doubts concerning the loyalty of his senior commanders.

logically-oriented officers, such as Heinz Guderian, saw Hitler as a patron of those officers who desired the development of new ideas in weapons and strategy. When he became Chancellor, Guderian believed that there was a sympathetic person at the head of the government who could help him in his conflicts with the more traditional military leaders. O'Neill, p. 156.

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Fest, Hitler, p. 539, and Deutsch, pp. 72-74. In addition, the revelation of November 7, 1937, turned such people as Admiral Canaris and General Beck against the Hitler regime and contributed to their decision to enter into oppositionist activities. For a discussion of Canaris' views on both the meeting on November 7, and the Fritsch crisis, see Brissaud, Andre, Canaris, (Grosset and Dunlap, New York: 1973), pp. 63, 79. There is some disagreement concerning the time when Beck began his opposition to the Hitler regime. According to Brissaud, as early as November 11, 1937, Beck discussed with Canaris the meaning of Hitler's adventurism (pp. 61-63). However, according to Zeller, it was not until May of 1938 that Beck became convinced of the implications for Germany of Hitler's adventurism (pp. 15-19).

While Hitler remained skeptical about the loyalty of his senior commanders, he did not participate in the development of the conspiracy against Blomberg and Fritsch. The conspiracy itself was the work of Himmler, Heydrich and Goering. All three had ample reason to fear the senior officers because they were the only people remaining in Germany who had any chance of counterbalancing the excesses of the National Socialist Regime. Therefore, the Army was a direct threat to the S.S., the Gestapo, and the Luftwaffe. If these generals could be eliminated from their commands, the road was clear for the Gestapo and the S.S. to pursue their terror unobstructed, and Goering could fulfill his ambition to be the senior military commander in Germany.⁵⁶ Blomberg unwittingly played into the hands of the conspirators by both marrying a woman with an unsavory past and having Hitler as a witness at the wedding. The union between the Reichswehrminister and the new Frau Blomberg was seized upon by the conspirators and presented as: a stain on the Officer Corps, a compromise of the Army, and an embarrassment for Hitler. As a result, Hitler demanded and received Blomberg's resignation, which eliminated one more obstacle to his total control of the Army. In many respects, Hossbach was correct when he commented: "It is the tragedy of modern German history that Blomberg was, neither

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For an interesting first-hand account see Gisevius, Vol. I, "Die Fritsch-Blomberg-Krise," pp. 383-459.

as a soldier nor as a statesman, a strong personality, forceful and creative, guiding and leading. His intelligence lacked the foundation of a firm character."⁵⁷

The circumstances surrounding the removal of Fritsch as Chief of the Army Command were even more distressing than the Blomberg incident. Fritsch was framed as a homosexual by the Gestapo. Fritsch adamantly denied the allegations, demanded a court of inquiry, but, unfortunately, refused to further involve the Army. Instead, he resigned his post, pending the results of the inquiry. After his vindication, he returned to active duty as a field commander.

Even though Hitler did not play a decisive role in these conspiracies, the Blomberg-Fritsch crisis demonstrated the way in which the Third Reich operated. Hitler was able to achieve his complete mastery of German politics not only through the ideology of the Fuehrerprinzip (Leadership Principle) but also through the shrewd manipulation of personalities and centers of power. By organizing the Nazi regime the way he did, he insured that there were a multitude of conflicting and competing centers of power and ambition.⁵⁸ Therefore, even though Hitler did not order the conspiracy against the generals, he knew that circumstances such as these would arise because of the fierce competition within his government. As soon as he became aware of the accusations

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Hossbach, p. 76.

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Orlow, Vol. II, p. 7-8.

against Blomberg and Fritsch, he quickly seized the initiative and realized his complete mastery of the Army. Upon the removal of Blomberg as Reichswehrminister, Hitler assumed the duties of that office, thus insuring that there would not be a military office independent of him. In addition, he used the Fritsch-Blomberg incident to promote into influential positions officers such as Jodl, Keitel and Brauchitch, who were pliable and did not pose a threat to the Nazi leadership. In short, the Blomberg-Fritsch affair was the last element in the Nazi strategy of bringing the military under the Party's domination. "With the events of January and February 1938, the Nazi seizure of power within Germany was completed. The last area of resistance, the Army, was thoroughly Gleichschaltet and the revolutionaries (the Nazis) were able to operate unchecked."⁵⁹ Indeed, the Blomberg-Fritsch affair was Hitler's coup de grace against the Officer Corps. From that time onward, the German military no longer harbored grandiose political plans but was relegated to the position of a functional elite.⁶⁰

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Gisevius, Vol. I, pp. 463-464. Yet, even if the military had contemplated action against Hitler, the effects of the Anschluss and the Sudeten crisis dissipated any antagonisms in the bulk of the Officer Corps. "Hitler's great achievements in the field of foreign policy had, furthermore, dissipated the evil impressions made by the crisis of the previous February (Blomberg-Fritsch affair)." Guderian, p. 41.

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Messerschmidt, pp. 10-11.

From Victory to Opposition and Defeat

The fate of the German nation and the German Army was sealed in January-February 1938. From that time onward the Army, as a unified group, was unable to muster any organized resistance to Hitler and the National Socialists. The narrowness of the attitudes and goals of the Officer Corps and the High Command, combined with skillful manipulation by Hitler, prevented the military leadership from mounting any effective resistance toward the Nazi regime. In the period prior to 1938, it was inconceivable in the august circles of the Army High Command that such a non-entity as the 'boehmische Gefreiter' could violate so easily the sanctity and self-image of the Army. Yet, this is precisely what Hitler did.

In retrospect, it is possible to outline the crucial dates when Hitler executed his gradual Gleichschaltung of the German Army. However, that is only part of the tragic story of the Army and Germany. To understand how Hitler and the Nazis were able to dominate the Army, it is necessary to go further than simply documenting the strategic miscalculations of the German High Command. The miscalculations were, in fact, the result of the Army's self-image as well as the politics of the National Socialists. Ever since the Wars of Unification in the Nineteenth Century, the Army conceived of itself not only as the protector of Germany and the nation's most important institution, but also the very essence of Germany; a view

which was shared by many civilians. No doubt, the political behavior of the German Army throughout the Imperial regime and the Weimar Republic was based on this exalted self-image.⁶¹ Consequently, by the time Hitler was asked to form a cabinet in 1933, the High Command, because of the Army's success in both the Imperial regime and the Weimar Republic, subscribed to an inflated view of the Army's political potential.

This is the only plausible explanation for the rather dubious alliance between the High Command and the Nazis which began in January 1933. The High Command, at that time, sincerely believed that Hitler had neither the ability nor the audacity to successfully challenge the political power of the Army. Hitler, however, refused to play the role assigned to him in the military's scenario

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In Der Deutsche Widerstand, Rudolf Pechel argues somewhat narrowly that the Nazi Gleichschaltung of the Army was the culmination of military politics during the Weimar Republic. During the Weimar period, he argues, the Army abandoned its ideals of soldierly virtues and service to the state which characterized the Kaiserheer in favor of a narrow military outlook. While it is true that the behavior of the Reichswehr during the Weimar Republic contributed greatly to the demise of democracy and the rise of the Nazis, Pechel fails to understand that this was the result of the desire of the High Command and the Officer Corps to return to conditions approximating the Imperial regime. In many respects Hitler played the role of Ersatzkaiser as did Hindenburg and Seeckt. In fact, many officers refused to take part in any action against Hitler for precisely these reasons. Pechel, Der Deutsche Widerstand, (Eugen Rentsch Verlag, Erlenbach-Zuerich: 1947), pp. 135-139. Guderian, after being informed of a possible putsch attempt against Hitler commented: "Up to this moment I had never imagined that any German General, in command of troops actually in contact with the enemy, could possibly envisage taking such a step in direct opposition to the Head of State." Guderian, p. 268. Also, see above, Blomberg's remark.

of events. He had no intention of playing a role similar to the constitutionalists of the Imperial regime or the republican supporters of the Weimar Republic. Instead, he was willing to allow the Army to live in its dream world, while he made preparations for the assault on its preferred position. While the Nazis brutally reorganized and revolutionized German society,⁶² the Army abandoned the civilians to protect their own narrow interests. What the High Command failed to perceive, however, was that the Nazis were creating a strong and dynamic state apparatus which limited the political maneuverability of the Army.⁶³ When Hitler finally turned his attention to the Army and the High Command, the senior officers were thunderstruck at the Fuehrer's audacity and his alteration of the traditional relationship between the Army and the state. In short, the charge which had been laid to Blomberg, that he was a "rubber lion" (Gummiloewe), is equally applicable to the entire Officer Corps.⁶⁴ By 1938, the Army had lost whatever political power it once possessed. Now, the Nazis were in a position to deal with the Army, Germany, and the rest of the world as they saw fit.

With the elimination of the Army as a possible center

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For a discussion of the social changes brought about by National Socialism, see Schoenbaum, David, Hitler's Social Revolution, (Doubleday & Co., New York: 1966).

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For a discussion of the influence of environment on the behavior of the military see above, Chapter II.

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Pechel, p. 140.

of organized opposition to the Nazi regime, the power of the Nazis over German society increased. Consequently, it became increasingly difficult to develop any organized opposition to the regime. Difficult though it was, opposition to the regime was manifested from a variety of quarters and by a variety of people through techniques which ranged from silent opposition and nonconformity to overt actions against the state.⁶⁵ Virtually every sector of German society, including the National Socialists, was represented in some form of opposition to National Socialism.⁶⁶ Although opposition was widespread,

"...differences of opinion, and in general the peculiar babble of voices presumably speaking for the German opposition, should make it clear that it was not a bloc. To treat it as if it were a single concept is inaccurate; it was a loose assemblage of many groups objectively and personally antagonistic and united only in antipathy for the regime."⁶⁷

The ever-tightening noose of the Nazi security apparatus, however, does not sufficiently explain the lack of organized political activity against the Hitler regime. Not only does the existence of an efficient security network demonstrate the difficulties involved in any conspiratorial activities

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Rothfels, Hans, The German Opposition to Hitler, (Henry Regnery Co., Hinsdale: 1948), pp. 9-15. See also, Peterson, Edward N., The Limits of Hitler's Power, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1969).

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For example, Count Helldorf, Commander of the Berlin SA, and Albert Speer.

67

Fest, Hitler, p. 701.

against the Nazis, but also the amorphous nature of the opposition is equally important to understanding the lack of success on the part of the German opposition. No doubt, the mistrust that had developed, not only during the Weimar Republic, but also during the Imperial regime made it difficult for these diverse groups to approach each other and come to some understanding about the methods and goals of any conspiratorial undertaking.

As a result of these problems, many realized quite early that the Army was the only organization capable of effectively challenging and neutralizing the Nazis.⁶⁸ This was the motivation behind the activities of such people as Hans Oster and Hans Bernd Gisevius. They realized earlier than some but too late for many the pernicious and tragic consequences of the Nazi regime. Yet, unfortunately, they were unable to convince the High Command to engage in any anti-regime actions. With the removal of Blomberg and Fritsch and the promotion of even more malleable officers to responsible positions, the prospects of a military putsch against the Nazis was even more dim. With the onset of war and the almost unprecedented victories of the German Army in both the east and the west, any military activity against the Hitler regime was almost totally out of the question.⁶⁹ It was not until Germany

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See Gisevius, Vol. I, passim.

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In November, 1939, "(General) Thomas reluctantly admitted that the young officers were in a pernicious state

began to suffer the early defeats in Africa and Russia that some officers began to have second thoughts about the war effort and the behavior of the regime.⁷⁰ From that time onward a group of disgruntled officers along with some civilian members of the opposition began to organize around the leadership of Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg.⁷¹

It is rather obvious why the members of the military opposition had to wait until after the tide of war turned against Germany. It was the Army, along with the German Right, who demonstrated their political bankruptcy in the period between 1930 and 1933 and who welcomed the Nazi rise to power. As far as they were concerned, National Socialism would help achieve the political and social unification of Germany, as opposed to the civil war (Buergerkrieg) atmosphere of the Weimar Republic.⁷² In addition to solving Germany's domestic problems, the Army

of mind. Their confidence in Hitler's leadership had been tremendously fortified by the first victories and by the absence of any threats from the West. Now they were eager for new heroic feats." Gisevius, Vol. II, p. 153.

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While it is generally true that many of the officers joined the conspiracy after Germany suffered a series of military reversals, some officers such as Former General Beck, Colonel Oster, General Witzleben and Admiral Canaris were opposed to the regime prior to the outbreak of the war.

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Zeller, pp. 198-236. According to Zeller, Stauffenberg found some positive qualities in National Socialism. Zeller, pp. 186-187.

72

Hjalmar Schacht wrote the following to Hitler in November 1932: "I have no doubt that things can only end in one way, and that is your Chancellorship.... Your movement is intrinsically so right that its victory, in one form or another, is inevitable. Quoted in Zeller, p. 56.

and the civilian Right looked toward the Nazis to achieve Germany's rebirth as an international power. Although the Nazis were somewhat extreme domestically and they precipitated some fretful moments internationally, the Nazis did manage to achieve the desires of the German Right.

The conspiracy of July 20, 1944, began to unfold and gain momentum after the tide of war turned against Germany when it became clear that she would suffer one more horrendous defeat in the short space of twenty-six years. For the vast majority of military conspirators as well as for many of the civilian participants in the conspiracy, it became imperative to save Germany from the perils that would befall her should the Nazis remain in power until the conclusion of the war. By their actions they hoped to affirm to the world that all was not reprehensible within Germany, that somewhere in the deep abyss of Nazi-dominated Germany there still remained decent and upstanding persons who were willing to risk an affirmation of morality and humanity.

Although credit must be given to the tragic figures who paid dearly for their involvement in the events of July 20, 1944, the participants and their motives must be analyzed with caution. At first glance, the conspirators appear to be a group of selfless persons who were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to rid their nation of an oppressive and morally bankrupt regime. However, on further investigation, this conclusion must be severely

modified. In an unsigned manuscript by Stauffenberg or one of the other leaders of the Putsch, some of the reasons for the undertaking are outlined.

"If the present course continues, defeat and destruction of the country's manpower and material strength is somewhat inevitable. Imminent disaster can be averted only by removing the present leadership. The original ideas of National Socialism were largely correct but were perverted after the Party's advent to power....

The leadership has failed to prevent a war on two fronts. The present regime has no right to drag the whole nation down with it to its doom. The most important aim after a change of government is to ensure that Germany continues as a factor in the Power game and that the Wehrmacht, in particular, remains a usable instrument in the hands of its leaders."⁷³

These ideas are reminiscent of the remarks General Groener made to his Kaiser in November 1918 and the principles upon which the generals relied during the years of the Weimar Republic. In addition, if the honor roll of major figures who either committed suicide or were the victims of Nazi reprisal are consulted, it shows that the vast majority of participants came from the military, the aristocracy, and the educated and land-owning classes of German society.⁷⁴ The evidence overwhelmingly suggests

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Zeller, pp. 204-205. (*italics mine*).

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Taking as an index the list of 144 participants who were executed or committed suicide in the aftermath of the Stauffenberg Putsch, there were 47 aristocratic participants, 60 military participants, and 70 professional and land-owning participants. The fact that these figures amount to a total of 177 is because there is some overlapping between the three groups. See Pechel, pp. 339-343, for the list of participants.

that the July 1944 coup, was the dying gasp of the doomed Prussian aristocracy who for generations had been leaders of German society.⁷⁵

Little needs to be said about the period after the abortive coup except that Germany was defeated, occupied, and truncated. The moral bankruptcy of the Nazi regime was documented at Nuremberg and other places. Furthermore, the faith of the German people in the armed forces as the savior and protector of the nation was no longer tenable. In effect, the Nazi period was a violent, traumatic and revolutionary period, which, in many respects, swept away parts of Germany and German society. This made it virtually impossible for Germany to look toward the past for some kind of solution to her problems.

⁷⁵Fest, Hitler, p. 715.

CHAPTER V

A NEW BEGINNING: POLITICS IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC

The German High Command and the German Nation were given a glimpse of the future when Field Marshall Friedrich Paulus was forced to capitulate at Stalingrad. Less than three years later, Adolf Hitler was dead and Germany was forced to accept unconditional surrender and occupation. The significance of the surrender at Stalingrad, however, was not the defeat of the German Army in battle. Germany had lost battles and wars before, but somehow German society, the old Germany, managed to survive.¹ For the Allies, Stalingrad was both the turning point in the

¹ For example, the Napoleonic Wars and the First World War.

war against the Axis powers, and the prelude to the offensives which would ultimately defeat Nazi Germany. For the Germans the battle signified much more than the beginning of the long road to defeat and occupation. German history was made in another respect at Stalingrad. Paulus' surrender transgressed an important military tradition: for the first time in the history of the German Army, a Field Marshall surrendered to an enemy.² This action by Paulus highlighted for Germany and the world the revolutionary nature of National Socialism and the Second World War. Both events insured that neither Germany nor Europe could ever recreate their ante-bellum societies.

"(W)e prisoners did not know how vast the (German) migration was, or that we were part of its vanguard. Literally millions of people were on the move. We did realize, however, that we were seeing the disintegration of Germany. Within an hour of taking the road prisoners and refugees had become indistinguishable....

The great trek of which we formed a part meant more than the disintegration of the comfortable village life of eastern Germany. It was also the end of an aristocratic tradition which had begun with the forcible conversion of the Prussian Slavs by the Teutonic Knights in the thirteenth century. The Junkers had survived the First World War and both under the Weimar Republic and under Hitler had resumed their traditional role of forming a bastion against the Poles and the Slavs to the east of them. Now we saw their splendour crumbling away. One evening we came to a town called Muskau whose neat avenues and buildings suggested a principality. At one end stood the vast palace which, we learned, belonged to the family Von Arnim. Count von Arnim himself was at home and although we did not meet him we all felt his authority. For the first time on the march we were provided with billets....

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Craig, William, Enemy at the Gates: The Battle for Stalingrad, (Ballantine Books, New York: 1973), p. 357.

In the evening, while some of the senior officers were being shown the treasures of the house by Von Arnim, others drifted into the town and, to their astonishment, found themselves invited into homes and given dinner. It was still a feudal society and we were the beneficiaries of its final flicker. The Count had taken us in, his tenants would do the same."³

These prisoners of war were witnessing not just the violent end of the German Drang nach Osten, which had existed for the better part of a thousand years, but equally important, the birth of a new era in central European affairs. With the collapse and occupation of Germany, Russia became, once again, an important factor in Central European affairs.

With the defeat, unconditional surrender, and occupation of Germany, the future of Central Europe lay in the hands of the victorious Allies. In the spirit of their war-time cooperation, the Allies had agreed, at Yalta and Potsdam, to a common policy toward a defeated and occupied Germany. At Yalta, territorial questions were settled in favor of Poland and Russia by making Germany's new eastern boundary the Oder and Neisse rivers. In addition, it was agreed that the Allies would occupy and administer specific areas of Germany. Furthermore, the Yalta conference laid the foundation for allied policy in occupied Germany. The purpose of the occupation was the

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Crawley, Aidan, The Spoils of War: The Rise of Western Germany Since 1945, (Bobbs-Merrill, New York: 1973), pp. 11 and 12.

elimination of Nazism and militarism.⁴ At Potsdam, the Allies reaffirmed the Yalta Agreement, however, they added that Germany was to be considered an economic unit, and the goals of the occupation was the education of the German people for democracy. Although the protocols of both conferences established noble principles, the documents which served "as a common directive to three of the four⁵ members of the Allied Control Council were to receive very different interpretations. The events which (would) henceforth take place in Germany can always be traced back to Potsdam."⁶

Although the United States desired a unified policy toward Germany and the maintenance of German territorial integrity, this could not be achieved. Neither France nor, more importantly, the Soviet Union would accept the existence of a unified Germany. Security against a resurgent Germany was the factor of paramount importance to both countries. Certainly, a unified Germany would be able to recoup and consolidate the losses of the Second World War far more quickly than a divided and truncated Germany. The lessons of the past were clearly evident in both French and Soviet policy toward the vanquished Germany. It had taken

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Clay, Lucius D., Decision in Germany, (Doubleday, Garden City: 1950), pp. 12-13.

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France did not participate at the Potsdam Conference. It was agreed, however, that a French Occupation Zone would be made out of British and American occupation territory.

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Clay, Decision, p. 42.

a defeated Germany only twenty-one years to recover from the First World War and unleash a second. If the security of France and the Soviet Union was to be insured, then the partition and demilitarization of Germany was essential. This was the foundation of French policy regarding such matters as the Ruhr and the Saar. It was also the foundation of Soviet policy.

"Someone expressed doubt that the Germans would be able to recuperate within fifty years. But Stalin was of a different opinion. 'No, they will recover, and very quickly. That is a highly developed industrial country with an extremely qualified and numerous working class and technical intelligentsia.... Give them twelve to fifteen years and they will be on their feet again.'... Stalin stressed that Germany would remain divided: 'The West will make Western Germany their own, and we shall turn Eastern Germany into our own state.'"⁷

As a result of this attitude the Soviet Union was bent upon obstructionism in Germany and unwilling to fulfill the terms of the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements.

"We should recognize that the Soviet Union alone, of all the major powers, was not eager to obtain an early peace settlement. Particularly in the case of Germany, the Soviet Union was content with any policy that contributed to delay. This permitted them to continue occupying the productive zones assigned to them, to continue drawing off its

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Djilas, Milovan, Conversations with Stalin, (Harcourt, Brace & World, New York: 1962), pp. 114 and 153. No doubt ideological considerations played a role in Soviet policy toward Germany. The West and the Soviet Union had two different conceptions of the meaning of democracy. Stalin was unwilling to see a united Germany organized according to western principles just as the west would be unwilling to see Germany organized according to Soviet principles. Consequently the only solution was partition.

resources, to continue indoctrinating the population in the Soviet way of life, and suppressing those who maintained other beliefs."⁸

Clearly, the policy of the Soviet Union was to obstruct any general settlement and capitalize on the resulting chaos. Consequently, the Western Powers were forced to concentrate their efforts in Western Germany.

From Occupation to Consolidation of the West German State

In the period immediately following the collapse, life in Germany came to a virtual standstill. Faced with critical shortages of almost every necessity, it was abundantly clear, at least to the British and American authorities, that something had to be done. However, while the Western Powers desired to create a unified policy for all of occupied Germany, they soon realized this was not possible. In fact, the three Western Powers were faced with only two alternatives: allow conditions to deteriorate and solidify while a unified policy was negotiated, or concentrate on the organization and administration of their individual zones, without regard for the other sections of Germany. Either of these alternatives was, in actuality, the most beneficial to the Soviet Union. While they, too, clamored for an overall solution in accordance with the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements, in reality they were deter-

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Byrnes, James, Speaking Frankly, (Harper & Bros., New York: 1947), pp. 159-160.

mined to solidify the division of Germany.

After the severe winter of 1946, it became obvious to the British and Americans that the individual efforts within their respective zones were destined to fail. Regardless of the intent and political merit of these individual policies, none of the three western zones was economically viable. Thus, if the West Germans were to become self-reliant, a consolidation of the zones was necessary. Furthermore, given the important role Germany was playing in east/west relations, it was almost inevitable that the United States would assume leadership in the consolidation and reorganization of Western Germany.⁹

The economic merger of the British and American zones was the first important step toward the formation and consolidation of the West German Republic. Ostensibly, the dire economic conditions of occupied Germany were the

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For more detailed information concerning the problems of consolidation see Clay, Lucius D., The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay, Jean Edward Smith, ed., (Indiana University Press, Bloomington: 1974), 2 Vols., passim. Indeed the constitutional framework of the Federal Republic greatly parallels American ideas concerning the proper form of democratic organization.

"We believe the following principles should be fundamental (to any German Government):

A. Germany should be a federal State.... Each of these states would be politically autonomous except for the specific functions ceded to the Federal government....

B. The constitution must contain the essentials of democracy, to wit: all political power must originate with the people and be subject to their control; there must be frequent reference of programs and leadership to popular elections; elections must be held under competitive conditions in which there are at least two competing parties; political parties must be democratic in character and clearly distin-

justification for this merger. While this is true from an economic perspective, in reality it was the shrewd manipulation of the post-war situation by Konrad Adenauer which contributed most to the founding and consolidation of the West German State.

In retrospect, it was perhaps extremely fortuitous, not only for the future Federal Republic and the Western Allies, but also for the Soviet Union, that Konrad Adenauer became the dominant German statesman in the post-war period. In many respects, Adenauer's ideas for a new Germany and a new Europe corresponded remarkably well to political reality. This put him in an excellent position to exploit the east/west rift and bring his ideas to fruition. Adenauer realized quite early that the deterioration of relations between Moscow and the West would result in Germany's partition, at least for the foreseeable future. In addition, as an old Catholic Rheinlander, he harbored many of the areas prejudices against Protestant Prussia. Therefore, it became easier for him to appreciate reality and accept the division of Germany. Furthermore, the European balance of power was upset in favor of two essentially non-European nations, the United States and the Soviet Union. Now, Adenauer believed

guished from governmental instrumentalities; the basic rights of the individual must be preserved by law; government must be exercised through rule of law; and the powers of the federal government must be limited in the constitution to those agreed by the several states composing the federal government.... The constitution of the several states must provide for the exercise of all powers reserved to the states and not given to the federal government." Clay, Papers, Vol. I, p. 241.

that the time had finally come to realize ideas he had expoused since the twenties: rapproachment with France and the problems of West European cooperation. In short, Adenauer understood that the mood in Germany and the West would support a policy of fulfillment, a condition which his noble predecessor Stresemann desired but never obtained.

In Germany circumstances were not comparable to the inter-war years, and Adenauer did not face the problems which confronted Stresemann and the other Weimar Chancellors. After the Second World War, the nation was both defeated and occupied. This prevented the reemergence of the radicalism of the twenties and thirties. Consequently, only through pragmatism at home and compromise internationally could Germany regain some control over her destiny, and reestablish some degree of world respect. Soon after relations deteriorated between east and west, Adenauer realized that West Germany would be the key to the stability and security of all of Western Europe.

From the time of Adenauer's dismissal as Lord Mayor of Cologne until the incorporation of the Federal Republic into NATO in 1954, he used the international situation to his advantage. He worked tirelessly toward the development of a viable and stable order in West Germany. In addition, he contributed to the gradual participation and acceptance of the new West German State in the international arena.

Since Germany was at the mercy of the occupying powers, internal and international politics were inextricably intertwined. Although Adenauer was faced with difficult and

frustrating conditions, he adroitly guided Germany along the path toward internal development and international participation. Fortunately, the West German leader enjoyed a good working relationship with General Robertson, the British military governor. This enabled Adenauer to reach a number of agreements with the British occupation authorities. The British were quite willing to allow some degree of German autonomy because of the traditional British policy of non-involvement in continental affairs. Moreover, the post-war British economy could not support a continuously dependent Germany. In addition, the American attitude favored the realization of Adenauer's objectives. Initially, the Americans, because of their reformist and moralist traditions, were determined to conduct a harsh occupation on the Germans.¹⁰ However, with the advent of the Cold War, the Americans became less concerned with retribution than with the development of a strong West German ally. Clearly, the most troublesome and intransigent Western Power was France. In many respects, French policy toward the occupation had a number of parallels with her behavior toward Germany after the First World War. She was determined that Germany would never again become strong enough to threaten the security of France. With this in mind, she proceeded to detach the Saarland, cause problems in the

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For example, Joint-Chiefs-of-Staff Directive 1067, which attempted to implement the Morgenthau Plan, as well as subsequent directives to General Clay. Clay, Papers, passim.

Ruhr, and generally obstruct any attempts by the U.S. or Great Britain to create a unified policy for the Western occupation zones.

Although the French were obstinate, they were unable to continue their divisive policies in the face of a concerted effort to find a solution to the German problem. In the first place, the British, following their traditional policy toward the continent, desired stability in Western Europe. Consequently, they supported the American policy of a total rebuilding of Europe.¹¹ Added to the British and American pressure was the desire of the Benelux nations to solve the German problem.¹² By the beginning of 1949, conditions favored the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Formation and Consolidation of the Federal Republic

On May 23, 1949, with the proclamation of the Basic Law, Germany began her second experiment in democratic government. Like her predecessor, ill-fated Weimar Republic, this new regime was also the result of military defeat. However, parallels between Bonn and Weimar must stop here

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In September, 1954, at the London Conference, Foreign Minister Eden, in an effort to placate the French, took the unprecedented step of committing British troops to Europe for an indefinite period of time.

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See Spaak, Paul-Henrie, The Continuing Battle: Memoirs of a European, (Little-Brown, Boston: 1971), pp. 77-87, for a discussion of the Benelux view on the German problem and European integration.

because in 1949, Germany's internal and external circumstances were dramatically different than they were thirty years previously. In the first place, Prussia no longer existed as a political entity. In the east, the territory beyond the Oder-Neisse Rivers became part of post-war Poland. The Prussian Territory between the Elbe and Oder-Neisse Rivers constituted part of the new German Democratic Republic (DDR). In addition, the Prussian holdings west of the Elbe were disbanded, and the territory was reorganized so that all vestiges of Prussian influence were eliminated. Ever since the rise of Brandenburg-Prussia, central European politics were influenced greatly by the Prussian State. After the consolidation of the Bismarckian Empire in 1871, Prussia dominated German politics. Furthermore, Prussia was the most authoritarian and hierarchically structured state in Germany. Secondly, during the twelve years of the Third Reich, the National Socialists did everything in their power to alter the social and political structure of Germany. National Socialism arose in response to forces unleashed in the Nineteenth Century. The Bismarckian Reich was an attempt to industrialize Germany under the direction of a feudal regime. Therefore, when the Imperial Regime collapsed in November, 1918, all the pent-up tensions and frustrations manifested during the Empire were released into the political

arena. The Weimar Republic, consequently, suffered the strains and fate of a transitional regime. Politics during the Weimar years was characterized by violence, instability and the lack of a political consensus among the conflicting groups. At times it appeared that Germany would opt for a radical solution to her political problems. At no time did the supporters of democracy possess sufficient strength to give the democratic regime a solid and secure foundation.

The advent of National Socialism and its rise to power was an attempt, to solve, albeit violently, the chaotic political problems brought about by Germany's lack of political development.¹³ Although National Socialism was an anti-modern response, its impact fostered the development of modern political institutions in post-war Germany. In the first place, the Nazis attempted to create a unified nation subordinated to the ideas of leadership and the Volk. This contributed to the elimination of such narrow ideas as class and interest group. Secondly, the Nazis dealt the death blow to Germany's most important class and institution, the aristocracy and the Army. The aristocracy was removed as a viable political force on the field of battle and in the reprisals conducted after the abortive July 1944 coup.¹⁴

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For a useful discussion of the impact of National Socialism on post-war Germany see Frye, Charles, "The Third Reich and the Second Republic: National Socialism's Impact upon German Democracy," The Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 21, No. 4, December 1968.

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See above, Chapter IV.

Furthermore, the Army was discredited. The Army, not only failed to protect the nation but contributed its fair share to the Nazi catastrophe. With a defeated and discredited Army, it was not possible to develop a new Dolchstosslegende. Finally, the severe economic, social, and political consequences of Germany's defeat created its own kind of leveling. Now most Germans had to face dire economic and social dislocations. In short, the social and political situation in post-war West Germany favored the development of a moderate democratic regime.

The members of the Parliamentary Council, who drew up the Basic Law, were determined to avoid the mistakes contained in the ill-fated Weimar Constitution. In their effort to make the Basic Law more realistic and applicable to the German situation, they devoted special attention to what they considered the shortcomings of the Constitution of 1919. As far as they were concerned, the troublesome provisions of the Weimar Constitution were those dealing with the presidency, the chancellorship, the political parties and the Weimar electoral system. Indeed, from the constitutional perspective, it was a combination of these factors which enabled Hitler and the Nazis to come to power legally. In Weimar, under the provisions of the infamous Article 48, the President had extraordinary powers. He appointed the members of the government and, in times of emergency, he could govern through the use of presidential decrees. The Chancellor, for the most part, maintained a precarious position during the first republic. This necessitated reliance on flimsy

majorities and weak coalitions, thereby causing a rapid turnover in cabinets. Furthermore, the Weimar Constitution not only tolerated, but favored the growth and activity of avowedly anti-democratic parties. This caused the republic to be under constant attack by extremist groups. Finally, the adoption of proportional representation enabled the development and participation of a large number of political parties. This fostered sharp cleavages in the legislature and prevented the development of any legislative consensus.

One of the major concerns of the framers of the Basic Law was to prevent a repeat of the Weimar experience in post-war West Germany. In order to accomplish this goal, the Basic Law severely limits the powers of the Federal President.¹⁵ Under the provisions of Article 63, the Federal President has the power to appoint the Federal Chancellor.¹⁶ However, he can only appoint the person who has been elected chancellor by a majority of the members of the Bundestag (Parliament). This not only prevents the formation of minority or presidential governments, but also limits presidential interference in legislative affairs. In addition, Article 58, designed to prevent

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"(T)he institution of the Head of State (Federal President) was one of those constitutional organs whose competencies were the most severely restricted in view of the Weimar experiences." Introductory Essay in The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, (Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany: 1974), p. VII.

16

The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, Article 63.

presidential rule by decree, requires "the countersignature of the Federal Chancellor or the appropriate Federal Minister" on all presidential orders and decrees.¹⁷

Similarly, in an attempt to prevent the development of radical political parties, such as the NSDAP, the Basic Law contains specific provisions regulating the organization and behavior of political parties in the Federal Republic. According to Article 21, Section 1, political parties must be publically accountable and organized according to democratic principles. More importantly, however, Section 2 of this article outlaws all parties "which by reason of their aims or the behavior of their adherents, seek to impair or abolish the free democratic basic order or to endanger the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany."¹⁸

The role of the Federal Chancellor was, perhaps, the most important position strengthened by the provisions of the Basic Law. During the Weimar Republic, the Chancellor presided over tenuous parliamentary coalitions and, therefore, had little control over the government. The framers of the Basic Law, however, sought to strengthen his hand and increase governmental stability through Article 67. This article prevents the removal of the Federal Chancellor unless the Bundestag is prepared to elect a new successor who can command a parlia-

¹⁷

Ibid, Article 58.

¹⁸

Ibid, Article 21.

mentary majority.¹⁹

Finally, the Bundestag, pursuant to its constitutional power to regulate elections, enacted the Federal Election Law on May 7, 1956. This law was designed to mitigate the full impact of proportional representation by requiring a political party to receive at least 5% of the vote before its members are allowed to sit in the Bundestag. No doubt this has contributed greatly to the reduction of the number of active political parties in West Germany. In 1949, ten parties were represented in the Bundestag, whereas during the past 15 years only three parties were represented.

While these legal and constitutional principles are important in understanding West German political stability, other equally important developments took place in the post-war period. In the first place, not only did the West German political parties change greatly from the Weimar period, but the very foundation of the party system altered radically. During Weimar, many parties operated in the political arena, which was one of the factors contributing to the instability of the first republic. As soon as the ban preventing Germans from undertaking political activities was lifted, Konrad Adenauer began his efforts to overcome this shortcoming. He realized that it was now possible to move beyond Germany's traditional confessional antagonisms

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Ibid, Article 67.

and create a unified Christian party.²⁰ Moreover, Adenauer viewed the decline of religion and the loss of Christian morality as a major contribution to the rise of National Socialism. Therefore, if Germany was to begin again and overcome the spiritual and physical catastrophe of the Third Reich, then Christian religion and morality must be given renewed strength. Furthermore, the defeat and elimination of National Socialism did not remove the problems of atheism and morality in German politics and society. Now, in the east, Germany was faced with another equally dangerous atheistic ideology. Consequently, Adenauer believed that the time had come for the development of a broadly based Christian party, rather than a return to the denominational conflicts of the past.

"For many years I had believed that we needed a Christian party based on the foundations that both Catholics and Protestants had in common.

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"The great question (after the war) was whether the newly formed parties were to link up with the old parties of the Weimar Republic, or whether new forms were to be evolved.... (The non-Marxist groups) realized that the real reason for the failure of the Weimar Republic was to be found in the disintegration of the Center. Furthermore, very many Catholic and Protestant Christians had united in resistance to National Socialism; they recognized their common purpose. Rejecting all former party groupings, the Christian Democratic Union (known in Bavaria as the Christian Social Union) was constituted as a new political organization." Adenauer, Konrad, "The Development of Parliamentary Institutions in Germany, 1945-1954," in Andrews, William G., European Political Institutions: A Comparative Government Reader, (D. Van Nostrand, Princeton: 1962), p. 58. In addition, for a useful discussion of the role of religion in German politics see Spotts, Frederic, The Churches and Politics in Germany, (Wesleyan University Press, Middletown: 1973).

Only this could, I thought, help us to counter the increasingly materialistic approach to political matters; and only this could lead to a political life in Germany that was not based merely on the interest of separate strata and classes....

Only a great party that included all strata of society could rebuild prostrate, broken Germany. It must be a party which could appeal to employers and employed, the middle classes, farmers, civil servants, intellectuals, people from the north and the south, those driven from their homes and those who had simply fled. The ethical foundations adopted by the CDU must be strong enough to contain and ease the tensions that exist in a big party."²¹

Adenauer realized that the time was indeed auspicious for this type of party. Now Protestantism was no longer in a position to dominate confessional politics. With the loss of the eastern territories, the Protestant denominations suffered a reduction of support, because Prussia was one of the traditional strongholds of German Protestantism. In West Germany, on the other hand, Catholicism did not suffer any loss of support because Catholics were strongly represented in the Rheinland and Bavaria. Furthermore, compared to the Protestant Churches, the Catholic Church emerged in a better position in the post-war years. It continued to possess its organizational strength of the pre-Nazi years and to maintain its connection to the Catholic labor movement and other ancillary religious organizations. Therefore, as Adenauer realized, the Catholic Church was in a position to alter its historical position as a minority

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Adenauer, Konrad, Memoirs: 1945-53, (Henry Regnery, Chicago: 1966), pp. 43 and 45.

religion and increase its influence in Germany. Furthermore, with the relative balance between Catholics and Protestants, additional conflict no longer served any purpose. Under the skillful leadership of Adenauer, the CDU developed into a popular mass political party, capable of appealing to diverse segments of post-war German society. In 1949, the CDU won a plurality in West Germany's first parliamentary election. In 1953, the CDU was the first party in German history to gain an absolute majority in Parliament. Indeed, the CDU dominated German politics from 1949 until 1966.²²

The Social Democratic Party (SPD), however, labored under problems which were very different from those facing the CDU. Whereas Adenauer was quick to realize that the times had changed and circumstances were ripe for a totally new party organization, Kurt Schumacher, the SPD leader, proceeded according to traditional SPD political assumptions. Schumacher reached political maturity during the Weimar Republic, a trying period for the SPD, as it was for other segments of German society. During that period, the party relied heavily on ideology in its political appeal. More importantly, however, the SPD was portrayed by its right-wing adversaries as the unpatriotic party of the "November Criminals." Because so many sailors in the Imperial Navy were members of the SPD, the party was accused of fomenting

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Edinger, Lewis, Politics in Germany, (Little, Brown, Boston: 1968), pp. 244-249.

the revolution, causing the collapse of the Empire and the flight of the Kaiser. Most unfair, however, was the accusation that the SPD stabbed the Army in the back and snatched victory from the German Nation. During the first republic, the party was portrayed by its adversaries as an unpatriotic and unGerman organization, just as it had been portrayed by Bismarck during the Empire. For this reason, the SPD was one of the first organizations introduced to the Nazi terror.

After the Second World War, Schumacher reorganized the SPD and based the party's political outlook on the Weimar experience. First, he insisted that the SPD re-emphasize its Marxist-Socialist working class origin. Secondly, he felt that the party had won the right to participate, and perhaps, dominate, post-war German politics because of the Social Democrat's record of resistance to the Nazis. Third, he earnestly fought against the occupying powers for the right of Germany to determine her future. He was against the division of Germany into zones of occupation and fought against the dismemberment and partition of Germany. This latter point was a dramatic reversal of traditional party appeal. Now, the SPD, more than any other legally constituted political group, was the champion of German Nationalism.

However, Schumacher's doctrinaire approach caused the Social Democrats to become a party out of touch with political reality. At the same time Adenauer saw more clearly the

realities of post-war German politics. He realized that Germany was forced to accept partition and he understood that the only way Germany (or at least the western portions) could eventually regain control over their territory was through rapproachment with the west. Furthermore, Adenauer understood that Germany's domestic situation was fluid. Now, for the first time in modern German history, it was possible to move beyond the conflict-ridden, ideological parties of the past and create broad based and less ideological parties. Consequently, the continued emphasis on ideology within the SPD aided Adenauer's goals. By establishing the CDU as a Christian party fighting against the new atheistic menace from the Marxist-Leninist east, Adenauer was at the same time implicitly attacking the Marxist SPD.

In addition to Schumacher's somewhat antiquarian ideas, the SPD was plagued with other equally pressing political problems. With the partition of Germany between east and west, the SPD lost the bulk of its traditional political support. In the west, the SPD had always obtained support from the Ruhr industrial center and the city of Hamburg. However, it obtained the great bulk of its electoral strength from the industrial area of Silesia and the urban areas of Berlin and Leipzig. With the removal of Silesia from German control and the separation of the Soviet occupation zone from the western zones, the SPD was at an electoral disadvantage.²³

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Ibid, p. 257. This, no doubt, helps explain why Schumacher was an ardent nationalist.

In the formative years of the Federal Republic, the SPD remained at a constant electoral disadvantage to the CDU.²⁴ During this important formative period of post-war political development, the party was hampered by the loss of its traditional areas of support, its Marxist ideology, and by the economic and political success of the CDU. Indeed, it was the CDU which set the tone of post-war German politics and determined the future development of West German political, social, and economic life.

In an effort to set the stage for an attempt to gain political power for the party (thereby forcing the party to abandon its position as Germany's permanent opposition party), a group of reformers centered around the then Mayor of West Berlin, Willy Brandt, successfully convinced the party to reappraise its political *raison d'être*. At the 1959 Party Congress held in Bad Godesberg, this group successfully pushed through a program which called for the abandonment of Marxism and the acceptance of the West German economic system. Although up to one third of the delegates supported the more traditional program, "the bulk of the party membership appeared to support...the party's new moderate position.... (T)he significance of the Godesberg Programm is that it had no ideology. The party has changed enough so that an ideological program is no longer necessary."²⁵

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"The Bulletin," Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, Vol. 24, No. 29, August 31, 1976.

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Chalmer, Douglas A., The Social Democratic Party of Germany: From Working Class Movement to Modern Party, (Yale University Press, New Haven: 1964), pp. 67-68.

Although "in every Bundestag since 1953, the SPD was able to increase its share of the total vote," from 1961 (the first parliamentary election since Bad Godesberg) the party's strength grew dramatically.²⁶ And since 1969, the Social Democrats have been the major party in the governing coalition. The party has been a member of the government since the formation of the Grand Coalition in 1966.

The continued existence of the Free Democratic Party (FPD) is perhaps the most striking aspect of the post-war German party system. With the development of the CDU and the SPD as broad based, non-ideological mass parties, it appeared that Germany was developing in the direction of a stable two-party system. Yet, the FPD, though small, continues to exist.²⁷ There are a number of factors which contribute to the continued existence of the FPD. In the first place, Germany lacks a tradition of two-party politics. This legitimizes the continued participation of third and fourth parties. In the second place, the party has been able to survive politically because, like the CDU, "it has been able to straddle the social cleavages which, in

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Kligemann, Hans D. and Pappi, Franz Urban, "The 1969 Bundestag in the Federal Republic of Germany: An Analysis of Voting Behavior," Comparative Politics, Vol. 2, No. 4, July 1970, p. 524.

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The FPD has averaged 9.37% of the vote in the seven elections between 1949 and 1972. It obtained its maximum support in the election of 1961, when it polled 12.8% of the vote. "The Bulletin," August 31, 1976.

Germany's past, gave rise to a multiplicity of parties of the center and the right."²⁸ For the most part, the FPD has been able to overcome the political divisions which have plagued German liberalism since the middle of the Nineteenth Century. During the Nineteenth Century, the liberals emerged as a nationalist and constitutional force. After the unification of the empire, the party split between the constitutionalists and the nationalists, a division which continued throughout the Weimar Republic. Finally, the party has been able to survive because it could always count on a small, though consistent, percentage of the electoral vote. This gives the party power far in excess of its parliamentary and electoral strength. Thus, it enables the FPD to hold the balance in the Bundestag when neither of the major parties receives an absolute majority at the polls.²⁹ Throughout most of the history of the Federal Republic, both the CDU and the SPD have had to rely on the support of the FPD in order to maintain their parties in power.³⁰

The development of the post-war German party system is a striking contrast to its Weimar predecessor. In the

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Burkett, p. 64.

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Only three times has the FPD failed to obtain government portfolios: in 1953 and 1957, when the CDU obtained its majorities, and in 1965, with the formation of the Grand Coalition.

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For an interesting discussion of these points see, Frye, Charles, "Parties and Pressure Groups in Weimar and Bonn," World Politics, Vol. XXVII, No. 4.

contemporary party system, fewer parties participate, but they are highly competitive, and all major parties accept the legitimacy and necessity of the contemporary regime.

The Post-War German Right

One of the most positive developments in post-war German politics has been the weakness of right-wing political groups. This is not to say that the Federal Republic has not faced the problem of right-wing extremism, only that a major right-wing threat has not materialized. However, since 1949, West Germany has had to deal with two right-wing extremist groups: the Socialist Reichs Party and the National Democratic Party. The Socialist Reichs Party was the first group on the political scene, but was eventually banned by the Constitutional Court as a threat to West German democracy. With the forced dissolution of the SRP, the NPD became the leading spokesman of the German Right.

The great concern both within and outside Germany over the nature of the post-war Right and the right wing parties is certainly understandable. From a historical point of view, it is clear that in Germany the Right has been much more effective politically than the Left. Indeed, Germany's first experiment in democracy ended in the right-wing extremism of National Socialism. For some, a useful index of the strength and stability of the Bonn regime may be

found in the political strength of the German Right.³¹

The argument runs as follows: since the Weimar Republic was unstable and plagued by economic and political crises, the Right was presented with a number of golden opportunities to mount its attacks on the fledgling republic, culminating in the demise of democracy and the rise of totalitarian National Socialism. Consequently, given the past performance of Germany, it must be assumed that democratic methods are at a disadvantage and any growth in the strength of the Right means a corresponding loss by the democratic regime. There is much to support this assertion. During the Weimar Republic, every time the democratic parties lost votes, the Right usually benefitted. However, this assertion may also be reversed, so that an entirely different set of relationships is emphasized. It is entirely possible that the weakness of the extreme Right (and the extreme Left) is an index of the success of the Bonn regime. No doubt, the rise of extremism is, in many cases, the result of acute dissatisfaction and governmental incapacity. When these conditions continue unabated, as in Weimar, the population often supports extremist alternatives.³²

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For example, Tauber, Kurt, Beyond Eagle and Swastika: German Nationalism Since 1945, 2 Vols., (Wesleyan University Press, Middletown: 1967), pp. 986 ff. For a similar analysis see also, Nagel, David, The National Democratic Party: Right-Wing Extremism in the Federal Republic of Germany, (University of California Press, Berkley: 1970).

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Nagel suggests that one reason for the formation of the Grand Coalition was the economic and political crisis of 1965 (p. 41). However, Edinger appears to present a much

Yet, Bonn has fared quite well in its relatively short existence (although it has existed more than twice as long as the ill-fated Weimar Republic). The regime has succeeded in lifting West Germany from the depths of the Nazi abyss. It has never faced a major economic crisis since its founding. It has grown into a major economic power, where the population, including the millions of displaced persons, have been assimilated both economically and politically. As Chancellor Schmidt has told his nation, West Germany has handled the present economic decline far better than any other western industrial nation. This is certainly a dramatic reversal of the inter-war experience.

Thus, one of the major reasons why the Right has not fared well is that it lacks a viable issue. In all the elections since 1949, the parties of the Right have failed

better argument. He contends that the CDU agreed to the coalition rather than risk an election and possibly lose power. With the formation of the coalition, the CDU could sort out its party problems while remaining in government. The SPD joined because it presented an opportunity to come to power for the first time in post-war politics. This, it was believed, would enable the party to prove its ability to exercise political power responsibly. Edinger, pp. 254, 257, and 263.

Concerning the rise of the German Right, Willy Brandt remarked: "One can ask whether or not the Federal Republic of Germany has offered numerous proofs, during the past two decades, of its reliability as a partner and of its solidarity as a peaceful democracy. I would answer the question affirmatively. But we also should not deceive ourselves with respect to the fact--whether it seems justified to us or not--that the supporting layer of confidence is still thin. Only by acknowledging the lingering suspicions can we understand the excitement evoked by the appearance of a not very impressive party of the radical Right. What some people overlook is that democracy in Germany has put forth strong roots and that we are strong enough to protect those roots." Brandt, Willy, A Peace Policy for Europe, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York: 1969), p. 11.

to achieve 5% of the vote and they have not won a single mandate. Combined with this lack of viable issues and its consequent poor electoral results, the Right appears to be losing ground to the right-wing elements of the CDU and FPD. Perhaps the CDU was the greatest beneficiary from the poor showing of the extreme Right. It seems that Franz Joseph Strauss, the fiery conservative leader of the CSU (the Bavarian wing of the CDU) has been capable of attracting many conservative Germans to the CDU.³³ Now only the die-hard extremists remain as supporters of the NPD, the only existing party of the extreme Right. Therefore, the absence of strong right-wing extremist elements demonstrates the integrative capabilities of the West German party and political systems.

Political Culture

There is a consensus among some students of German politics that the problem of German democracy must be approached with extreme caution. Historically, the Germans have demonstrated a penchant for abandoning democratic beliefs and structures, under the slightest pressure from anti-democratic forces. In 1848, liberal democracy collapsed under the strong Prussian reaction. In the 1860's and 1870's, the German liberalism willingly abandoned democracy and

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For an interesting presentation of Strauss' ideas see, Strauss, Franz Joseph, Das Konzept der deutschen Rechten: Aus Reden und Schriften des F. J. Strauss, Halfmann, Dieter, ed., (Pahl, Rugenstein Verlag, Koeln: 1971). It is clear, from this presentation, why elements of the Right would be attracted to Strauss.

constitutionalism in exchange for unification by feudal and paternalistic Prussia. This trend culminated in the unsuccessful Weimar experiment and aided the rise of totalitarian National Socialism. For the most part, the Republic failed because it faced an anti-democratic milieu. As a result of its historical experience, it has been argued that the Germans, prior to the founding of the Bonn regime, had not developed the requisite social relationships and political attitudes and beliefs necessary to support their democratic politics. Thus, for many, skepticism concerning the viability of the Bonn regime is more than warranted.³⁴

Although a skeptical approach to German politics is useful, it should not color any analysis of the development

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There are a number of sources which either imply or explicitly suggest that the Bonn regime governs a society that may not be entirely conducive to democracy. Among them are: Ekstein, Harry, "A Theory of Stable Democracy," Appendix B, in Division and Cohesion in a Democracy, (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1966), passim. Almond and Verba found that affective support for the West German government left much to be desired. See Almond, Gabriel, and Verba, Sidney, The Civic Culture, (Little, Brown, Boston: 1963). Edinger suggests that "(t)he prevailing climate of political opinion in the Federal Republic indicates that the new political system is based more on a permissive than on a supportive consensus." Edinger, Politics in Germany, p. 114. Dahrendorf also contends that the modern German experience lacks a commitment to the values needed for a liberal democratic society. Dahrendorf, Rolf, Society and Democracy in Germany, (Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co., Garden City: 1969), passim. Similarly, Glen Schramm argues that the German idea of Rechtsstaat aids the operation of the West German Democratic regime because "there is no evidence that a great number of governmental officials have in a profound way made these values their own." Schramm, Glen, "Ideology and Politics: The Rechtsstaat Idea in West Germany," in Albinski, Henry S., and Pettit, Lawrence K., European Political Processes: Essays and Readings, 2nd ed., (Allyn and Bacon, Boston: 1974), p. 55.

of the Bonn regime. While the past is always a useful indicator of possible present and future developments, this does not mean that the past will be repeated or that conditions must remain unchanged. Just as attitudes, political structures, and governmental operations had a negative impact on the Weimar Republic, it can be argued that Bonn has reversed the process. The Bonn regime began its existence in a decidedly favorable position, especially when compared to the Weimar experience. In 1945, the return to any previous political experience was not a viable alternative. Since 1949, the West German regime has demonstrated its ability not only to survive but to prosper.

The post-war experience suggests that the regime has been able to increase support and develop a supportive and complementary political culture. Indeed, common sense would suggest this to be the case because the existence of a strong and viable democratic culture could not be present immediately after the tragedy of the Nazi experience. Moreover, "(t)he success of the Federal Republic in the first quarter century would seem to indicate that considerable learning has taken place."³⁵ By using a time-series poll, these authors concluded that during the life of the Federal Republic, the regime has developed the growth of

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Conradt, David, Bradley, Warren, and Weinstein, John, "Sources of Political Attitude Change in Post-war Germany," a paper delivered at the 1974 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, p. 2.

diffused support for the post-war republic.³⁶ In tracing the development of attitudes over time, this study demonstrates that popular support has changed from the early years. In the beginning, support was tied to policy outputs, whereas at present, the republic has built up a reservoir of support which can be relied upon in times of crisis.³⁷ Thus, the ability of the regime to perform successfully and the ability of the society to develop attitudes complimentary to the regime not only explains the continued success of the West German regime, but it also explains why radicalism poses few problems.

West Germany and Europe

For almost two hundred years, and probably longer, European international politics has been dominated by the dual problems of nationalism and the question of political control of central Europe.³⁸ Not suprisingly, these problems, in the Nineteenth Century, revolved around the questions of German nationalism and unification. For

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Ibid, p. 25. See also, the attitudinal surveys conducted between 1947 and 1966 by the Institut fuer Demoskopie, in Nolle, E. and Neumann, P. K., The German Public Opinion Polls, 1947-1966, (Verlag fuer Demoskopie, Allensbach: 1967), passim.

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This sense of support and pride in the new Germany partially explains the ability of the West Germans to handle their present economic difficulties, as well as the fact that Chancellor Schmidt is able to lecture other world leaders on economic and urban matters.

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It may be argued that the problem of central Europe dates back at least as far as the Thirty Years War and, perhaps, ultimately to the decline of the Carolingian Empire.

Germany, the political unification did not completely satisfy the desire for national unification. The creation of the Second Empire was a Prussian imposition and did not solve the problem of domestic unity. Furthermore, the Bismarckian Reich opted for the little German (klein Deutsch) solution to the problem of unification, and, therefore, excluded the Austrians from the unified empire. In addition, for the remainder of Europe, the creation of a powerful state in central Europe was a major threat to all because it upset the precarious European balance of power. As a result, Europe was forced to fight two extremely violent and destructive wars in which Germany attempted to realize her desire to encompass all Germans in the German state. Her adversaries reacted in response to the threat posed by this central European power.

For some Europeans, the spectacle of the destructive Second World War served only to reinforce the idea that a new method of dealing with European problems must be found.³⁹ Others, viewing Europe prostrate and destroyed at the conclusion of the Second World War, arrived at a similar point of view. World War II certainly changed the face not only of Europe but also the world. Outside Europe, the war effort gave added impetus to the nationalistic movements in the colonies of the European imperial

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Konrad Adenauer concluded in the mid-Twenties that cooperation, not antagonism, must be the future foundation of European politics. Pritte, p. 171. Paul-Henri Spaak arrived at a similar conclusion during the war. Spaak, pp. 76-77.

powers. Within Europe, not only were the nations exhausted and destroyed, but now they had to face the power and presence of two quasi-European states: the Soviet Union and the United States. Now, Europeans had to face the reality that they were no longer the dominant force in the world. In the post-war world, Europe was presented with the conditions necessary to prevent the recurrence of her periodic fratricidal behavior and was forced, out of necessity, to develop the means of cooperative behavior.

In this atmosphere of constraints and potentialities labored Guy Mollet, Robert Schumann, George Marshall, Paul-Henri Spaak, as well as Stalin and Molotov. Almost immediately after the conclusion of the war, it became clear that the World War II Grand Coalition was no longer a viable foundation for European and world order. It quickly became obvious that the Soviet Union was in no great hurry to conclude a general agreement on Germany and Europe. After the Berlin Blockade, there could be no doubt about Soviet intentions in eastern and central Europe.⁴⁰

Fortunately, the implication of Soviet policy was not lost upon the leaders of western Europe and the United States. It became clear that, because a general solution to European problems was not possible, the west European nations along with the United States would have to chart their own course. Soon after, there began the developments toward the creation of the Federal Republic as well as the

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See above, this chapter.

search for cooperative arrangements among the west European nations.

Concerning the German question, France was the most recalcitrant of the west European nations. In the immediate post-war period, France continued to apply Richelieu's maxim: whatever weakens Germany strengthens France. This French reluctance to agree on Germany made her as inflexible as the Soviets. Even though the French were initially intransigent toward Germany, a Franco-German rapprochement began to develop through the labors of a number of Europeans. Almost immediately upon entering post-war German politics, Konrad Adenauer began working toward his "Carolingian solution" to west European politics.⁴¹ His statesman-like behavior on such thorny Franco-German problems as the Saarland and the Ruhr Authority demonstrated his good faith concerning the question of Franco-German rapprochement. As far as Adenauer was concerned:

"European unity...is an unalterable aim of German policy. (Moreover) (o)ne of the principle aims of the Free World is to reconcile France and Germany and bring them together in a common effort for the welfare of their people. The successful outcome of the German-French discussions fills me with special satisfaction. The cooperation of Germany and France is an absolutely essential element for the maintenance of peace in Europe."⁴²

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Prittie, pp. 168, 178.

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Adenauer, Konrad, "Germany, The New Partner," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 33, No. 2, January, 1955, pp. 180-181.

Even in France, not all Frenchmen were firm believers in Richelieu's policy. Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet worked diligently for Franco-German cooperation and west European integration. It was Schuman's plan which became the foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community. Jean Monnet, building upon Schuman's work, became one of the guiding lights in the creation of the European Common Market.⁴³ Although there have been problems over the last quarter century, Franco-German relations have steadily grown and improved. At present, the cooperation of these two former enemies is the cornerstone of the European Common Market.⁴⁴

Even though the development of relationships between the Federal Republic and western Europe have been remarkable, West Germany still faced problems in the east. This continued to demonstrate the often precarious position of Germany in central Europe. Germany was not only caught in the tide of post-war international politics, she was often the center of numerous cold war confrontations. However, by the late 1960's and early 1970's, it was clear that

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For some useful insights into the developments surrounding the process of European integration see Friedrich, Carl J., Europe: An Emergent Nation?, (Harper & Row, New York: 1969); Curtis, Michael, West European Integration, (Harper & Row, New York: 1965); and Morgan, Roger, West European Politics Since 1945: The Shaping of the European Community, (Capricorn Books, New York: 1973).

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For a discussion of these developments see Goldsborough, James O., "The Franco-German Entente," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 54, No. 3, April, 1976, pp. 496-510.

West Germany had been successfully integrated into both western Europe and the Atlantic Community.⁴⁵ Just as Germany's relations vis-a-vis western Europe had domestic and international implications, so too did her relationship with eastern Europe. What is perhaps Germany's most difficult domestic problem--reunification--is eminently an international question. Once again, post-war West Germany has been fortunate to have had extremely capable leadership at the helm. Just as Adenauer was capable of dealing effectively with Germany's relations with the west, so too has Brandt launched West Germany on a realistic course towards the east.⁴⁶ Clearly, the new Ost Politik, with its normalizing of relations with the east and the acceptance of the Order-Neisse boundary and recent Helsinki agreements, postpones indefinitely the question of unification as well as placing the Federal Republic firmly in the western world.

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For a discussion of Germany's role in European defense and the Atlantic Alliance see below, Chapter VI.

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There is some question as to why the West Germans embarked upon the Ost Politik. Laslo Goergey suggests that for political as well as economic reasons, rapprochement between the Federal Republic and eastern Europe became essential. In the first place, the reestablishment of Germany's traditional trading relationships was necessary to insure the strength of West German economy. In addition, from a political point of view, it was essential to eliminate unification as a major domestic question, as well as to prevent the diplomatic isolation of the Federal Republic. At this time, the Atlantic Community, led by the United States, was desirous of lessening tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Goergey, Laslo, Bonn's Eastern Policy, 1964-1971, (Archon Books, The Shoe String Press, Hamden: 1972). Brandt alludes to the problem of the strained relations between Bonn, Paris, and Washington, as well as the unification problem as reasons which led to the accommodation with eastern Europe. Brandt, p. 24.

The post-war developments in the Federal Republic, both domestically and internationally, demonstrate a remarkable change: for the first time in generations, the Germans, at least the West Germans, have been able to create and maintain strength and stability in both domestic and international affairs.

CHAPTER VI

CREATING NEW TRADITIONS: THE BUNDESWEHR AND POLITICS

It is understandable that the question of rearming West Germany would resurrect the specter of militarism and cause anxiety in many quarters. In the first place, the German nation was a central factor in history's two most destructive wars. In the second place, the German nation, historically, has accepted an exaggerated role for the military in its political and social life. Although the rearmament and development of a West German military organization provoked anxiety, one thing is clear: the behavior of the Bundeswehr cannot compare with that of any of its predecessors. There are, perhaps, two important reasons why this army is very different from anything that existed in the past. On the one hand, the contemporary West German regime has developed into a

legitimate and capable government, which assures that all subordinate organizations remain in their proper spheres of competence.¹ And on the other hand, Germany, both East and West, is no longer in a position to influence international and military events to the extent that it could in the past. Thus, domestic and international conditions serve to insure that the West German military (the Bundeswehr) will be different from any of its antecedent organizations.

The Question of German Rearmament

At the conclusion of the Second World War, it was inconceivable that the Western Allies soon would be contemplating the rearmament of Germany. Indeed, it was to be the common policy of the victorious Allies to exorcise Nazism and militarism from Germany.² However, no

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For a discussion of some of the factors which contribute to the legitimacy and capability of the Bonn Regime, see Chapter V.

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For example, the Morgenthau plan and JCS Directive 1067. The Morgenthau plan was designed to de-militarize and pastoralize Germany, and JCS (Joint-Chiefs-of-Staff) Directive 1067 ordered a harsh (though humane) occupation. In retrospect, it appears that these efforts were doomed from the beginning. Indeed, political reality and historical precedent demanded that the West Germans play an important role in European politics. In the first place, Germany, as a major European industrial nation, played an important role in the pre-war European economy, thus insuring West Germany's position in the post-war reconstruction. Secondly, the disintegration of the war-time alliance virtually guaranteed that West Germany would join with the Western Allies and contribute its economic and military resources to the reconstruction of a European balance of power.

sooner had the Germans capitulated when the wartime alliance collapsed. The Western Allies, faced with a fait accompli in both the Eastern Zone and Eastern Europe, soon had to accept the challenge of the Berlin Blockade and the hardening of positions between East and West. In the meantime, the military balance in Europe shifted dramatically in favor of the Soviet Union. While the Western Allies demobilized quickly after the Second World War (leaving only garrison troops to occupy Western Germany), the Soviet Union continued to maintain a large standing army.³ Although this situation caused concern both in Germany and the West, it was not sufficient reason for the West Germans to raise the question of rearmament. However, the Soviet Union went one step further. Between 1947 and 1949, an East German Police Force was created.⁴ This

³ McGeehan, Robert, The German Rearmament Question: American Diplomacy and European Defense After World War II, (University of Illinois Press, Urbana: 1971), p. 6-7. McGeehan cites the following statistics: 22 Soviet divisions in East Germany which were backed up by 175 ready Soviet divisions and another 125 in reserve, not counting 60 satellite divisions. Against this force, the West had only 4 weak Anglo-American divisions and no air force.

⁴ Verteidigung im Buendnis: Planung, Aufbau und Bewaehrung der Bundeswehr, 1950-1972, Herausgegeben vom Militaergeschichtlichen Forschungsamt, (Bernard & Graefe Verlag Fuer Wehrwesen, Muenchen: 1975), p. 25. These authors cite the following statistics for the East German Police: 70,000 housed in barracks (Kassernierten Bereitschaften), 18,000 Border Police, and 5,000 Transport Police. In addition, see Schubert, Klaus von, Wiederbewaffnung und Westintegration: Die innere Auseinandersetzung um die militaerische und Aussenpolitische Orientierung der Bundesrepublik, 1950-1952, (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahreshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte, Stuttgart: 1970), pp. 10-15, for a discussion of the impact of the East German Police, as well as the Korean War, on the question of German rearmament.

increased concern within Western Germany because it now had to face the prospect of invasion from German troops instead of Soviet forces. Adenauer, reflecting German fears, raised the question of West German defense with the Allied High Commissioners. However, while the Allies were aware of the potential danger posed by the preponderance of military power possessed by the East, they were unwilling to discuss the subject of German rearmament and agreed only to the increase of the West German Laender police by 10,000 men. Although Adenauer realized the potential threat posed by the Eastern forces, this was not his major concern. He believed that the question of German rearmament was tied intimately to the reestablishment of German sovereignty in the western occupation zones.⁵

Adenauer first presented the idea of German rearmament in a 1949 interview with the Cleveland Plain Dealer newspaper. Although his remarks in the interview met with opposition both in German and abroad,⁶ it did outline Adenauer's fundamental ideas concerning German rearmament.

"In the interview with the Cleveland Plain Dealer I had said that the Federal Republic was prepared, if that case arose, to make a contribution only in the context of a European army or, to put it differently, to the army of a European federation. There could be no European army without a European federation. Inside this federated Europe Germany would have her place as an equal member.

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Adenauer, Memoirs, p. 270.

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McGeehan, p. 19.

There were three factors that determined my attitude to the question of German rearmament:

- 1) the achievement of sovereignty as a consequence of rearmament;
- 2) security against the rearmament of the Eastern zone by Soviet Russia;
- 3) the establishment of a European federation."⁷

These remarks reflect, in the military sphere, two of Adenauer's most fundamental concerns: European federation, and rapprochement with France. In the first place, he realized that France would never accede to German rearmament without guarantees.⁸ Furthermore, he believed that a federated European Army would contribute to his goal of European integration.⁹

For the most part, these early discussions concerning German rearmament were merely speculations. It was not until the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 that the question of German rearmament began to be seriously considered. The parallels between Germany and Korea were not lost upon the West, especially the Germans. Both countries were politically divided, with one half of the country under the control and direction of the Soviet Union. If the Soviets would try armed force in Asia, it was considered possible that they would do the same in Europe where they had major interests and an overwhelming

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Adenauer, in his memoirs, alluded to the fact that his remarks caused a fuss in Germany, p. 268.

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A federated army plus the internationalization of the Ruhr basin in the European Iron and Coal Community would more than guarantee French security.

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For a discussion of Adenauer's views on European integration, see above, Chapter V.

superiority of force. Indeed, the outbreak of the Korean conflict fit the pattern of Soviet expansion. In the post-war period, they brought Eastern Europe under their domination, supported insurrection in Greece and, now, armed force in Asia. To many in the West, it was simply a matter of time before they would become a victim of Soviet designs. This interpretation of Soviet intentions was given even more credibility when the political, social, and economic fabric of Western Europe was taken into consideration. Germany was still occupied. There was political instability in France and Italy, and the general health of the European economy was open to serious doubt.

In addition, the military situation was equally dangerous. The early success of the North Koreans pointed out serious deficiencies within the American military. The fact that it took some time for the U.S. to muster enough strength to break out from Pusan raised the possibility that the Americans might not have sufficient strength to defend both Europe and Asia. Indeed, the Americans were quick to recognize their deficiencies and their implications for Europe. In the period between July and August 1950, the Americans reached the conclusion that if Europe (West of the Elbe) was to be defended, then German participation was essential.¹⁰ As might be expected, the U.S. desire

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McGeehan, p. 25.

to rearm Germany caused a mild stir in some capitals, and an uproar in Paris. The British, for the most part, thought that rearmament was a bit premature. Furthermore, it would be possible to allow the Germans to develop a Federal police force and thereby avoid the problem. The French, on the other hand, were understandably opposed to any German rearmament. However, the Americans remained adamant. After a series of proposals and counterproposals, the French knuckled under and produced the Pleven Plan.¹¹ The Pleven Plan called for the development of a European Army with German contingents under the direction of a European Defense Minister. This minister would receive his directives from a supranational council of ministers under the control of European parliamentary assembly. According to this plan, under no circumstances would the Germans be permitted to organize a ministry of defense or a general staff.¹² Although for four years all discussions concerning German military participation centered around the Pleven Plan, this work did not produce tangible results. The Plan had been accepted by all interested parties; but when it came before the French Assembly for the crucial vote, it was defeated 319 to 264.¹³ With that defeat, the Plan was dead. However, the question of how to integrate West Germany still remained to be solved. Now that all

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For a discussion of the proposals and counterproposals, as well as the Pleven Plan, see *ibid*, pp. 39-94.

¹²

Ibid, p. 64.

¹³

Spaak, p. 175.

parties agreed to the necessity of German contribution to European Defense, it became imperative to find another solution to the problem of German rearmament. Finally, it was agreed that Germany would join the West European Union in 1954 and agree not to produce nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons in its territory. Furthermore, Germany was admitted to NATO in 1955 with the proviso that all its troops be integrated into the NATO command structure. This is in contrast to the other member nations who earmark some of their forces to NATO while the remainder stay under national control.

The decision to rearm Germany raised a number of significant problems for the new West German regime. Most Germans acquainted with their history realized the important role the military played in the past. In particular, they were aware of the behavior of the military in the Weimar Republic, of the gradual isolation of the Reichswehr, and of its contribution to the Nazi seizure of power.¹⁴ It was apparent to many that the political ideas of the Reichswehr, its recruitment policies, and its political isolation reinforced its basically anti-democratic nature and enabled the military to be receptive to Nazi propaganda.¹⁵ For many, the question of a rearmed Germany was more than a problem of merely raising an effective military

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See above, Chapters III and IV.

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Hitler was well aware of these factors and made deliberate appeals to the Reichswehr. See above, Chapter IV.

force. Fundamentally, it was a question of creating an efficient military organization which would be integrated into and controlled by the West German government and society. "In my view, the idea of a democratic armed force consists simply of three things: organic integration of the army into the democratic state; devotion of its leaders to the state and its constitution; identity of values in the army and the democratic state."¹⁶ Consequently, German rearmament posed two important, though interrelated, problems: 1) how to insure that the military was institutionally integrated into the political system and remained effectively under the control of the elected officials (Primat der Politik);¹⁷ 2) how to insure that the military commanders and subalterns agreed with and accepted the value structure of a democratic society.¹⁸

In all fairness, these solutions to the problem of political control of the military were not new. It can be argued that these ideas were known after Prussia's defeat at Jena in 1806, during the Prussian constitutional conflicts in the 1860's, and at the time of the writing of the Reichswehr Law. However, even though the ideas were

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Baudissin, Wolf Graf von, "The New German Army," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 33, No. 2, January, 1955. The ideas of Baudissin are discussed below.

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Civilian supremacy.

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Fischer, Johannes, "Verteidigung im Bündnis--Streitkraft in der Demokratie," Militaergeschichtliche Mitteilungen, No. 1, (1974).

not new, the circumstances, now, were. Unlike any previous attempts at military reform, the Bundesrepublik did not find it necessary to deal with an already existing military organization. After the Second World War, the German Army was completely disarmed and disbanded. It was not until five years after the defeat in 1950 that the question of a German contribution to European defense was raised. Moreover, it was an additional five years (1955) before the first Bundeswehr units were organized. Thus, the Federal Republic, unlike any previous German regime, was afforded the opportunity to address itself to the problems of military organization and control prior to the formation of the Federal Army.¹⁹

Perhaps equally important was the social atmosphere in post-war West Germany which contributed to the integration of the Bundeswehr into political and social life. Not only was the regime spared the necessity of dealing with a rump army, but conditions were not favorable to the emergence of Revanchist and Putschist right-wing organizations. While defeat and occupation contributed greatly to this situation, equally important was the attitude of the West Germans toward military organizations and rearmament.

During the Second World War, Germany suffered not only defeat, but the full effects of the Allied war

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Interview with Wolf Graf von Baudissin. See also, Genschel, Dietrich, Wehr Reform un Reaction, p. 23.

effort on her territory. Furthermore, unlike the First World War where the German Army fought mostly on French and Russian territory, German resistance collapsed on German territory at the conclusion of the Second World War. Consequently, many Germans witnessed the collapse of the Wehrmacht, as well as being the recipients of the full effects of modern warfare.²⁰ As a result, the military collapse had two far-reaching effects: it destroyed the myth of invincibility of German arms, a myth which had developed during the Wars of Unification; secondly, the death of this myth caused many segments of German society to react strongly against anything military. These attitudes were an additional asset to the Federal Republic in its quest for military reform. It meant that during the organizing phase of the Bundeswehr, the government did not have to deal with a concerted effort to reestablish the traditional military organization. Moreover, it insured that the newly-created Army would not immediately inherit the political and social mantle of previous military organizations.

Post-war German society was decidedly anti-militarist. This was the period of "ohne mich" when substantial segments of German society were against military service. According to surveys conducted by the Institute fuer

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In July, 1943, between 60,000 and 100,000 people were killed as a result of the Allied air raids on Hamburg.

Demoskopie in November 1954, 37% of the sample were against the formation of a West German Army and 45% were in favor.²¹ However, by June 1956, 47% of the sample was against the formation of the Bundeswehr, whereas only 31% were in favor.²² Indeed, this feeling of contempt for everything military was so widespread that the then Federal President Theodor Heuss commented "that 'without me'...is the destruction of all democratic sentiments which (are contained in the Phrases) 'with me' and 'with you'".²³

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Nolle, p. 437.

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Ibid, p. 438. Civilian distrust of the military is now somewhat less apparent. "According to an opinion poll of Emnid Institute in March, 1970, 46% of those surveyed felt the Bundeswehr 'belongs in society', that one owes it thanks because of its protective function and that it is well thought of. An additional 15% held that the need for the Bundeswehr is obvious. Only 16% saw it as a 'state within a state' or as 'very extraneous.'" The Bundeswehr, Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, (1973), p. 9. "In April/May 1973, one-half of the population considered the Bundeswehr to be 'important' or 'very important', while 23% thought it was 'not so important', and a total of 17% polled 'unimportant', 'superfluous', 'harmful', or 'dangerous'. 9% had no opinion. The percentage of the population who regard the Bundeswehr as 'important' or 'very important' had decreased considerably as compared with previous years. The number of those who consider it 'not so important', 'unimportant', or 'superfluous' has increased correspondingly." "The Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Development of the Federal Armed Forces," White Paper, 1973/1974, (Federal Ministry of Defense: 1974), p. 53. "In the 18-24-year old age group only 44% are in favor of universal conscription...of the total male population, however, 56% favor compulsory military service...." White Paper, 1975/1976, p. 161. Thus, over the years of the development of the Bundeswehr, the population has come to at least tolerate its existence.

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Heuss, Theodor, Soldatentum in unserer Zeit, (Rainer Wunderlich Verlag Hermann Leins, Tuebingen: 1959), p. 12. According to the German view of a democratic society, democracy entails not only the development of the individual, but it requires a sense of civic mindedness and commitment to society.

The Constitutional and Institutional Position of the Bundeswehr

One of the most significant factors which determines the political role of the Bundeswehr is the NATO Alliance. The entrance of West Germany into the Atlantic Alliance created a number of significant implications for West Germany. In the first place, participation in NATO as a full and equal partner was the culmination of West Germany's quest for sovereignty. In the second place, participation in NATO meant that the Federal Republic was forced to accept the defensive strategy of NATO. This meant that membership in the Alliance was one means of preventing any effort, on the part of the West Germans, to reestablish control over the lost territories through the use of force. This, no doubt, greatly reassured the Soviet Union and prevented German rearmament from becoming a major international issue. Thirdly, participation in NATO meant that West Germany could rely on a system of mutual security for its defense. Clearly, the West German support for some kind of West European defense organization was a result of both the desire to further European cooperation and the realization that West Germany was no longer in a position to be self-sufficient militarily.

"The two alliances (NATO and the Warsaw Pact) appear to have certain things in common: two superior world powers are protecting, in their own interests, a group of medium and small countries in Eastern and Western Europe which, if left to themselves, would be unable to maintain the balance of power

and to assure their own security."²⁴

Finally, the role of the West German armed forces in NATO is substantially different than the other members. While the other members of NATO earmark only a portion of their national military forces to NATO, the entire German Field Army is earmarked for NATO.²⁵ This means that the West German Army is totally integrated into the NATO Command structure and, during periods of crisis or hostilities, all of the armed forces of the Federal Republic will receive operational plans and commands from the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. In effect, Germany's participation in NATO internationalizes German defense policy and military politics. Defense policies and priorities, as well as questions of preparedness and organization, are not exclusively domestic issues but international as well.²⁶ This not only limits the control of the Federal

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"The Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Development of the Federal Armed Forces," White Paper 1975/1976, p. 6.

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White Paper 1973/1974, p. 32. By treaty, the Federal Republic is limited to a maximum troop strength of 499,000. The Force Structure of the Federal Republic of Germany: Options and Analysis, (The Force Structure Commission: 1972/1973), p. 52. The West German Territorial Army (Army Reserve) is under the control of the West Germans. However, its functions in hostilities are limited to securing rear areas, defense, and helping to insure the independent action of the Field Army. For a presentation of some of the functions of the Territorial Army, see Taschenbuch fuer Wuerfragen 1974/75, (Umschau Verlag Frankfurt/Main: 1974), p. 113. This handbook is published in cooperation with the Federal Defense Ministry.

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Sommer, Theo, "Wiederbewaffnung und Verteidigungs-

Republic over its armed forces, but also divides between Bonn and Brussels the efforts of the Bundeswehr to influence military policy.

It can be argued that the West Germans have gained an added benefit from this arrangement, especially when this arrangement is viewed in the context of history. Historically, military preparedness and defense policy has been of paramount importance because of the geographic vulnerability of Germany. Now, West Germany does not have to rely exclusively on its own resources for defense because of its participation in a collective security pact which depends heavily on the United States. "The optimum goal of German defense policy and strategy would therefore be the creation of an armaments structure clearly unsuited for the offensive role yet adequate beyond a shadow of a doubt to defend German territory."²⁷ As a result, West Germany is not forced to allocate huge amounts of resources to the military sector. This means that the impact of the military and military-related issues will be substantially reduced.

The integration of the Bundeswehr into the North Atlantic Alliance was one means of rearming Germans, while at the same time preventing the West German military from

politik" in Die Zweite Republik: 25 Jahre Bundesrepublik Deutschlands-eine Bilanz, Lowenthal, Richard, and Schwarz, Hans-Peter, eds., (Seewald Verlag, Stuttgart: 1974), p. 582.

27

Schmidt, Helmut, Defense or Retaliation: A German View, (Frederick A. Praeger, New York: 1972), p. 169. This attitude clearly differs from Schlieffen's.

becoming a destabilizing factor in European politics. Although this solved, for the most part, the international implications of West German rearmament, there still remained a number of important domestic issues. These involve questions of the internal organization and behavior of the military, as well as the proper role of the Bundeswehr in West German politics and society. All agreed that every effort should be made to prevent a repetition of Germany's tragic past. Indeed "(t)he central axiom...was the firm refusal to repeat a 'Seecktian system'".²⁸ Thus, the fundamental problem was how to guarantee the principle of "Primat der Politik."

However, in post-World War II West Germany, something more than simply civilian control was involved in the principle of "Primat der Politik." During the Third Reich, this principle had been driven home repeatedly to the Wehrmacht. "Never had the primacy of politics (and the wrong politics, at that) been demonstrated more forcefully than during the Third Reich."²⁹ In the Federal Republic, civilian control means that the Bundeswehr is under the direction of civilians, who are temporary incumbents,

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Hornung, Klaus, Staat und Armee: Studien zur Befehls-und Kommandogewalt und zum politisch-militaerischen Verhaeltnis in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, (v. Hase und Koehler Verlag, Mainz: 1975), p. 123.

29

Gehlen, Reinhard, The Service: The Memoirs of General Reinhard Gehlen, (World Publishing, New York: 1972), p. 79.

and both the military and their civilian leaders are subject to constitutional and democratic controls. Moreover, since the Federal Republic is a parliamentary regime, civilian control of the military meant parliamentary control. This means that "(t)he traditional 'Oberbefehl' (Supreme Command) of the Head of State was not reinstituted."³⁰ Unlike past German regimes, in the Federal Republic the Head of State (The Federal President) is not the Commander-in-Chief; nor does he exercise any important military responsibilities.

Political control over the Bundeswehr is divided, like in the United States, among a number of political organizations. Ministerial responsibility for the armed forces is the province of the Defense Minister,³¹ who has the power of command over the armed forces (Befehls-und Kommandogewalt). The Defense Minister is the cabinet-level minister responsible for military affairs. Under normal conditions, all directives and commands are issued through him. Because of his central position in military affairs, the Defense Minister is often referred to as the Oberbefehlshaber (Commander-in-Chief). However, this title is not completely accurate. Historically, the Commander-in-Chief of the German Armed Forces, whether he

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Mann, Siegfried, Das Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, (Boldt Verlag, Bonn: 1971), p. 41.

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Article 65a, Basic Law. In times of actual or imminent hostilities, the Federal Chancellor assumes command, Article 115b.

was the Kaiser, the Reichspraesident, or the Fuehrer, exercised his authority over the military exclusively and independently of other governmental institutions. This condition contributed greatly to Germany's tragic military past, and it was the firm desire of the creators of the Bundeswehr to prevent a repetition of this.³² Although the Defense Minister has primary responsibility for the armed forces, he cannot exercise his authority in a completely independent fashion. As a member of the cabinet, he will be subject to a number of pressures at that level, if for no other reason than the implications his behavior has on the political fortunes of the entire cabinet.³³

In addition, military and defense issues are extremely complex. Thus, the successful realization of these policies necessitates cooperation among many governmental agencies (not to mention the NATO Allies). In an effort to facilitate these matters, as well as to control the military further, the Federal Defense Council was created. This body, composed of the Chancellor, Defense, Foreign, Interior and Economic Minister, deals with matters of interest to all ministries.³⁴ In addition to facilitating cooperation on military and defense-

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Unlike Weimar, none of the Defense Ministers have been career officers in the Federal Republic.

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For example, the Spiegel Affair.

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Hornung, p. 140, and Geffen, W., The Role of the Military in West German Defense Policy Making, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1971, p. 324.

related matters, this council aids in preventing departmental particularism in all areas, not just the military.³⁵

In addition, as a parliamentary regime the cabinet is subject to the vicissitudes of parliamentary life. Moreover, the Parliamentary Defense Committee acts to prevent the political isolation of the military which further insures civilian control. This Committee serves an important oversight function for a number of reasons. In the first place, like United States Congressional Committees, it is autonomous. As such, it selects its own topics for investigation and need not obtain a mandate from Parliament to do so. Furthermore, it is the only committee which is empowered to investigate all military-related issues. Finally, this committee is empowered to conduct proceedings at all times, even when the Parliament is not in session. Throughout its existence the committee has been criticized for dealing far too often with "investigations concerning both the safeguarding of democratic principles within the Bundeswehr and the maintenance of operational and economic efficiency in the armed forces."³⁶ However, given the fact that the Bundeswehr is relatively new and in the process of building new traditions, this seems to be an unfair criticism. In fact, it probably need not spend undue amounts of time on basic issues of defense, since these

³⁵
Hornung, p. 139.

³⁶
Geffen, pp. 332, 334.

are more readily handled at the ministerial and NATO levels.

The final institution designed to insure civilian control of the German armed forces is the Parliamentary Commissioner for Military Affairs (Wehrbeauftragte des Deutsches Bundestages). This officer, elected by a majority of the Parliament for a five year term, is responsible "(for safeguarding) basic rights and to assist the Bundestag in exercising parliamentary control."³⁷ As such, he has broad powers of investigation relating to the internal behavior of the Bundeswehr. His primary function is to insure that each soldier is not denied his constitutional rights and that the Bundeswehr effectively carries out the principles of Innere Fuehrung.

"The Parliamentary Commissioner shall take action on the basis of a conscientious assessment of the facts...by information received from members of the Bundestag, complaints lodged by military personnel, or through other media, he becomes aware of circumstances which lead him to believe that there has been a breach of the soldiers basic rights or an infringement of the principles of 'Innere Fuehrung.'"³⁸

The Parliamentary Commissioner is an important asset in safeguarding the principle of "Primat der Politik." While the other civilian institutions are often more concerned with control at the highest levels, the Commissioner is

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Article 45b, Basic Law, Article 2, Sec. 2.

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Law on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Military Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany, Federal Law Gazette, Vol. I, p. 111.

concerned with the operation of the armed services at all levels. This prevents the isolation of the Bundeswehr by enabling civilian influence to reach all levels of the armed forces.

The New Inner Structure

As well-intentioned as the formal controls may be, these alone do not insure civilian control or the political reliability of the armed forces. This was apparent during the Weimar Republic, as well as during the Nazi period. During Weimar, the Reichswehr managed to circumvent the formal controls and become "a state within a state." Hitler, well aware of the Reichswehr's behavior during Weimar, did not rely exclusively on formal controls, but added propaganda, the S.S., and the secret police as control mechanisms. Indeed, the Nazi experience is most instructive.³⁹ The Nazis paid close attention to the internal state of the armed forces both to insure their reliability and their efficiency. Under the Nazis, the Wehrmacht was subject to political control to an extent unprecedented in German history. This allowed the Wehrmacht to become, exclusively, an instrument of the political leaders, as well as preventing the army from acting effectively against the state (two important

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Two useful studies on this subject are Messerschmidt, Manfred, Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat, and Mueller, Klaus-Juegen, Das Heer und Hitler: Armee und Nationalsozialistisches Regime, 1933-1940, (Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart: 1969).

consequences of civilian control).⁴⁰

These factors were not lost upon the personalities responsible for the preparation of the West German military organization. From the very beginning their major concern was the internal composition of the Bundeswehr. In September 1950, when the preparations for West German rearmament were in their infancy, Chancellor Adenauer directed his military advisor, Count von Schwerin, to consult with a number of former Wehrmacht officers. Schwerin, therefore, convened a secret meeting at the Himmerod Monastery, which was attended by former Wehrmacht Generals Vietinghof, Heusinger, and Speidel, and the future Bundeswehr Generals Baudissin and Kielmansegg.⁴¹ At the conclusion of these discussions a memorandum, known as the Himmerod Memorandum, (Himmeroder Denkschrift) was submitted to the Chancellor. All present agreed that circumstances favored and mandated a completely new German military organization. Furthermore, they warned of "the danger of an army as a 'state within a state' and a one-sided connection of the troops to political parties."⁴² In order to prevent abuses of this nature they suggested that a new standard, a new inner structure (Inner Gefuege) should be created. As a means of realizing this new standard they suggested that

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See above, Chapter IV.

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All were former General Staff Officers.

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"Himmerod Memorandum," quoted in Verteidigung im Buendnis, pp. 32-33.

"(i)n the context of the general service training, great attention should be given to the education of the soldier, in the political and ethical sense. It should not be a purely military education but should deal with timely questions of an historical, legal, political, social and economic nature."⁴³ This memorandum demonstrated the ability of German military officers to confront responsibly the political and historical implication of rearmament. Equally important, however, it shows that the controversial idea of "Innere Fuehrung" was first formulated by military men.⁴⁴

Soon after the conclusion of the Himmerod Conference, Count Schwerin was replaced by Theodor Blank.⁴⁵ With the appointment of Blank, the German rearmament effort became more formalized. Although it was a sufficiently imposing and Germanic title of "The Delegate of the Federal Chancellor Dealing with Questions Pertaining to Increases of Allied Troops in Germany," the organization which he

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Ibid, p. 33.

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"The basic idea which evolved into 'Innere Fuehrung' not only came from this conference but from professional officers." Count Kielmansegg quoted in Nelson, p. 31. The term 'Innere Fuehrung' does not have an English equivalent. It often translated as "modern leadership", "moral guidance", and "the principles of leadership and civic education." It is all of this and more. For a discussion of 'Innere Fuehrung', see below.

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Schwerin was replaced because of an indiscretion involving the press. While discussing the issue of rearmament, he left the impression that rearmament plans were already completed. When reports to this effect were published, Adenauer replaced him with Blank.

created and directed is usually referred to as the Amt Blank (Blank Bureau). This embryonic defense ministry was responsible for developing the plans to be used when West German rearmament would be possible. As Blank set about his duties as shadow defense minister, he recruited into his organization many of the former officers who participated in the Himmerod Conference.⁴⁶

From the outset the primary problem facing the Amt Blank was the creation of an effective military organization which would remain under the control of the civilian political leadership. With this goal in mind, Blank paid close attention to the nature of his organization. In the first place, not only was the Bureau under the control of a civilian, Blank, but all sections (Abteilungen) and subordinate departments were under civilian control.⁴⁷ In addition, he paid careful attention to the recruitment of the military personnel. All early members, both civilian and military, agreed on the necessity of creating an army with a democratic spirit.⁴⁸ Moreover, many of the military members had been involved in the military opposition to the

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Generals Heussinger, Speidel, Kielmansegg and Baudissin participated in the conference at the Himmerod Monastery. General de Maziere, a future inspector General of the Bundeswehr, was recruited soon after Blank was appointed.

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Genschel, p. 75.

48

Ibid, p. 123.

Third Reich.⁴⁹ Equally important, however, was the functional organization of the Amt Blank. In addition to sections dealing with more traditional military matters, there was a department, whose most prominent member was Graf Baudissin, which dealt with the problem of the inner structure of the military (Innere Gefuege).⁵⁰ Its most important function was to explore and develop a program that would insure civilian and democratic control without impairing military efficiency.

In an effort to develop a new set of values for the Bundeswehr, the members of this section were forced to confront historical as well as contemporary problems. In the first place, the German Army, for most of its history, had existed on the periphery of society. The military conceived of itself as unique because its function, defense of the nation, was different from any other social activity. However, in the past there was a political gulf as well between the military and the nation. The military believed that its unique role required social and political privileges.⁵¹

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Ibid, pp. 122-123.

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Innere Gefuege was later known as Innere Fuehrung.

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"(In post-war German society) one thing is for sure: none of the groups are singularly privileged professions and none retain his old privileged position. The Bundeswehr is no longer the uncriticized wonder, 'the shining armor.' The soldier is no longer the sole representative of the state, the darling of the people." Baudissin, Wolf Graf von, Soldat fuer den Frieden: Entwuefe fuer eine Zeitgemaesse Bundeswehr, (R. Piper Verlag, Muenchen: 1970), p. 35.

Moreover, they reasoned that without the military the nation could not survive. Since the military possessed the knowledge necessary to defend the nation, civilians, therefore, had no business meddling in military affairs. Thus, the military was able to isolate itself during the Imperial and Weimar regimes and found itself unable to resist the creation of the Third Reich and Hitler's adventurism.

"The creation of an armed force after the collapse of 1945, in addition to raising problems about the nature of Hitler's totalitarian regime, is closely related to German history after 1848. The conflict between Reichskanzler Bismarck and Chief of the General Staff Moltke let to multifaceted problems between the political and military leadership."⁵²

In addition, contemporary conditions raised a number of problems. The atmosphere in Germany was not particularly conducive to rearmament. After the defeat of 1945, many Germans were decidedly against the recreation of a German army. There were a number of reasons for this pacifist outlook. First of all, many Germans, both civilian and military, had witnessed the horrors of war first hand. Secondly, the myth of German invincibility had been shattered. Finally, in the post-war period, many Germans were more concerned with their personal lives and unwilling

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Jung, Kurt, "Soldat als Staatsburger", in Poeggeler, Franz and Wien, Otto, eds., Soldaten der Demokratie: Die Bundeswehr in Gesellschaft und Staat, (Bernard & Graefe Verlag Fuer Wehrwesen, Frankfurt/Main: 1973), p. 42.

to make the sacrifice military service required. This pacifist tendency was characterized by "ohne mich" (I will not serve) attitude, prevalent especially among the youth. "(T)he armed forces are no longer valued, as in the past, as the most evident expression of national power and greatness. This has now been given over to economics and industry."⁵³

Although the problems facing the section Innere Gefuege were difficult, its work was made easier for two reasons. In the first place, unlike the ill-fated Weimar Republic, the Federal Republic was completely disarmed. Consequently, efforts at military reform did not have to face the resistance of a military already in existence. Secondly, the German Army was totally defeated in the Second World War and "it is easier to institute reforms after defeat than after victory."⁵⁴ The military reforms developed by the section Innere Gefuege are known as Innere Fuehrung, a concept developed by Count Baudissin. Baudissin realized that circumstances were favorable to a thorough reform of the German military. Innere Fuehrung was designed to reform and modernize military thinking so that the army would be in a position to adapt to and complement the social and political fabric of post-war West Germany.

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Schultz, Fritz-Rudolf, "Probleme militaerische Menschenfuehrung aus der Sicht der Wehrbeauftragten," (Poggler and Wien), p. 54.

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Interview with Generalleutnant A.d. Wolf Graf von Baudissin.

Innere Fuehrung is a multifaceted concept designed to insure political reliability, aid military efficiency, and prevent the reemergence of militarism.⁵⁵

From the military perspective, Innere Fuehrung reflects the changed military position of West Germany. In the past, at least since the period of Moltke the Elder, the German military adhered to an offensive strategy.⁵⁶ Today, the German military is no longer capable of serious and prolonged offensive actions.

"(The Bundeswehr) would not be able to accomplish their mission in isolation from the Allies.... Hence, the Federal Republic is not self-sufficient with regard to her defense, but instead must continue to rely on the close cooperation between her forces and those of her allies."⁵⁷

Moreover, modern warfare has become too destructive to be considered in a cavalier fashion. Under modern conditions, war is equally destructive to the victor and the vanquished, assuming these categories are relevant to atomic warfare. A state which possesses an adequate defensive force can preserve peace by making aggression too costly for a

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Genschel, p. 28.

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Moltke's strategy in the Wars of Unification utilized quick thrusts into enemy territory in order to destroy enemy forces before they could attack Germany. Schlieffen's strategy in the west envisioned a massive envelopment of the enemy on his own territory. Similarly, the strategy employed in the Second World War provided for lightning thrusts into enemy territory before he could mount a serious threat to Germany.

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White Paper, 1970, p. 37.

potential adversary. As a result, the soldier exists not to wage war but "for the preservation of peace."⁵⁸

Since the very nature and purpose of warfare had changed, the mentality and organization of the military must change. This, according to Baudissin, is a revolutionary task.⁵⁹ It is revolutionary "because it sets the contribution to peace as the supporting motive of soldierly service.... This signifies something of a spiritual revolution."⁶⁰ The spiritual revolution demands a total redirection of the soldiers attitude toward warfare. In the past, the military was organized for the offensive and, to support this strategy, military life and soldierly prowess was glorified.⁶¹ Now the reverse is the case. The maintenance of peace and the prevention of war is the hallmark of military virtue.⁶²

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Baudissin, Wolf Graf von, Soldat fuer den Frieden: Entwuefe fuer eine Zeitgemaesse Bundeswehr, (R. Piper Verlag, Muenchen: 1970), p. 24.

59

Ibid, p. 24.

60

Ibid, p. 28.

61

Ibid, p. 30. As representative of this mentality, Baudissin quotes Kurt Hesse's, Wandlung des Soldaten, (Berlin: 1931). "Death for the soldier signifies life's highest pleasure. It means that life is meaningless not only for the self but also for the enemy. Battle is the highest vocation of mankind."

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These ideas of Baudissin have been officially adopted by the Federal Government. "Today, we have before us a new type of soldier. His mission is responsive to a completely new challenge: though he is trained to use weapons of great destructive power, this is done for the sole purpose of preventing their ever being used." White Paper, 1970, p. 115. In his inaugural address of July 1,

Baudissin's ideas concerning the changing nature and role of warfare in international politics were designed to combat past attitudes, as well as convince contemporary Germans that the Bundeswehr would be radically different from previous German military organizations. In the 1950's when the Bundeswehr was being formed, many Germans, especially the young who would have to serve, were decidedly against anything that appeared militaristic. This formulation of the role of the Bundeswehr was designed to demonstrate that service, rather than subjecting the soldier to the trial of war, actually prevented the outbreak of war. Thus, if the youth of Germany were seriously against future military actions, the best way to realize this desire was to serve in the army. Military weakness invited adventurism from foreign powers, whereas a credible defense force prevented it.⁶³

Furthermore, not only has the nature of warfare changed, but so have the techniques used to prosecute a modern war. Today, warfare is technical and scientific.

1969, Federal President Gustav Heineman made a similar observation: "It is not war that is the time of trial in which a man has to win his spurs, as my generation learned when the Kaiser was on the throne, but peace--a time of trial in which we all have to win our spurs." Quoted in White Paper, 1970, p. 115.

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Interview with Colonel (Ret.) Dr. Gunther Will. Dr. Gunther Will suggested that one of Baudissin's major concerns was to convince German youth of the utility of military service. Dr. Will was a member of the Abteilung Innere Gefuege in the Amt Blank.

"The technology and totality of combat demands the delegation of duties. The burdens of direct military responsibility are shifted vigorously to the lower levels. The strong (military) hierarchy maintains aspects of a partnership where the authority of the superior is on a new foundation. The specialist is a professional within his area and he can replace and advise his comrades only within limits. The superior is no longer able to guide and supervise the specialist in great detail. On the battle field there will be more cooperation than obedience.... Consequently, there are increased demands upon the leader.... The object of battle is attained only when the tactical leader applies all appropriate technical measures and when the specialists carry out their duties in the direction of the tactical end.... (In the past) untechnical uniformity with its uniform armaments, every non-commissioned officer and officer was in the position to control the execution of his orders and commands. The abundance of today's vehicles, equipment and weapons systems demands the supervision of specialists.... The military hierarchy surely has not lost its significance; it has become, however, a living society of soldiers with grades and differentiated responsibilities and judgements."⁶⁴

Thus, modern warfare is a cooperative effort which requires the will to work together and share responsibilities. Consequently, strict discipline (Prussian parade ground discipline) is no longer necessary, and is counter-productive. The modern soldier must not mechanically perform his duties. Instead, he must see his role as an

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Baudissin, Soldat, pp. 59-60, 121.

intellectual challenge.⁶⁵ The soldier must not only obey orders; he must understand why he is given the command. This is necessary because the technology of modern warfare forces the soldier to become an expert and he must understand what is required of him, if he is to adequately apply his technology. What Baudissin is suggesting is a variation on the traditional ideas of commission and command (auftragen and befehlen). Commission means that a subordinate is given his task and the means with which to accomplish it. However, he is not told which method to employ. This is left to his discretion. Command is when the subordinate is given binding orders detailing the execution of the task.⁶⁶ Innere Fuehrung, in the context of modern warfare, encroaches upon what is normally known as external leadership (Auessere Fuehrung).⁶⁷

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Interview with Colonel Dietrich Genschel, a member of the faculty of the Hochschule der Bundeswehr, Hamburg. He defined Innere Fuehrung as an intellectual outlook. Innere Fuehrung creates critical soldiers capable of solving a variety of problems.

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General Seeckt defined the terms as follows: "We understood by the term commission the indication of the end to be attained together with the assignment of the means, without any direction as to the execution of the task--in contradistinction to issuing binding instructions (behehlen) as to the details of execution." Seeckt, Thought of a Soldier, p. 40. In discussing this point with Peter von Schubert, Dienstreferant bei Wehrbeauftragte Berkan, he commented that in the past the concept of commission was much abused. Soldiers were required to execute orders even when they were not given the proper means or when the commands were militarily unsound. Today, a subordinate has the right to and is expected to question an order if he feels that it is unsound and not worry about being disciplined. See also, "Hilfen fuer die Innere Fuehrung." ZDV 10-1, passim.

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Waldman, Goosestep, p. 63.

In the past, Auessere Fuehrung dealt with tactics, operation and logistics⁶⁸--the area of command and obedience (Befehl und Gehorsam). Today, the German soldier does not blindly submit to the command and discipline of his superior. In the Bundeswehr, the soldier is both a participant and a recipient of orders and commands.

The Second World War was a revolutionary event. Just as it forced a rethinking of military doctrine, it also required a rethinking of the role of the soldier in warfare and society. After the war, the German Army, because it carried out its duty to defend the Fatherland, found itself under sharp criticism. Much of this criticism, from both foreign and domestic sources, centered around the fact that the Army allowed itself to be used for the worst kind of adventurism, thereby becoming closely associated with the many excesses of the Third Reich.⁶⁹ This criticism, of course, caused consternation

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Dr. Will also drew the distinction between Auessere Fuehrung--the management function--and Innere Fuehrung--the application of the constitutional values and norms in the military environment--but admitted that often the distinction was blurred.

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"The German soldier entered the Second World War with more or less distinctly defined traditional values and military principles. Our experiences in the war deprived us of these supports.... (T)he war proved that the supposedly firm standards summed up in the phrase 'the world of the soldier' were unable to cope with such abominations. A secularized 'soldiers honor' which describes obedience duty, hardihood and readiness for action as unquestioned and absolute concepts abandons the soldier blind and helpless to the whim of criminals and charlatans." Baudissin, "The New German Army," p. 5.

among many former officers and soldiers of the Wehrmacht who had been taught to defend Germany and execute the orders of their superiors.

However, for Baudissin and the other reformers involved in developing the Bundeswehr, the Nazi experience raised problems other than the fact that there was mud on the military mantel. They were faced with the problem of how to prevent the abuse of the military by its political leaders, without weakening military efficiency. The problem was difficult because often politically reliable armies are militarily ineffective.⁷⁰

The solution to this problem is the concept of the "Citizen in Uniform" (Staatsbürger in Uniform).⁷¹ The central idea in this concept is that the soldier should reflect and be a part of the society which he defends.⁷² One reason for this is the changing nature of warfare. Under the conditions of modern warfare, the sharp

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Witness the Red Army after the purges and prior to the rise of Zhukov. Commenting on Marshal Budenny, Liddel Hart remarked: "Budenny, the famous cavalry general of the Civil War, was most aptly described by one of his own officers as a 'man with an immense moustache, but a very small brain.' Some of the best Russian commanders had been eliminated in the pre-war purges, and those who survived as politically safe were often militarily unsafe." Liddel Hart, B. H., History of the Second World War, Vol. I, (Capricorn Books, New York: 1972), p. 165.

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"Citizen in Uniform" is another term for Innere Fuehrung.

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Baudissin defines "Citizen in Uniform" in the following way: "By coming from society the soldier learns the values of society.... Not a 'citizen soldier' but a 'citizen in uniform' is the correct formula for the new (concept)." Soldat, p. 200.

distinction between combatants and noncombatants is no longer true. "In one respect military life is not separate from all other aspects of life. During the Second World War more German civilians died than soldiers. The soldier therefore, is part of the society from which he originates."⁷³ Because of this, the life of the soldier is no longer totally unique. When the soldier fights he knows that he alone does not face the uncertainty of war. Therefore, the military can no longer argue that it is a completely unique organization. It is part of the society it defends. Furthermore, because of both the tragedy of the Third Reich and modern combat conditions, blind obedience and strict discipline no longer play the role they did in the past. Today, if the soldier is to fight effectively, he must know why he fights and what he defends. He must experience, both as a civilian and a soldier, the way of life he defends. This is the essence of "Citizen in Uniform."

"Citizen in Uniform" does not mean that the soldier forfeits his right upon entering the army. As a citizen of a democratic/constitutional regime, based upon concepts of constitution and human rights, he cannot be expected to defend these ideas if he must sacrifice these upon entering the army. Although the soldier is subject to the principles of command and obedience, this discipline is less strict than in previous German military organizations. Military discipline must respect the constitutional

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Baudissin, Soldat, p. 169.

and human rights of the recruits. Also, the soldier is subject to military discipline and command only during his duty hours. During his off-duty time, the soldier is allowed to pursue his personal life unfettered by the military hierarchy. "In the barracks, clearly, duty and freedom are separable. The soldier needs an undisturbed private sphere, in order to develop himself and feel a certain sense of belonging in his environment."⁷⁴ In addition, there is more to the concept of "Citizen in Uniform" than simply the relationship of the individual soldier to the military organization. Upon entering the armed forces, the soldier maintains all the political rights of the civilian. He can vote (the members of the Reichswehr could not), engage in political activity, and hold elective office.⁷⁵ Clearly, the concept "Citizen in Uniform" insures that the Bundeswehr will respect civilian and constitutional authority, reflect the democratic values of society, and insure that all levels of the military organization are integrated into the society it must defend. The concept, moreover, aids in military efficiency. By restricting infringements on civil rights as little as possible, the military reinforces and focuses these values, thereby clarifying for the

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Baudissin, Soldat, p. 25.

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When holding elective office, members of the Bundeswehr must take a leave of absence from their military duties. "It is not uncommon to find members of the Bundeswehr participating in village, state and national politics." Interview with Dr. Will. For a more detailed presentation of the soldiers rights, see "Soldatengesetz" Bundesgesetzblatt, Vol. I, 1956.

soldier the way of life he is to defend. In addition, by eliminating extreme discipline and emphasizing education the soldier is better prepared to fulfill his military mission. The concept "Citizen in Uniform" reverses the nineteenth century idea that the army is the school of the nation. "Now the nation is the school of the army."⁷⁶

"The soldier is the representative of the state and its fundamental order. As leaders and supporters of a special power he must feel especially bound to these values. Only then will he serve reliably and convincingly. Only then will he be equal to his task."⁷⁷

The concept of Innere Fuehrung was a radical departure from the attitudes and values of any previous German military organization. In the past, the German army prided itself upon its privilege and isolation from the remainder of German society and, as a result, resisted all social and political reforms. As might be expected, therefore, the integrative values associated with Innere Fuehrung were met with skepticism and resistance. Some argued that Innere Fuehrung, by politicizing the military would weaken military efficiency.⁷⁸ More seriously, however, was the criticism that Innere Fuehrung defamed the German soldier because of its implicit criticism of the behavior

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Interview with Graf Baudissin.

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Baudissin, Soldat, p. 83.

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Oberst von Bonin, an early member of the Amt Blank, opposed Innere Fuehrung because it was prepared by men who did not fight in Russia. Genschel, pp. 134-135.

of the Army during the Third Reich.⁷⁹ Still others lamented that Innere Fuehrung meant an end to many of the trusted and loved traditions of the German Army.⁸⁰

Baudissin, responding to these critics, argues that Innere Fuehrung, on the contrary, was an outgrowth of the finest traditions of the German Army. And by resisting the reforms associated with Innere Fuehrung, these critics are, in fact, guilty of the very things they accuse Baudissin of. According to Baudissin, tradition

"Signifies (that) which one accepts, cultivates and passes on. This appears as a clear concept. Nevertheless, linguistic problems often cause different appraisals of the concept....

We blend in the concept tradition two areas...: Firstly,...our worthy heritage and fundamentals and secondly, customs, standards, behavior and manners which originate often accidentally--one thinks, for example, of the indirect address of the third person (Wollen Herr Oberst) which was a joke originated by the Prussian Guards....

Only when we separate the (proper traditions) of our moral and spiritual predecessors clearly from the transient form can we grasp the problem of tradition. In firmly holding the secondary, external and incidental... we can lose...the character (of tradition)."⁸¹

The concept of tradition, then, is complex. It is a living thing, composed of immutable and transient components. However, since no organization with a long history is without traditions, the transient must be separated from

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Ibid, pp. 131-132.

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Ibid, p. 6.

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Baudissin, Soldat, pp. 79-80.

the immutable. According to Baudissin, there are two timeless components of the soldierly tradition: service and humanism. Although in the past the German Army conceived of its duty as service to the state, this was often misplaced. Past military organizations, whether it was the Kaiserheer, Reichswehr or Wehrmacht, conceived of themselves as privileged professions, and the most noble manifestations of service to the state. With the development of these attitudes, the army lost sight of the timeless qualities of service in favor of privilege and arrogance. Today, the soldier is part of the society he serves. Therefore, he can only remain faithful to the finest military tradition if he behaves in a chivalrous and humane way.

"Our soldierly tradition is a tradition of service not domination. It is not, therefore, privilege, haughtiness and arrogance.... Chivalry is not characteristic of the knight, which bestows upon him special respect. Today, it has become more of a completely compulsory value which signifies a preparation for service and a personal sense of duty and solidarity.

In fact, it is by no means an exclusively soldierly virtue, nor a specifically German tradition, but an occidental foundation and value."⁸²

The German soldier serves in the best traditions of the army and the nation when he is committed to their humanistic values and traditions. This has been a long and honored tradition associated with great leaders such

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Ibid, p. 83.

as Stein, Scharnhorst, Groener, Beck and Stauffenberg.

"Stein (inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution) possessed an unflinching belief in the unique value of morality, which he saw as the basis of a solid stable order. Conventions and formalities were approached by Stein with mistrust. For him, history and tradition were not memorable values reserved for holidays....

Freedom, law, honor and the dignity of the individual were unalterable postulates of a dignified human life.... For Stein, politics and morality were not completely contradictory.... (Although Stein failed) he gave to our history two legacies: progressive ideas and the tragedy of his frustrations."⁸³

Furthermore, Baudissin argues, the conspirators of July 1944 acted according to this tradition. This deed was an affirmation of the most noble humanistic traditions of the German Army as well as a personal reaction of these people to the criminality and bestiality of the Third Reich. Their action was guided by the ideas of western civilization and was a testament to the long neglected humanistic tradition of the German Army.⁸⁴

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Baudissin, Soldat, pp. 87, 89. In this context, he suggests that Scharnhorst and the Army reformers had ideas similar to Baron von Stein. By arguing in this way, Baudissin is taking a swipe at the critics of Innere Fuehrung. The progressive ideas of Stein, Scharnhorst and the other reformers altered the antiquated Fredrickan army and enabled Prussia to contribute to the defeat of Napoleon. Groener also can be included in the honor role of German soldiers for two reasons: 1) in 1918 he realized that the Kaiser and the Imperial Regime were liabilities and 2) as Interior Minister he warned of the Nazi danger and wanted to suppress them.

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"The humanism that had distinguished the German reformers after the Napoleonic Wars had long since faded.... The last influential military representative

"July 20 has become a symbol. By that we mean not only a noble deed performed by an important group of people, but all that was performed by many men and women, by all positions, professions and classes in opposition to the NS state, who followed their conscience in an insoluble conflict between moral responsibility and obedience to an immoral state....

This deed, without the prospect of practical success, establishes my hope for a democratically minded armed forces in a new state.... (They) were the model of the best soldierly traditions...."⁸⁵

The opposition to Hitler, both military and civilian, is crucial to an understanding of Innere Fuehrung. As both a reaction to the misuse of the military and an affirmation of humanistic traditions, it is the foundation for the values and traditions of the Bundeswehr. Innere Fuehrung and the subsidiary concept of "Citizen in Uniform" is an attempt to insure that both civilian and military life will compliment one another through their mutual support of humanistic values. Only through this

of that tradition was Helmuth von Moltke and, already to a considerably lesser extent, men like Schlieffen and Falkenhayen. Therefore, nothing distinguished the class but expertise and political ambition; a broader outlook and adherence to the old standards were confined to a few exceptional persons." Speier, Hans, German Rearmament and Atomic War: The Views of German Military and Political Leaders, (Row, Peterson, Evanston: 1957), p. 23.

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Baudissin, Soldat, pp. 96-103. On the subject of July 20, 1944, General de Maiziere remarked: "(The) Bundeswehr and the Bundesrepublik are founded upon morality, human dignity and human rights. This army cannot be misused so long as the state remains the same.... The opposition acted in the tradition of the Bundeswehr.... They recognized the immoral, yes, the criminality of the National Socialist Regime.... They put their conscience above misused obedience." Maiziere, Ulrich de, Bekentnis zum Soldaten: Militarische Fuehrung in unserer Zeit, (R.v. Decker's Verlag, G. Schenck, Hamburg: 1971), p. 93.

mutual reinforcement will it be possible to prevent both military isolation and the misuse of the military by its leaders.⁸⁶ With this in mind, the Federal Government has warmly endorsed Innere Fuehrung.

"The abbreviated formula 'Citizen in Uniform' is the cardinal notion of leadership and civic education. It is a notion with dual substance: a constitutional political guideline and the ideal of soldierly education.

The term 'Citizen in Uniform' expresses the fact that the citizen who joins the services does not cease to be a free citizen. A 'Citizen in Uniform' means the same to leadership and civic education as a free citizen means to the Basic Law....

The status of citizen continues when a man assumes the status of a soldier, sailor, or airman. The guiding image of the citizen in uniform forms the bridge which links the Bundeswehr to society and firmly roots our armed forces in (the) State and social order.

As an ideal of military upbringing, the term 'Citizen in Uniform' expresses the fact that leadership, training, education, and upbringing in the forces is to instill into

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Baudissin is aware that there is danger in using July 20 as a standard of behavior. It was, after all, an attempted coup d' etat. This would imply that when conditions demand, the army has the right and obligation to act in a similar way. Although this is implied, Baudissin is not willing to go quite that far. "As an event, surely, July 20 is unable to set any norms, because never can behavior in an exceptional situation set a norm. However, the soldiers of July 20 can and should be examples for the soldiers of today." Graf Kielmansegg, quoted in Baudissin, Soldat, p. 119. The key to this dilemma is suggested by de Maiziere when he remarked "the army cannot be misused so long as the state remains the same", meaning that so long as the Federal Republic remains committed to human and constitutional rights. Baudissin, Kielmansegg and de Maiziere seem to be suggesting, hopefully unintentionally, another old German military tradition: the Army as representative of the nation is the guardian of the nation and what it stands for. Should society and government somehow lose sight of their guiding values, Innere Fuehrung would require the Bundeswehr to take action.

the men serving in them self-reliance and self-control, thinking obedience and personal initiative, and individual effort and comradely cooperation."⁸⁷

Recruitment

The commitment of the fledgling Federal Republic to the development of a democratically spirited Bundeswehr would not have been realized if attention was paid exclusively to the beliefs and values of the Bundeswehr. In order to help insure that the new army would complement the democratic state through the concept of Innere Fuehrung, special attention was paid to the type of soldier recruited into the Bundeswehr. This, of course, was most crucial during the formative period of the Bundeswehr because the new army would be struggling, at this time, through its organizational phase. Moreover, this was perhaps the best and only time to make sure that the army adopted the proper attitudes and traditions.⁸⁸

From the beginning, the Amt Blank, as well as the federal government, desired to create a military committed to democratic principles.⁸⁹ Furthermore, during the initial phase civilian control of the Bundeswehr was formalized, even before the first units were mustered.

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White Paper, 1975/1976, p. 148.

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It is useful to recall that the Weimar Republic was unable to accomplish this, thereby losing its battle with the Reichswehr at the very beginning.

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Genschel, pp. 27-32, 229.

When the Amt Blank finally became the Defense Ministry, the principle of civilian control was firmly established and civilians were already in responsible positions. Of equal importance was the recruitment of the military advisors of the Amt Blank. All of the important members agreed that it was necessary to prepare a new army with a democratic spirit.⁹⁰ In addition, the German Parliament demonstrated an equal concern for both the "inner structure" as well as the personnel of the Bundeswehr. "The toughest question facing the West German parliament when the Bundeswehr was first being formed was how to staff the top ranks of the armed forces serving a democracy when the only available manpower pool consisted entirely of men who had served earlier in Hitler's forces."⁹¹

However, since the West Germans desired to regain sovereignty and were, at the same time, under international pressure to quickly establish an armed force, they could not wait to develop a new military cadre. Instead, they had to rely on the former members of the Wehrmacht.⁹² Yet, this was not as dangerous as it might first appear because the Wehrmacht was not singularly united in their

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Ibid, p. 123.

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Nelson, p. 63.

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Bauer, Werner, "Deutsche Generale", in Beitrage zur Analyse der Deutschen Obersicht, Zapf, Wolfgang, ed., (R. Piper Verlag, Muenchen: 1965), 2nd ed., p. 114; and Nelson, p. 69.

love and support of the Nazis.

"...the German military officers fell into four groups according to their attitudes toward the Nazi regime:

- 1) Devoted followers of Hitler
- 2) Critical followers who served the dictator as experts, as they would have served any head of state, especially in war time.
- 3) Conspirators who wanted to deprive Hitler of power either by arrest or assassination but without giving aid or assistance to Germany's enemies.
- 4) Radicals who were so outraged by Hitler's policies that they were willing to add cooperation with the enemy (Landesverrat) to revolt against the authorities (Hochverrat)."⁹³

In an effort to root out the undesirables, the Federal Government created the Personalgutachterausschuss (Personal Assessment Committee). This committee was responsible for the screening of all officers of the rank of full colonel and above.⁹⁴ The committees required all prospective Bundeswehr personnel to have an irreproachable military record and to demonstrate adjustment to post-war civilian life.⁹⁵ The committee was concerned with the post-war civilian life of the former soldier to see whether he could adjust to civilian life in a democratic society. Consequently, if the applicant could show that he was able to obtain gainful civilian employment, this helped

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Speier, pp. 19-20.

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The Annahmerorganisationen were responsible for screening all ranks below that of full colonel.

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Nelson, p. 67.

prove that he was capable of adjusting to post-war German society.⁹⁶ In addition, two categories of former soldiers were rejected immediately: convicted war criminals and former colonels and generals of the Waffen-SS.⁹⁷ However, members of the Waffen-SS below the rank of full colonel who could prove that they were involuntary members and had actively disavowed the ideology of the Waffen-SS were considered. Although members of the Waffen-SS were considered for appointment, in 1956 when the strength of the Bundeswehr was 67,000, less than one per cent were veterans of the Waffen-SS. Moreover, out of the 731 Waffen-SS veterans who were screened, only 299 were found acceptable and only 45 received commissions.⁹⁸

In addition, certain persons were acceptable only after a detailed investigation plus the approval of the Defense Minister (Blank). These persons included members of the Allgemeine SS, the Sicherheitsdienst, and members of unsavory post-World War I and Nazi organizations. As a result, these committees, with the blessing of the Federal Government, labored to insure that all Nazi

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It must be remembered that during Weimar many ex-officers and enlisted men could not make the adjustment from military to civilian life. These people not only wreaked havoc in the inter-war years but were most susceptible to Nazi propaganda.

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The Waffen-SS was composed of Nazi sympathizers as well as members who were conscripted or transferred into it. However, none of those transferred or conscripted achieved the rank of full colonel or general. Nelson, p. 64.

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Waldman, pp. 55-57.

influence was eliminated. Only those officers who had not tarnished military honor and who could demonstrate their adjustment to democratic society would be admitted to the Bundeswehr.

Although this was an admirable exercise, there still remained the problem of the secret restoration of Prussian tendencies. While this was a problem, it does not appear to have been a serious one. In the first place, the Defense Ministry could be highly selective in the personnel chosen. Of the 800 former generals of the Wehrmacht, only a small portion were needed.⁹⁹ Some, of course, had died; others were too old for "recommissioning"; and still others chose not to serve. This last group, fortunately, was composed of aristocrats and traditionalists who did not like the "new approach (to the military)."¹⁰⁰ Moreover, conditions were not conducive to restorative tendencies in the early years.¹⁰¹

However, the Bundeswehr has maintained two previous recruitment traditions. In the first place, the Bundeswehr continues to be populated by a high percentage of former Prussians.¹⁰²

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In 1962, there were 180 generals and admirals in the Bundeswehr. However, by this time the Bundeswehr was beginning to develop its own officer corps.

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Interview with Graf Baudissin.

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There is some evidence that restorative tendencies emerged in the late 60's. This will be discussed below.

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Nelson, p. 73.

Although this is true, it is unclear whether the Bundeswehr harbors latent revanchist tendencies or whether life and success in West Germany will make Prussia just a memory. However, this is a problem of minimal significance so long as West Germany remains firmly tied to NATO and the German government remains in a position to dominate the army.¹⁰³

Of more importance are the class origins of the officer corps. Since the turn of the century there has been a marked decrease of aristocratic officers in favor of the middle classes. "In Imperial Germany in 1911, two-thirds of the generals and admirals were aristocrats; in 1921, the year the Reichswehr was founded, one-half were aristocrats; in 1932, one-third; and in 1945, at the end of the war, one-fifth were aristocrats."¹⁰⁴ In 1962, 15.55% of the generals and admirals of the Bundeswehr were aristocrats, while 74.44% were of middle-class origin.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, possession of the Abitur qualifies a person to be an officer, as it did since the turn of the century. As late as 1967, the social origins of the Bundeswehr leadership were: 13% aristocrats, 63% professional/upper

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See above, Chapter II.

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Bauer, p. 123.

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Ibid, p. 117. In 1962, the class origins of the generals and admirals of the Bundeswehr were: 28 aristocrats (15.55%), 134 middle-class (74.44%), and 18 no response (10.01%). Of the 50 generals and admirals of the Volksarmee (East Germany) there were: 1 aristocrat (2%), 42 middle-class (84%), and 7 no response (14%). The raw figures are Bauer's, p. 117; the percentages are mine.

middle-class, and 17% lower middle-class.¹⁰⁶ However, while the data on the social origins of the upper ranks of the officer corps suggests a somewhat homogeneous group, information on the educational level of the officer corps suggests more diversity. According to the Ministry of Defense in 1967, "6.8% of all Bundeswehr officers...had only a primary education; 87.7% claimed a secondary-level education; and 5.5% had progressed to a university."¹⁰⁷ In the period between 1970 and the first half of 1973, 66% of the regular officer candidates had a secondary education; 24% had qualified for admission to a technical college; and 10% had completed primary school.¹⁰⁸ In fact, the officer corps of the Bundeswehr can be divided along educational lines. Personnel who have achieved a level of competence within their technical area may be promoted to the lower ranks of the officer corps. Since 1957, the Bundeswehr has operated professional schools whose express purpose is to insure technical competence as well as career advancement. By attending one of these schools, a member of the Bundeswehr, depending upon his

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Hancock, M. Donald, "The Bundeswehr and the National Peoples Army: A Comparative Study of German Civil-Military Polity," Monograph Series in World Affairs, (University of Denver: 1973); percentages were calculated from Table 2, p. 13.

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Ibid, Note B, p. 13.

¹⁰⁸

White Paper 1973/1974; percentages were calculated from figures on p. 124.

period of enlistment, may obtain the necessary academic qualifications for entrance into the officer corps. Furthermore, non-commissioned officers who do not possess the requisite academic credentials may still become officers in the category "Officer Specialist." Officer Specialists are personnel who have demonstrated technical skill and intellectual proficiency in a particular area and are permitted to achieve ranks up to and including captain. Advancement to the rank of major and above (field grade) still requires, for the most part, university education and advanced instruction at one of the Bundeswehr Universities and the Command and General Staff College. Even though the officer corps is open to personnel who possess demonstrable skills, career advancement within the military is dependent upon certification by military educational institutions. This is a most significant aspect of recruitment and education within the Bundeswehr. During the educational process within the military, whether it is on the Professional School, University or Command and General Staff College level, members of the Bundeswehr are required to show proficiency in technical areas. In addition, they are required to attend courses in social science and Innere Fuehrung which constantly reaffirm the principles of civilian control.

Of perhaps greater importance is the party affiliation of the Bundeswehr. This is important for two reasons:

- 1) an army too closely associated with one party could

be dangerous, and 2) ever since the Himmerod Conference, it was a principle that the Bundeswehr should not engage in party politics. For the first ten years of its existence, however, many of the members of the Bundeswehr were sympathetic to the CDU/CSU.¹⁰⁹ This is understandable for a number of reasons. In the first place, it was the CDU/CSU which organized the Bundeswehr and dominated West German politics in the formative years of the republic. In the second place, the CDU/CSU is a center-right political party appealing to the West German middle class. Finally, during this period, the SPD was still in the process of eliminating its Marxist ideology, and still an anti-military party.¹¹⁰ The growth of SPD support by the end of the decade is of particular interest. By that time, the party had demonstrated its political and military acceptability.¹¹¹ Furthermore, it had also encouraged its members to join the Bundeswehr.¹¹²

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Kempe, Martin, "SPD und Bundeswehr", Blaeter fuer Deutsche und Internationale Politik, Vol. 10, (1971), pp. 1147-1148. He cites the following statistics for the long term and professional soldiers: in the early 1960's, 74.6% supported the CDU/CSU, 11.5% the FPD, and 4.8% the SPD. By the end of the decade, 60% supported the CDU/CSU, 20% the SPD, and 20% the NPD.

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See above, Chapter V.

111

"Defense Ministers like Helmut Schmidt demonstrated that the SPD understood the military and was competent to deal with them." Interview with General Baudissin.

112

Interview with Colonel Genschel.

Of equal interest is the amount of NPD support in the Bundeswehr. Some critics saw this as a manifestation of the German military's traditional anti-democratic sentiments.¹¹³ Although the activities of the NPD raised the specter of renewed German militarism, fortunately they were a transient phenomena. Furthermore, it can be argued, the presence of NPD sympathizers in the Bundeswehr demonstrates that the Bundeswehr reflects the society of which it is a part. While it was unfortunate that the NPD existed and had supporters in the military, the Bundeswehr cannot be faulted. In the first place, the party was not banned; therefore, to support it was perfectly legitimate. Secondly, to ask the Bundeswehr to eliminate these supporters and assume the role of the political leaders would be unconstitutional. The NPD was a political problem for the responsible democratic leaders of West Germany, not the Bundeswehr. Finally, it can be argued

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"In both predisposition and psychological determinants and in terms of developing social functions, the Bundeswehr appears destined to play a conservative and potentially nationalistic role in German society." Thus, the support within the Bundeswehr for the NPD is considered dangerous by this author. Ashkenasi, Abraham, Modern German Nationalism, (John Wiley, New York: 1976), pp. 143, 153.

While this is possible, there is evidence to suggest that the impact of the NPD was not that extreme. In a study by Roghmann and Sodeur, they found that "(t)here was a significant decrease in authoritarianism, over the 17 month period of service in the army...." Furthermore, they found that the decrease may not be "due to age (maturity) but possibly to the learning experience in the military." Roghmann, Klaus and Sodeur, Wolfgang, "The Impact of Military Service in Authoritarian Attitudes: Evidence from West Germany", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 78, No. 2. This research was carried out during the period of greatest support of NPD in the Bundeswehr.

that although some officers supported the NPD, the party did not have a great effect on the Bundeswehr. Those who organized the Bundeswehr learned well the lessons of Weimar and the Third Reich: political officers are powerless without reliable troops. This is one reason for conscription in West Germany.

"Conscription forms the strongest and most conspicuous link between the Bundeswehr and the population....

Conscription keeps in motion an interchange of men between the armed forces and civilian society, which benefits both sides. Conscripts act as a point of contact between the armed forces and civilian society: they help to keep the military organization open for influences from the civilian sphere and thus make the forces responsive to the social changes taking place in their civilian environment; and they prevent the forces from passing into spiritual isolation."¹¹⁴

Perhaps one of the most difficult recruitment problems in contemporary West Germany is the problem of conscientious objectors. According to Article 4 of the Basic Law, no one can be compelled against his will to bear arms. Since the mid-1960's, there has been a steady increase in the number of draft age men desiring exemption on the grounds of conscience. In the mid-60's, approximately 3,000 men a year were exempted. However, by 1977, the projected figure was 41,000; and by November 1977, 33,535 had been exempted.

This raised a number of recruitment problems. In the first place, those seeking conscientious objector status

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White Paper, 1973/1974, p. 56.

tend to be well educated, thereby depriving the armed forces of those recruits most necessary to its operations. This problem was magnified further by a recent law which eliminated the sincerity test and required the potential draftee to merely "utter verbally his aversion to war." This would have made it easier to become a conscientious objector. Estimates suggested that over 100,000 draft age men would be exempted from service. It was argued that both the size of the group as well as their educational level would hinder the Bundeswehr because the manpower pool would contain less educated persons. However, the provision simply requiring a verbal statement has been nullified. This means that some will have to be reexamined and the number of potential conscientious objectors will not exceed 40,000 of the estimated 452,000 recruitment pool. Thus, recruitment will be more equal, and the Bundeswehr will not be denied the educational resource it needs.

It is clear that in the twenty-two year history of the Bundeswehr, the pattern of recruitment reflects the social and political development of the Federal Republic.

The Bundeswehr and Politics

Even though great efforts were made by the Federal Republic to integrate the Bundeswehr into the state and society, civil/military relations in West Germany have not been without tensions. Indeed, tension between the military and society has been present since the very beginning of the Bundeswehr. Almost from the outset, many professional soldiers felt that the reforms instituted

under the heading *Innere Fuehrung* demonstrated a deep-seated distrust of the military by the state and society. Moreover, this feeling of social isolation was further reinforced by the anti-military attitudes of the West Germans during the 1950's.

In the early 1960's, however, social attitudes began to change toward acceptance of the Bundeswehr. This change was the result of both international and domestic events. Internationally, the periodic Berlin crises, the Berlin wall and the Cuban missile crisis demonstrated to the population the necessity of maintaining a military force. Domestically, the Bundeswehr had proven useful in coping with such natural disasters as floods and forest fires.¹¹⁵ As a result, the Bundeswehr was no longer viewed as a social outcast.

By the mid-1960's, the Bundeswehr had, so to speak, arrived. Now its leaders felt that they were in a position to make demands upon the government and society instead of remaining passive recipients of governmental policy. Consequently, during the period between 1966 and 1970 the Federal Republic was faced with three important incidents involving the Bundeswehr: the Starfighter crisis, the generals crisis, and a growing controversy over *Innere Fuehrung*.

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Fleckenstein, Bernhard, "The Military and Labor Union Organizations in Germany," Armed Forces and Society, Vol. 2, No. 4, (August 1976), p. 505.

The Starfighter crisis is interesting because it was the first time in which the Bundeswehr made open demands upon the government. The Starfighter crisis was triggered by mishaps involving the F104G fighter aircraft. This prompted the Bundeswehr to demand the removal of the aircraft from service. Although the military was willing to press their demands, the facts surrounding the loss of the aircraft were unclear. The military argued that the high accident rate was a manifestation of the poor quality of the aircraft. However, other nations were successfully operating this aircraft at a much lower accident rate. This led some to suggest that the problem was poor training and airmanship, not the airworthiness of the aircraft. Consequently, the behavior of the Bundeswehr was viewed by the government as a direct challenge to its authority. It appeared to them that the Bundeswehr was attempting to gain undue influence in defense and weapons procurement policy, two areas the government considered their exclusive domain. The outcome of the controversy was the government's decision to continue operating the Starfighter. This served to remind the Bundeswehr that it was a technical service, not a policy-making organization.¹¹⁶

The Starfighter crisis is interesting for reasons other than its demonstration of civilian control. The

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For a detailed discussion of the Starfighter Crisis see Hornung, pp. 278-289.

incident also illustrates the use of the Bundeswehr for partisan political gain. During the height of the controversy, Helmut Schmidt, one of the SPD's most effective spokesmen on military affairs, rose to the defense of the armed forces.¹¹⁷ Schmidt's behavior, however, does not appear to be the result of any great fondness of the military. Instead, it shows a certain amount of opportunism on the part of the SPD. What Schmidt realized was that the crisis was a good opportunity for the SPD to begin a rapprochement with the military.¹¹⁸ Therefore, since the question of civilian control was not

¹¹⁷

Ibid, p. 276.

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Since its inception in the 1870's the SPD has consistently disliked the military, a feeling that the military gladly reciprocated. However, during the early 1960's the leaders of the SPD, especially Schmidt, sought to change this and other aspects of the party platform. The Starfighter crisis, therefore, was seen as an opportunity to demonstrate to the Bundeswehr, and the rest of West Germany, their new political ideas. This is also demonstrated in Schmidt's response to the continued alienation of the labor unions and the Bundeswehr. Referring to a resolution passed at the Young-Generation Conference of the Chemical Industries Labor Union Schmidt said: "In my opinion, a resolution such as was issued recently by the labor unions, saying we can talk to the Bundeswehr but they can't talk to us under any circumstances is grotesque. Do you really believe that would impress anybody in the Bundeswehr? All they will say is: They must have lost their minds. You cannot stamp the soldier, a priori, as a second-rate human being; can't you see how silly that is? In that way we will never build up a basis for mutual talk. Again, those who believe they are fulfilling their democratic duty by grossly insulting the Bundeswehr are political imbeciles...." Quoted in Fleckenstein, p. 504, *italics in original*. For a discussion of the internal reforms of the SPD during this period, see above, Chapter V.

at stake, Schmidt sought to use the situation to increase the standing of the SPD within the Bundeswehr and to score some political points on the CDU.¹¹⁹

Although the Starfighter crisis is a good illustration of West German military policy-making, it was far less serious than the generals crisis and the continuing controversy surrounding Innere Fuehrung. Admiral Heye's comment in Quick magazine asserted that the Bundeswehr was unmistakably becoming a state within a state was followed two years later by the general crisis.¹²⁰ This comment unleashed a debate over how well the Bundeswehr was being integrated into the West German state and society. Thus, when Generals Trettner, Pape, and Panitzki resigned in protest, it rekindled the debate over military integration and crystallized a deep-seated tension between the Bundeswehr and the state and society. Their resignations were in protest over a governmental decree permitting members of the Bundeswehr to join labor unions.¹²¹ In their opinion, the decree appeared to sanction a military labor union "as self-appointed

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Manfred Woerner suggests that because Germany is a parliamentary regime based upon disciplined parties, the opposition plays an important role in civilian control through its ability to criticize the government. Therefore, the Bundeswehr, as well as defense policy, is a political football tossed among the political parties. This was also confirmed during my visit to West Germany. Most informed people who I spoke to suggested that the Bundeswehr is often caught in the middle of partisan conflict.

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Heye was, at that time, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces.

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Fleckenstein, p. 507.

guardian and Bundeswehr controller outside parliament."¹²² This development, consequently, was viewed as a further indication that the state and society still did not trust the Bundeswehr. Moreover, the generals questioned unionism on professional military grounds. They protested that union activities among the ranks would further hamper discipline and efficiency in the armed forces. Although the decree triggered these resignations, the cause actually ran much deeper. The crux of the conflict, in fact, centered around Innere Fuehrung and sparked a controversy which would last into the 1970's.

The roots of the controversy over Innere Fuehrung go back to the inception of the Bundeswehr. Innere Fuehrung was designed as a means of integrating the Bundeswehr into society and as a substitute for the traditional values of the military. Yet, at the very beginning, the government appeared to fully endorse Innere Fuehrung and at the same time accept traditional military values. This is best illustrated by the Personnel Review Board's attitude toward July 20, 1944.

"The soldier's conscience is bound by eternal moral laws. Aware of his transtemporal responsibility, he respects the rights and the religious and political convictions of his neighbor. From this orientation it follows that the future soldier must accept the conscientious decisions of the men of July 20, 1944. He will combine this acceptance with respect for them and for the many soldiers

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Ibid, p. 509.

who out of a feeling of duty risked their lives until the end."¹²³

Although the government appeared to retreat from Innere Fuehrung, most soldiers would not have dared to openly challenge it during the 1950's. This was the period when West Germany was pacifistic and skeptical of all things military; to attack the concept of Innere Fuehrung certainly would have been imprudent.

However, in the 1960's there were two events which laid the foundation for a conservative counter-attack on Innere Fuehrung. One was the article in Spiegel Magazine in October 1962, criticizing West German military preparedness.¹²⁴ The other was the Starfighter Crisis and the continued allegations of military unpreparedness. Consequently, when the general resigned over military unionism, it was the signal to counterattack.

Innere Fuehrung was criticized for a variety of reasons. Some argued that it was vague, idealistic and postulated on a utopian view of man. Others suggested that it bred too much civilian influence and parliamentary control,¹²⁵ and that it represented a radical break with

¹²³

Quoted in Speier, pp. 31-32. The endorsement of both views was necessary to attract former officers who did not agree with Baudissin.

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The article caused the "Speigel Affair" and was the undoing of Franz Josef Strauss as Defense Minister.

¹²⁵

In 1969, General Grashey imprudently suggested that Innere Fuehrung was a concession to the SPD. He was promptly removed. Genschel, p. 7, Verteidigung im Buednis, p. 267.

past traditions that were not necessarily all that bad.¹²⁶ What all the critics had in common, however, was a belief that Innere Fuehrung impaired military efficiency and discipline. Almost all critics desired a return to the strict discipline of the parade ground where a member of the armed forces was secure in the strict relationship between the superior and subordinate.

Unfortunately, many of these attacks coincided with a most difficult period in West German politics. This was the time of left- and right-wing radicalism and the extra-parliamentary opposition. In one respect, the critics of Innere Fuehrung were reacting to political change. During this period, both the extreme right¹²⁷ and left had designs upon the armed forces. The right was seeking an obvious ally, while the left desired to undermine the Bundeswehr as an instrument of political power. The armed forces' desire to return to the more traditional values was, in effect, a desire to insulate the Bundeswehr from its changing environment. By rekindling an emphasis on traditional military values, it was hoped that the Bundeswehr could retain some unity and functional integrity. Consequently, the Bundeswehr began to emphasize traditional military values moreso

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For a more detailed discussion of the critics of Innere Fuehrung see Genschel, *passim*, especially pp. 1-11.

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The major spokesman for the right on military affairs was Hans-Georg von Studnitz. See his Rettet die Bundeswehr, (Seewald Verlag, Stuttgart: 1967).

than in the past.¹²⁸ This aspect of the controversy is best illustrated by General Albert Schnez's article of May 1969 entitled "Thoughts on the Improvement of the Internal Order of the Army."¹²⁹ In this article Schnez argues that Innere Fuehrung was a useful concept at the very beginning. At this time, the population was skeptical and the role of the Bundeswehr unclear.¹³⁰ Now all that has changed because the role of the Bundeswehr is sharply delineated and the armed forces are accepted. Moreover, Innere Fuehrung could be used by radicals, such as the New Left,¹³¹ to undermine the Bundeswehr and the state. This would be unfortunate because the Bundeswehr serves the majority, not the radical minority.¹³² Moreover, present-day German youth are anti-military, anti-democratic and anti-state; if they are to be of any use to the state and the armed forces, they need strong discipline--something Innere Fuehrung prevents.

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For an analysis of Bundeswehr Publications see Gutte, Rolf, "Die Mentalitaete Unserer Armee: Analyze von Bundeswehr-Publikationen," Frankfurter Hefte, Vol. 21, (1966), pp. 6-16.

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The so-called Schnez Study was prepared with the help of Generals Uechtritz, Thilo and Niepold.

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The Schnez Study in Hessler, Klaus, Militaer-Gehorsam-Meinung (Dokumente zur Diskussionen in der Bundeswehr), (Walter der Gruyter, Berlin: 1971), pp. 56-57.

131

Ibid, p. 57. It is interesting that he does not mention the right in this context.

132

Ibid, p. 52.

In addition, Schnez also argues that Innere Fuehrung hinders the effective operation of the forces. It is an unclear concept and thus causes undue anxiety among superiors because it is difficult to apply.¹³³ In fact, there is some evidence to this effect. While Innere Fuehrung has been described in general by Baudissin and official government publications, it has never been properly codified. This is evident from the reports of the Parliamentary Commissioner (Wehrbeauftragte).¹³⁴ These reports are filled with illustrations of the problems encountered trying to apply Innere Fuehrung, and they demonstrate how the Commissioner had to proceed case by case to show the armed forces what was intended by Innere Fuehrung. Innere Fuehrung was a problem because the relationship between superior and subordinate was not so clear as in the past. This resulted in the Wehrbeauftragte receiving a wide variety of complaints. Some were frivolous and easily dismissed. Many which did have merit were the result of a poor understanding of the concept. In these cases, the Wehrbeauftragte took pains to show how these problems should be handled in the future. Finally, some complaints were the result of a callous disregard for Innere Fuehrung, and discipline was promptly forthcoming.

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Ibid, p. 61.

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See the annual reports of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the period (Matthias Hoogen), where he repeatedly points out this problem.

The major problem was the first two categories which clearly indicated a lack of understanding and not malicious intent. Therefore, the Wehrbeauftragte suggested that rather than use a case by case approach, it might be better to codify and delineate strict guidelines for Innere Fuehrung. This is exactly what was done. In 1973, the government published a new series of directives and reformed the courses and syllabi used for training in the Bundeswehr.¹³⁵ Innere Fuehrung was not abandoned but, hopefully, it was strengthened.¹³⁶

These three incidents demonstrate that the government is firmly in control of the Bundeswehr. Unlike the past, the armed forces are not separate and aloof, but part of the political and social dynamics of the state and society. In fact, for the first time in German history, it is mistaken to discuss the military as a completely separate political entity. This is because the forces are well integrated into the state and society through Innere Fuehrung and the Defense Ministry. In fact, it makes more sense to discuss the politics of the Bundeswehr in terms of Defense Ministry politics, just as one discusses military matters in the United States in the context of the Pentagon. This does not mean to say that the West

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Politische Bildung in der Bundeswehr, ZDv 12/1, (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung: 1973).

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All White Papers since 1970 have reaffirmed the necessity and utility of Innere Fuehrung.

German Defense Ministry does not present problems to West German society. It merely suggests that the problems of the past are not the problems of the present. The solution of one set of problems may itself create a new set of problems. With the changing situation in NATO, the West will come to rely more on the West Germans. As this situation develops, the Defense Ministry will begin to demand a greater share of what West German society has to offer. In the past, there was the problem of how to control the armed forces; in the future, it may be a problem of how to control the civilian-controlled Defense Ministry.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF THE GERMAN MILITARY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

This study began as an attempt to deal with one of the fundamental problems of military politics: how is it possible to control a military organization and maintain it within prescribed political boundaries? Germany was chosen because, during the twentieth century, it had experienced both sides of the problem. During the Weimar Republic, Germany possessed an army virtually out of control. In contemporary West Germany, the situation is almost the complete opposite of the Weimar experience. Today, the West German Army does not pose, and has never posed, a threat to the existence or stability of the Federal Republic. This is, perhaps, one of the most significant developments in post-war West Germany. An important question, therefore, is why has the Federal Republic succeeded where the Weimar Republic failed? The

question is even more intriguing because, at first glance, there are a number of interesting similarities between the Federal Republic and the Weimar Republic. On the one hand, both republics resulted from military defeat. On the other hand, military personnel who had served the previous regime were utilized by both republics to rebuild a military organization.

Although Germany was defeated in both world wars, circumstances were very different in the two post-war periods. In 1918, the Weimar Republic was created in the midst of military defeat and domestic turmoil. At the conclusion of the war, the German war effort collapsed, not in Germany, but on foreign soil. Moreover, up until the very end of the conflict, the German nation was led to believe that victory was within the grasp of the German Army. While it was unmistakably clear to the High Command that the war was lost, defeat came as a complete surprise to many, both at the front and at home. Furthermore, the military collapse coincided with the outbreak of the German Revolution. This coincidence set the stage for the development of the infamous "stab in the back" legend, a point of view which would figure prominently in subsequent Weimar politics.

In addition, Germany lacked clear-sighted leadership in the immediate post-war period. The announcement by Scheidemann in November, 1918 which proclaimed the German Republic was done more out of necessity than conviction. The military collapse and the revolution came as a complete

surprise to the leadership of the Social Democrats, and they were clearly unprepared to assume control of events. Furthermore, they refused to join forces with the nascent radical Left. The SPD leadership wanted to reestablish order and, above all, avoid a repetition of the events which occurred in Russia the previous year. Perhaps a program developed by both the moderate and radical socialists would have provided a firmer foundation for the republic and prevented the quick reemergence of the German Right. This, however, did not take place. Instead, the moderate socialists and the radical Left clashed almost immediately. This precipitated the alliance between the socialist government and the High Command--a relationship which would eventually prove fatal to the Weimar Republic. Moreover, the first clashes in Berlin in late 1918 and early 1919 ushered in a period of unrest which proved beneficial to the German Army. Throughout the years between 1918 and 1923, the republic was faced, almost constantly, with armed threats from both the Left and the Right. Thus, in the early years, the crucial period for the consolidation of the new regime, the Weimar Republic was not permitted the stability necessary to create the foundation needed for the new political order.

In addition, even though the republic was able to weather the political storms of the early period, the stability which began after 1923, was illusory. Certainly, one must question whether the republic was stable at any time during its brief existence. If the amount of anti-

regime violence is used as an index, then the republic had some semblance of stability in the years between 1923 and 1929. At no time during this short period did the regime confront any major violent political activity by either the Left or the Right. However, stability is also the result of the ability of the government to rule effectively and deal with the issues of the day. Here, too, the Weimar Republic lacked the requisite stability.

In many respects, the political and governmental process contributed to the collapse of the Weimar Republic. Throughout its existence, the regime possessed a multi-party system. While the possession of this system, by itself, does not necessarily create instability, the nature of the Weimar multi-party system did cause serious political problems. For example, in the general election of 1932, 23 political parties competed and 13 won seats in the Reichstag. The number of competing political parties, therefore, made the formation of governments extremely difficult. This is shown clearly by the fact that the average life of Weimar governments was a little over six months. Coupled with the instability often present in coalition politics was the fact that the regime was faced with extremist political parties. These parties did not accept the legitimacy of the regime but were willing to use democratic procedures to undermine the political process. On the Right, the republic was faced with the German Nationalists and, later, the National Socialists.

On the Left, it was faced with the German Communist Party. The problem of extremist parties is brought into sharp relief through a comparison of the elections of 1919 and 1920. In the election of 1919, the so-called Weimar Coalition (Social Democrats, Center and Democratic parties) received an overwhelming majority of electoral support: 76.2 per cent. However, in June of 1920, the electoral support of these political parties had shrunk to 47 per cent of the vote. Moreover, in subsequent elections, these political parties, the only avowedly democratic parties, never obtained an electoral majority. Consequently, not only were the supporters of the republic faced with anti-democratic parties of both the Left and the Right, but, more importantly, the electoral support of the democratic parties was problematic. Therefore, the political instability, caused by the Weimar party system, made effective government virtually impossible. Throughout most of Weimar, Germany experienced political drift instead of vigorous and effective government. This, no doubt, must have shocked many Germans, especially when the listlessness of the republic was compared to the vigor of the Imperial Regime. It also explains, to some extent, why many Germans abandoned democracy for the promise of strong and effective government.

To make a bad situation worse, the Weimar Republic faced serious international problems. The Allies, especially the French, were determined at the conclusion of the First World War to punish the Germans for precipi-

tating hostilities. The result was the infamous Diktat of Versailles. The treaty forced the Germans to accept responsibility for the outbreak of war, cede territory in the east to Poland, accept the demilitarization of the Rheinland, pay enormous reparations, and reduce their military forces. In addition, Germany was humiliated further by the French occupation of the Ruhr, which the Germans were powerless to prevent. Thus, the apparent failures of the republic in international affairs served to further undermine the already weak foundation of the republic.

In short, there are a number of reasons for the failure of the Weimar Republic. In the first place, the nature of the German Revolution made its contribution to the demise of Weimar. The events of November, 1918 were, at best, politically inconclusive. The revolution was more the result of war weariness and governmental collapse than the desire of the population for radical political change. Although popular zeal is not absolutely necessary, Lenin demonstrated that leadership capable of directing events is essential. In 1918, this leadership was lacking in Germany because the moderate socialists proved incapable of taking complete control of events. Almost immediately after the proclamation of the republic anti-regime organizations, on both the Left and the Right, were permitted to develop and thrive. The revolution, instead of clarifying the political situation through the victory of one of the contending political forces, merely served to further

confuse German politics. The revolution launched a number of contending political forces into the arena of Weimar politics.

Secondly, because of the constellation of contending political forces, the institutional framework of the Weimar Republic proved ineffective. The party system destabilized the situation further and prevented the evolution of stable and effective democratic government. Moreover, the Weimar presidency, during the Hindenburg incumbency, proved an added asset to the German Right. Consequently, the supporters of democracy remained on the defensive throughout the existence of the Weimar Republic.

The political atmosphere in inter-war Germany proved most conducive to the political program of the German High Command. In 1918, the army forced the Kaiser's abdication, not out of love for democracy, but as a means of saving the army. The High Command realized that the war effort had failed and that it was responsible for military defeat and the collapse of the Imperial Regime. However, this did not deter the political ambitions of the army leadership. They believed that the army remained the essence of a strong, viable and resurgent Germany. Therefore, if Germany were to rebuild after the war and regain her position and prestige in Europe, then the army and old martial spirit had to be rekindled and developed. This appraisal was central in the mind of General Groener who, by informing the Kaiser that his abdication was necessary to save Germany and the army, laid the groundwork

for the reemergence of the army in German politics. The desire of the German High Command to reestablish its central position in German politics was given an added boost in the period immediately following the abdication. Because of the impending threat of a takeover by the radical Left, the government turned to the former Imperial High Command and officer corps for support. This was given immediately by the army leadership because it allowed the army early entrance into the new regime. Moreover, in the early years of violent confrontation, the army became more entrenched politically, due to the government's reliance upon the army leadership for support.

Although the chaos of the early years proved beneficial to the army by allowing entrance into the government, the political instability that manifested during the years 1919 to 1923 prevented the army leadership from carrying its plans to fruition. The unstable condition meant that the Reichswehr was used all too frequently for internal security. This prevented military reorganization after the collapse of 1918. Furthermore, the experience of the early years uncovered serious disciplinary problems in the army. In 1920, it was the Ehrhardt Freikorps which mutinied and staged the Kapp Putsch. In addition, during the Nazi Beer Hall Putsch in Munich in 1923, the loyalty of the Bavarian troops was in doubt. Therefore, in the early years, the subordination of the Reichswehr to the discipline of the military command was questionable. This lack of complete discipline was a major drawback to the political plans of

the High Command because the success of its program depended upon a military organization clearly subordinated to the army leadership. Consequently, the years of apparent stability were welcomed in the higher circles of the Reichswehr. As the Reich settled down to a period of normalcy, the army was permitted to withdraw into its narrow confines and begin the process of reorganization.

The reorganization of the Germany Army during the Weimar Republic was directed by Colonel General Hans von Seeckt. Seeckt was the beneficiary of both Groener's earlier labors and the inability of Weimar governments to rule effectively. Groener, through his actions immediately following the Kaiser's abdication and the armistice, insured that the army would have some say in Germany's political future. While Groener's actions were necessary to the reemergence of the army as an important center of political power, they alone do not explain the success of the army in Weimar. An equally important factor was the inability of the government to develop and carry through military policies. In the period following the First World War, Germany was not without supporters of a thorough reform of the army. These reforms were never carried out because of the government's dependence upon the military for support and the provisions of the Versailles Treaty, both of which placed severe limits on military policy. Furthermore, the regime was not in a position to institute reform because governments were either shortlived or so broadly based that they were

unable to agree upon a course of action. Therefore, in the years of apparent stability, the military was left, essentially, to its own devices. In this respect, the army was better off than the rest of Germany. While the nation was adrift searching for solutions to its problems and leaders capable of implementing them, the army already possessed a program and effective leadership.

Seeckt was determined to see Germany reemerge as a great power. This could be accomplished only through the recreation of an effective military organization and the elimination of the democratic regime. Both were essential because of historical imperatives. Germany became a great power in the nineteenth century through the leadership of Prussia. Prussia was an authoritarian state which afforded its military prominent political influence and social prestige. Therefore, Seeckt concluded, Germany needed similar conditions to reestablish her status as a great power. However, conditions during Weimar dictated caution. In the first place, the French would seize any opportunity to finish the work begun at Versailles. Secondly, the army needed time and tranquility to reorganize. Thirdly, the army was not in a position to dictate the course of domestic events. If the army, or for that matter any political group, attempted to alter the regime, the army might have been faced with less pliable political leaders. Therefore, Seeckt, while perhaps not completely comfortable with the democratic leaders, understood them and could deal with democratic leadership. Seeckt behaved in a way

similar to Groener. For both Generals cooperation with the republic was necessary until the army had recovered. Once German military power had been reestablished, then the army would be in a position to determine political events. However, Seeckt's first priority was military reorganization.

Seeckt's reorganization of the Reichswehr was based upon three premises: 1) Germany's status as a great power was the result of a strong and efficient military organization; 2) if the Reichswehr was to be the foundation of a resurgent Germany it had to be modeled after the Imperial Army; and 3) if reorganization was to succeed, Germany needed a period of domestic peace which would remove the army from the political arena and allow the army leadership to concentrate upon reorganization. When Seeckt turned his attention to military reorganization, the situation was bleak. Not only was the nation defeated and exhausted, but it was forced to accept the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. At first glance, the military provisions of the treaty appeared to place Germany at a military disadvantage to the other European nations. However, Seeckt was able to turn apparent constraint to his advantage, both militarily and politically. At the conclusion of the First World War, Germany possessed a large and highly-trained manpower pool. Therefore, the army could be highly selective in its recruitment. Seeckt chose only the best trained and most efficient candidates for the reorganized Reichswehr. In addition, Seeckt

applied the traditions of the German General Staff. The General Staff developed as a means of overcoming military disadvantages through innovation, planning, and efficiency. Seeckt continued these traditions and the Reichswehr developed new operational doctrines which proved highly effective in the Second World War. Finally, Seeckt utilized the treaty provision requiring long-term service in the Reichswehr to develop a military cadre capable of quickly training a large national army. Therefore, even though the Reichswehr was small, it was efficient and capable of rapid expansion when the need arose.

Politically, the Versailles Treaty was also useful to the military program. By limiting the size of the Reichswehr (100,000 men), it allowed the recruitment of personnel who were both militarily efficient and politically reliable. Seeckt chose only those people who had monarchist and conservative views as well as a fierce loyalty to the Prussian military spirit. Through these recruitment policies, Seeckt insured that the Reichswehr would not be infected with democratic ideas but remain loyal to what he considered the best traditions of the German military.

In his efforts to recreate the Imperial German Army, Seeckt also outlined the organizational values of the Reichswehr. Although the Reichswehr was required to swear allegiance to the Republic, Seeckt sought to transfer this to the more indefinite concept of the state. He insisted that military duty was not to be found supporting the democratic regime because democracy was an imposed and

alien ideology. To faithfully serve the republic was not in the interest of Germany or the army. Seeckt, therefore, interpreted military service as service to the German state and nation, not to the democratic regime. In order for the Reichswehr to perform its duties properly, its members should concentrate on their military duties and create a strong and effective army. They should not concern themselves with politics because the army, by serving the state, stood above politics. This definition of military service, coupled with recruitment policies, helped realize one of Seeckt's primary political goals--a military organization nurtured in the traditions of the Prussian and Imperial German Armies.

The behavior of the Reichswehr illustrates many of the points raised in Chapter II. In that chapter it was suggested that the politics of the military is the result of environmental opportunities, capable leadership, military values and recruitment. All of these factors coalesced to produce a military determined to eliminate the republic. In the early period, the instability enabled Groener to maneuver the rump Imperial Army into a position of influence in the republic. Because of the possibility of a left-wing coup, the Social Democrats accepted the protection of the High Command and the former Imperial officer corps. Groener had definite plans when he offered the army's support to Ebert. He wanted to assure both the continued existence of the German Army and launch it on the road to recovery. Since the army, at this point, was

not capable of completely determining the course of events, the situation in the early years approximates the second hypothetical situation suggested in Chapter II. Civilian government remained in power because its dependence upon the army for support was beneficial to the interests of the army. To put it simply, because of the fluid political situation and the weakness of the army, it was more useful for the army to support the moderate socialists than to resist completely the forces of political change.

Seeckt continued in the same direction as Groener. He maintained the army's support of the regime because it remained in the army's interest to do so. During Seeckt's tenure from 1920 to 1926, he worked to rebuild German military power while at the same time effectively preventing the political control of the army by the democratic regime. In these efforts Seeckt was aided by the maleability of Reichswehr Minister Gessler and his ability to present the military point of view directly to the president. Thus, Seeckt was able to create an anti-democratic military through recruitment policies and his insistence that the Reichswehr adopt a belief system modeled on the Prussian and Imperial German armies. Seeckt's behavior also approximated hypothesis two. His goal was the restoration of Germany's military and political past. To do this he needed time and the cooperation of the existing political leadership. Since both were forthcoming, there was no reason for the army to alter the regime. However, it was implicit in the work of both Groener and Seeckt that, at

some point in the future, the regime would be changed in favor of one more comfortable to the army and suitable to German political traditions.

This opportunity was presented in the waning years of Weimar. As the nation experienced a worsening depression, the republic confronted increasingly violent activity by both the Left and the Right. In addition, the political situation in the Reichstag made it more difficult for a government to obtain a parliamentary majority. Of greater importance, the political influence of the military had increased. When Groener was First Quartermaster General in 1918, the army was weak and fighting for survival. If the army was to survive, the alliance by Groener and Ebert was a political necessity because circumstances dictated an accommodation with the new regime. When Seeckt was Chief of the Army Command, the Reichswehr was in the process of reconstruction which made a continuation of the policy of cooperation equally necessary. In the last few years of the republic the situation altered dramatically. At this time, Marshall von Hindenburg was president of the republic, which meant that the army had one of its most prestigious former members as Commander-in-Chief. Furthermore, General Groener came out of retirement to become Interior Minister, General Schleicher was Chief of Staff, and Major Oskar von Hindenburg, the president's son, was a presidential aide. The appearance of Hindenburg, Groener and Schleicher at this time had a familiar ring. In 1918, these three presided over the liquidation of the Imperial

regime in an effort to save the army. Hindenburg was Commander of the Army, Groener was First Quartermaster General and, the then Major Schleicher, was an aide to Groener. Now that the army was in a stronger political position, these three would preside over the termination of the Weimar Republic.

The behavior of the military leadership during these last years was tantamount to a coup d' etat. The army leadership, with the blessing of the Reichspräsident, engineered the downfall of the Brüning government as well as the installation of the Papen and Schleicher cabinets. When these presidential cabinets failed to stabilize the situation, General Schleicher convinced Hindenburg to appoint Hitler as Chancellor. He reasoned that the Nazis could be useful politically. In the first place, Nazi participation in the government would realize a small portion of their demands and eliminate the necessity for their violent behavior. Secondly, the Nazis possessed a political program which the military could support in part. Thirdly, the Nazis possessed the popular support which was essential to the political and military rebirth of Germany. Finally, the army reasoned that the Nazis would accomplish what the army could not--the destruction of the Weimar Republic.

When dealing with the Nazis in this period, the Reichswehr leadership felt secure in the belief that they were, in reality, the undisputed masters of Germany. They reasoned in this way because Germany was firmly in

the hands of the Reichspräsident and the military leadership. Moreover, by granting the Nazis entrance into the government, the military obtained added benefits. Although the cabinet contained Nazis, they would be firmly controlled by the other members of the cabinet, the president, and the army. Furthermore, by allowing the Nazis to participate in the cabinet, it insured that the Nazi-disciplined Reichstag delegation would completely support the government. Therefore, this parliamentary group plus the nationalists would guarantee the government a working parliamentary majority capable of rubber stamping governmental programs. Consequently, all would benefit. The republic would, in fact, be destroyed, though the institutions would remain as a legal facade. The Nazis would obtain some political power but, above all, the Reichswehr would become the most important power in Germany in a way reminiscent of the Imperial Regime. Therefore, the behavior of the German Army during the last years of the Weimar Republic most closely approximates hypothesis one: direct rule. Indeed, the behavior of the Reichswehr in the last years of the republic was the culmination of the work of both Groener and Seeckt. During this period, the army achieved its ambition to reorganize Germany according to the desires of the military.

There were, however, two fatal flaws in the Reichswehr's plan: they underestimated the Nazis and failed to plan ahead. The Reichswehr leadership's plans would only work, as they did, so long as Hindenburg remained president. In

1933, the Field Marshall was aged and the military political program did not take into consideration the political vacuum that would result upon Hindenburg's death. When the aged Field Marshall died, it was the Nazis, not the army, who filled the political vacuum. In addition, the army simply assumed that Hitler would play the role the army assigned to him. However, Hitler's program called for a reversal of the relationship between the army and the Nazis. Instead of the Nazis doing the army's bidding, Hitler was determined to make the army serve the National Socialist movement. Consequently, no sooner had Hitler become Chancellor when he began to undermine the army's sources of political power. He reorganized the civilian sector and brought it firmly under Nazi control. He expanded the Reichswehr through the influx of supporters of National Socialism, thereby diluting the solidarity of the army. Finally, when Hindenburg died, Hitler combined the offices of chancellor and president. By 1938, Hitler had succeeded in his quest to undermine the power of the Reichswehr. Through the Blomberg-Fritsch affairs, he rudely demonstrated to the army that he, not the Wehrmacht, was the master of Germany.

The relationship between the Nazi regime and the Wehrmacht is instructive. While a hypothesis was not developed specifically to deal with this type of situation, the Nazi period fits well within the major ideas outlined in Chapter II. The Nazi regime was far stronger politically than the army. Through the use of the terror apparatus and countervailing centers of power (Gestapo, S.S., Sicherheits-

dienst, etc.), the Nazis were able to bring sizable portions of Europe, let alone the Wehrmacht, under their domination. In addition, the Nazis paid close attention to the recruitment of the army, especially its leadership, as well as its political values. After the Blomberg-Fritsch Affair, Hitler replaced the military leadership with pliable personalities--Halder, Jodl, Keitel. Furthermore, perhaps with the exception of Rommel, advancement in the Wehrmacht depended more on political reliability than professional competence. Finally, the Nazis insured the reliability of the military by attaching to the Wehrmacht independent S.S. units and by using political officers to propagandize among the troops. The Nazi period suggests that even an unstable regime can control the military when it possesses more political power than the armed forces. Although the Third Reich depended upon unstable leadership and an irrational ideology, through the use of a variety of political techniques, (propaganda, terror, etc.) it was able to force the army into submission. In fact, the Third Reich was the first German regime able to subordinate the German Army and make it an instrument of the state. The Nazis forced upon the army a degree of political control unparalleled in German history.

The behavior of the German Army during the Nazi period demonstrates another point developed in Chapter II. There it was suggested that the political power of the military need not be based exclusively on the appeal to armed force. During the Prussian and Imperial regimes, the army was

powerful not because of its weaponry but because the society and regime accepted a high status for the military. During Weimar, circumstances were so conducive to military goals that the Reichswehr did not have to threaten the government with an outright seizure of power.¹ In July, 1944, elements of the Wehrmacht did resort to violence. This, however, was more the result of weakness than strength. Had the Nazis failed in their attempt to subordinate and control the German Army, it would have remained a major political factor in German politics. The Nazis, however, succeeded, thus precipitating the desperate actions of July 20, 1944.

In the post-World War II period, the Federal Republic was the beneficiary of both the experiences and political change that had taken place during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. The situation following the Second World War was dramatically different than the one following the First World War. During the Weimar Republic, German politics was dominated by three contending political forces: moderate democrats and left- and right-wing extremists. Throughout the entire existence of Weimar, the political

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It may be objected that the Kapp Putsch was an example of the use of force by the military. While this appears to be true, a number of distinctions must be made. In the first place, in 1920, the Reichswehr did not exist as a cohesive and disciplined organization. At that time, the army was composed of Freikorps who were controlled more by their immediate superiors, than by the Army Command. Although the Ehrhardt Brigade was formally part of the Reichswehr, this and other Freikorps units were para-military groups, not military regulars. It was not until after Kapp that Seeckt reorganized the Reichswehr. The reorganized and unified Reichswehr never applied force to the Weimar Regime.

initiative shifted among these three groups and the situation was not clarified until the Nazis seized and consolidated political power. In 1949, when the Federal Republic was created, the political choices were much narrower. The German Right was totally discredited because of its role in the Nazi catastrophe. The Left was also at a disadvantage because the Soviet Union was being blamed for the partition of Germany. Perhaps of greater significance was the fact that the occupation authorities would only permit the organization of avowedly democratic groups. Consequently, in 1949 a democratic regime was the only possibility available to the West Germans.

In addition, West Germany possessed political leadership firmly committed to the creation of a strong and viable democratic regime. Moreover, unlike Weimar, the Federal Republic was able to draw on previous democratic experience. In 1919, when the constituent Assembly convened, Germany was without any previous experience with democracy. In 1949, the West Germans had the past to use as a guide.

It was the goal of the framers of the Basic Law to rectify some of the shortcomings of the Weimar Constitution and create a strong legal framework for the infant Federal Republic. As a result, the Basic Law was a radical departure from many of the provisions of the Weimar constitution. In Weimar, the president had important political functions. He appointed the cabinet, was commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and, during emergencies, could

rule by decree. In the Federal Republic the duties of the president had been reduced to the point where he plays mostly a symbolic role. Although he, too, appoints the cabinet, he may choose only those members of the Bundestag who possess a clear parliamentary majority. Therefore, minority and presidential cabinets, a problem during Weimar, are not possible in the Federal Republic. In addition, the Federal president, although chief of state, is not commander-in-chief of the federal armed forces. This function is performed by the defense minister in peace time and the chancellor during periods of war or national emergency. This helps insure that the armed forces remain under parliamentary control. Finally, the presidential power to promulgate decrees is limited by the Basic Law. Presidential decrees are permitted only with the countersignature of the relevant cabinet minister or the chancellor. The Basic Law, therefore, attempts to prevent the abuses characteristic of Weimar by insuring that government remains strong, effective, and responsible to parliament.

The Basic Law also strengthens the position of the chancellor. In Weimar, the chancellor was constantly at the mercy of shifting party configurations in parliament. Today, the Federal Republic utilizes the constructive vote of no confidence. Unlike the normal vote of no confidence, where the government falls upon losing its majority, the constructive vote of no confidence means that the government cannot fall unless parliament is able to immediately give a majority to a new government. This provision helps

insure that Bonn, unlike Weimar, will constantly possess strong and effective government.

Finally, the Basic Law attempts to strengthen the democratic regime through the regulation of political parties. One of the most fatal characteristics of Weimar was the presence of avowedly anti-democratic political parties. The Basic Law attempts to prevent this development by mandating that only political parties which support the democratic regime can participate in politics, and by empowering the Constitutional Court, after a hearing, to ban political organizations which do not meet democratic criteria. In the twenty-nine year history of the Federal Republic, two political parties, the Socialist Reichs Party and the German Communist Party, were banned because of their undemocratic goals and procedures.

In addition to constitutional change, political developments have also aided the stability of West Germany. In this respect, the most important development has been the evolution of the West German party system. In the Weimar Republic, the multi-party system contributed to political instability because of both the number of political parties and the nature of the parties. Not only did the regime face anti-democratic parties but, throughout most of the republic, the democratic parties together did not obtain a majority of electoral support. Only once (1919) did the Weimar Coalition receive an electoral majority and, in subsequent elections, the democratic parties constantly lost electoral support. In the Federal Republic, the

process was reversed. In the election of 1949, nine political parties competed and the CDU/CSU and SPD obtained a combined vote of 61%. By 1976, the combined vote for the CDU/CSU and SPD was 91% and, of the seven other parties in existence in 1949, only the FPD has maintained representation in Parliament.² In comparison to Weimar, not only have the democratic parties gained strength, but the party system has developed into one where two parties clearly dominate the national electoral process. Therefore, as a result of the political and constitutional developments, the Federal Republic has evolved into a remarkably stable regime.

In the area of foreign affairs, the Federal Republic also benefitted from post-war developments. The mood in Western Europe after the cataclysm of the Second World War favored the creation and development of institutions of international cooperation. In contrast to the inter-war period which was dominated by the politics of hostility and revenge, the period after the Second World War was one of conciliation. Many influential Europeans realized that if Western Europe were to survive and rebuild, international reconciliation and cooperation were necessary. As a result of these attitudes, Western Europe entered into a new and significant era with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Common Market. This meant that the Federal Republic's international position was more

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Edinger, Lewis, Politics in West Germany, 2nd ed., (Little, Brown, Boston: 1977), p. 171.

favorable than Weimar's. Inter-war Germany was isolated internationally. This created serious foreign policy problems which contributed to the political instability of the Weimar Republic. In contrast, the Federal Republic was not a political outcast, but an accepted and active member of the West European community. These positive international developments, therefore, contributed to the growth of a stable regime in post-war West Germany.

With the Federal Republic launched on a firm foundation, the regime was in an excellent position to deal with the question of West German rearmament. Moreover, West Germany did not actively begin to raise an army until 1955--six years after the founding of the republic and ten years after the conclusion of the Second World War. In this respect, the Federal Republic was more fortunate than its ill-fated predecessor. Weimar, due to the political instability, was forced from the beginning to deal with the remnants of the Imperial Army. This allowed the former Imperial Officer Corps an almost unfettered participation in Weimar politics.

Equally important was the fact that when rearmament began, the Federal Republic made every effort to avoid past mistakes. In West Germany, a number of factors contribute to the political control of the military. Since the Bundeswehr is completely integrated into the North Atlantic Alliance, German military and security policy is internationalized. This reduces the political influence of the Bundeswehr for two reasons: 1) plans and operations

are not the exclusive domain of the Germans but are determined by NATO; and 2) because of the existence of the NATO collective security alliance, the Germans are not left to their own resources in the area of national security. Historically, one reason for the political influence of the army in Germany was the fact that the Germans faced potentially hostile neighbors in the east and west.

The political atmosphere in West Germany also aided efforts to control the army. In 1945, it was clear to all Germans that the army was exhausted and defeated. Furthermore, the Wehrmacht did not protect the German homeland and civilian population. During the war, the civilian population suffered tremendously from the allied war effort. At the conclusion of the hostilities, Germany was occupied by the victorious powers. Consequently, the population was no longer willing to accept an exalted position for the military within West German politics and society. The experience of the Second World War and the Third Reich ended the love affair between the army and society which began after the Wars of Unification in the nineteenth century.

In the early years of the Federal Republic, the population was decidedly anti-military. Therefore, in contrast to the Weimar Republic, West Germany was in a strong position to insure the political reliability of the armed forces when rearmament began in 1955. In 1918, the ill-fated Weimar Republic was forced to accept the protection of the unreformed Imperial Officer Corps. By 1955, the

Federal Republic had been in existence for six years before rearmament began in earnest. More importantly, the republic had been planning for its future rearmament for five years where every effort was made to prevent the repetition of the past. In light of Germany's past experience with military organizations, it was clear that the legal framework and internal organization of the armed forces needed special attention. From the legal perspective the Federal Republic attempts to insure that the Bundeswehr remains strictly within the bounds of political control and accountability. It was already mentioned that the Federal President is not the commander-in-chief of the federal armed forces. In times of peace this role is performed by the defense minister, and in times of war or national emergency command is exercised by the chancellor. This insures that the Bundeswehr, unlike the Reichswehr, remains firmly under parliamentary control. In addition, the defense committee possesses important oversight functions and is the only parliamentary committee permitted to conduct business when the parliament is not in session. The Federal Republic, however, added another control unique to civil/military relations--the Wehrbeauftragte. The Parliamentary Commissioner is an arm of the Bundestag and has broad investigatory powers in the area of military affairs. Essentially, the Parliamentary Commissioner maintains a close supervision of the armed forces to insure that they remain a reliable instrument at the disposal of the regime.

As the Weimar experience demonstrated, formal controls

alone do not insure the political reliability of the military. Equal attention must be paid to the internal organization of the military. This was, perhaps, the most critical aspect of German rearmament. The West Germans, therefore, utilized the five-year preparatory phase to make sure that the Bundeswehr would be complementary to the new democratic regime. Moreover, the Federal Republic took advantage of favorable circumstances to insure the political reliability of the Bundeswehr. When the question of West German rearmament was raised, governmental leaders began to assemble a planning staff composed of civilians and former Wehrmacht officers. Since the goal of rearmament was the development of both a technologically efficient and politically reliable armed force, the military personnel were thoroughly screened with regard to their competence and political views. Furthermore, because of the comparatively small size of the planning staff (Amt Blank), the government was extremely selective in its recruitment. Only former officers who accepted the necessity of a complete overhaul of the armed forces were permitted to serve in the Blank Office.

The result of the labors of the Blank Office was the concept of Innere Fuehrung--an idea most closely associated with Count Baudissin. Innere Fuehrung is the vehicle through which the Bundeswehr is integrated into West German politics and society. As such, it represents a radical departure from past practices of the German Army. Historically, one of the salient characteristics of the Prussian and German

armies was their isolation from the mainstream of national life. Because of its recruitment policies and its belief that the military profession was a unique calling, the army insisted upon isolation from the remainder of society. Moreover, it was these characteristics which made the political control of the German Army difficult and contributed to the tragedy of German politics in the Twentieth Century. These were the attributes of the German Army which Baudissin, and others, desired to change.

Baudissin, however, did not confront these problems directly. Instead, he uses a rather circuitous route to argue for fundamental change. He argues that one of the most important traditions of the German Army, traditions which originated with Stein, Sharnhorst and Boyen, was innovation and adaptation to change. Therefore, if the Bundeswehr was to be an efficient and reliable instrument, it must adapt to post-World War Two circumstances. In addition, Baudissin argued that past German Armies neglected the lessons of the Napoleonic reformers and substituted the false values of militarism, arrogance and isolation. The emphasis upon these values, Baudissin suggests is one of the most important factors contributing to the Nazi catastrophe.

Innere Fuehrung is, according to Baudissin, in the spirit of the best traditions of the German Army. Innere Fuehrung enables the army to be a useful instrument in the hands of the democratic regime. It also prevents, as far as humanly possible, a repetition of the Weimar experience

and the Nazi tragedy. Finally, the Federal Republic in the 1950's was under pressure to quickly become a useful military ally. This meant that the army did not have the luxury of developing a new military cadre. If the Bundeswehr was to develop swiftly into an efficient armed force, a contribution from former soldiers was essential. However, to make service palatable to Wehrmacht veterans, it was not prudent to be overly critical of the Wehrmacht. Although the army shares a major part of the blame for the Nazi regime, many soldiers served out of a sense of patriotism and behaved properly during the war. To consider all soldiers as pariahs would make their service in the Bundeswehr impossible, precisely at the time when their efforts were needed most. Finally, the German Army is an old institution with some three hundred years of history. It was equally impossible to reorganize the army without giving some consideration to the past, especially when its repetition was to be prevented. Thus, Baudissin argued that the principles of Innere Fuehrung were the proper conclusions to be drawn from past history and contemporary conditions.

In the contemporary world, the role of the soldier must change because the nature of warfare has changed. In the past, war was primarily offensive and conducted between opposing armies. This made the military profession unique and required the cultivation of the martial spirit. The Second World War altered this, however, to the point where military operations were conducted against both military

and civilian targets to the extent where the distinction between front and rear was blurred. Since the impact of modern warfare, especially with the advent of atomic weapons, falls equally upon soldier and civilian, the military profession is no longer unique. Furthermore, because of the destructiveness of modern warfare, armies no longer exist to wage war but to prevent its outbreak. This means that modern armies can no longer rely exclusively upon the martial spirit, nor seek laurels on the battlefield.

Innere Fuehrung, through its corollary Citizen in Uniform, attempts to replace the martial spirit with an equally powerful set of values. This was necessary because of both the changing nature of war and past political experience. Although the army was efficient in the past, the emphasis strictly upon the military aspects of service allowed the army to fall easy prey to the National Socialists. The concept of Citizen in Uniform is designed to prevent a repetition of the past by enabling the soldier to resist any efforts to undermine the democratic regime.

Citizen in Uniform means that when the recruit enters the service, he does not relinquish all of his civil rights or his ties to civilian society. While in the army, not only does the soldier retain his rights, but he is encouraged to participate fully in politics and society. The soldier is allowed to vote, hold public office, and participate fully in social and political activities during his off-duty hours. Furthermore, the soldier may avail himself of a variety of military programs designed to help him appreciate

the advantages of life in a democratic society.

Innere Fuehrung, therefore, has three major functions. The development of these ideas reveal Baudissin as a military reformer in the tradition of Scharnhorst and Boyen. It was Baudissin's goal to develop an armed force which would be politically reliable, difficult to misuse, and, above all, militarily efficient. Through Innere Fuehrung and Citizen in Uniform all three are achieved. Political reliability is insured because democratic values are the cornerstone of the Bundeswehr and each individual soldier is guaranteed the free exercise of his rights while in the military. Furthermore, Innere Fuehrung and its corollary require the military to be representative of West German society. Through conscription and special recruitment programs for officers and non-commissioned officers, the army is prevented from becoming the exclusive domain of any one particular group. Through Innere Fuehrung, the army is well-integrated into the mainstream of West German society and politics and avoids the isolation of the past.

Secondly, these concepts help prevent the misuse of the military. By enabling the Bundeswehr to share and complement the values and behavior of the rest of society, it becomes more difficult to use the military to undermine the West German social fabric. The army is required to share, respect, and defend the democratic values embodied in the Basic Law. Should a personality similar to Hitler emerge, the Bundeswehr is well-equipped to resist any overtures.

Finally, Innere Fuehrung is designed to enhance military operations, should they become necessary. Because the soldier experiences the political and social life of West Germany, he has a better understanding of the society and way of life he must defend. While it is true that past German armies fought bravely, contemporary circumstances are somewhat different. Today, a soldier must engage an enemy knowing that the civilian population and, more immediately, his family and home are subject to attack. In addition, the soldier will also be subjected to a wide variety of psychological warfare techniques. Therefore, by inculcating the values of his society, through experience and learning, the soldier will be better equipped to defend them. Innere Fuehrung, therefore, aids the integration, reliability, and fighting spirit of the Bundeswehr.

Although Baudissin attempted a thorough reform of the German army, Innere Fuehrung appears to have fallen short of the mark. After the retirement of the three principle military leaders of the reform (Baudissin, Kielmansegg and de Maiziere), there appears to have been a dilution of Innere Fuehrung. Critics point to three major developments as indications of the failure of Innere Fuehrung and the reemergence of behavior more consistent with past military practices. In the first place, the Bundeswehr has become a more rigid bureaucratic organization and not the dynamic organization cultivating initiative, and the willingness to accept responsibility. Secondly, the Bundeswehr has

not confronted the problem of the role of the military in the Nazi regime, and also fails to impart a civic education on its personnel. Officers do not take seriously their responsibility to educate the soldiers in civic matters. Instead, most see the responsibility for political education as a nuisance, better left to lower level and less qualified personnel.³ Thirdly, the reemergence of an emphasis on past military traditions is considered the most serious challenge to the intent of Innere Fuehrung. Some saw the invitation to former Colonel Hans Ulrich Rudel, an unrepentent Nazi as well as the most decorated World War II pilot, to speak at an airforce base as an illustration of the wrong use of military traditions.⁴ In addition, the emphasis upon the rediscovery of tradition, a result of former Defense Minister von Hassel's tradition directive, as a major reaction against Innere Fuehrung.

Clearly, these developments appear to seriously undercut the intent of Innere Fuehrung. Even Baudissin and

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Indeed, the behavior of students at the Munich Bundeswehr University who participated in pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic behavior graphically illustrates this point. Furthermore, social scientists studying the Bundeswehr also point to its failure as an institution of political education and socialization. See Lippert, Ekkehard, Schneider, Paul and Zoll, Ralf, "The Influence of Military Service on Political and Social Attitudes: A Study of Socialization in the German Bundeswehr," Armed Forces and Society, Vol. 4, No. 2, Winter 1978, pp. 265-283.

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New York Times, November 11, 1976, p. 2.

Federal President Scheel acknowledge this. Commenting on recent developments, Baudissin remarked:

"You must admit that the reforms didn't succeed as we had hoped and that the idea that soldiers would teach soldiers how to serve democracy is pretty much forgotten. The failure of the program is the failure of the hierarchy. Political instruction has to come out of the hierarchy as a whole. All that is left now are company commanders who give a lecture now and again to the troops."⁵

Similarly, Federal President Scheel suggested recently that the Bundeswehr is not fulfilling its educational mission.

"We come to that not very fortunate phrase 'Innere Fuehrung'....

Here we mean the need to make clear to the soldier the point of the defense effort--the mission and structuring of our defense--and in doing so, to make clear to him the point of his career, or the point of his term of conscription. To do this is essential--or better, should be essential--to the entire Bundeswehr...

The Bundeswehr has an educational task in that the armed forces must measure up to.... The Bundeswehr academies are called upon to work out the intellectual foundations of the defense forces in a democracy. To do this should be the focal point of the theoretical training."⁶

The primary problem indicated by these developments is whether or not Innere Fuehrung has failed as a military reform and, thus, the German military traditions are on a comeback. In order to evaluate this, each of the three

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Quoted in the New York Times, February 23, 1978, p. 3.

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Federal President Scheel in an address to a high-level convocation of the Bundeswehr at Saarbrueken. Quoted in The Bulletin, No. 8, Vol. 26, April 12, 1978, p. 43 (*italics mine*).

problem areas must be analyzed. But before that can be done, the intent of Innere Fuehrung must be kept firmly in mind. Innere Fuehrung was designed to prevent the repetition of both the Weimar and Nazi experiences by firmly placing the military under civilian control and by attempting to insure that the army possesses values complementary to the regime, thereby preventing the isolation of the military. At the same time, military efficiency was to be insured because military education, both political and technical, would develop critical, educated soldiers capable of initiative.

In terms of the problem of initiative and the apparent rigidity of the Bundeswehr one should not be too quick to conclude that Innere Fuehrung has failed. In the first place, the problem of initiative is not peculiar to the Bundeswehr but one that has been plaguing the German military since the reforms of Scharnhorst, et al. Indeed, there is a unique contradiction in German military history. During military operations in war, the Germans have shown a great deal of initiative and flexibility on the battlefield. Initiative is a central tenet in the teachings of Scharnhorst, Moltke, Seeckt and Baudissin. During the Wars of Unification, the early stages of World War I (when operations were mobile not positional), and throughout the Second World War, military commanders at all levels showed great initiative and flexibility. Yet, on the other hand, Prussian/German military traditions are also known for

their blind obedience (Kadavergehorsam: literally, the obedience of the dead). The key to understanding this problem is the contemporary status of the Bundeswehr. It is a peace-time army. Therefore, professional success is determined through administrative criteria. If a unit is not disciplined enough, does not possess the proper department, etc., it reflects on the careers of the officers. Indeed, there is more supervision because a commander is less likely to permit initiative because of its impact upon his career. In war, however, soldiers are more likely to take risks and show initiative precisely because a brilliant stroke is important to a career, and more likely to be recognized by superiors.⁷

With regard to the failure of civic education a number of factors are important. Clearly, in many respects the Bundeswehr has failed in its educational role. But is it as serious as has been suggested? To suggest so falls into a historical trap, one Baudissin attempted to avoid; a trap which even the Federal President fell into when he stated: "The Bundeswehr academies are called upon to work out the intellectual foundations of the defense forces in

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This was pointed out to me during my conversations at the Fuehrungsakademie in Hamburg. A member of the U.S. Military Liaison Staff told me that today the Germans are just like the Americans. Promotion is the result of both time in grade as well as an evaluation of performance. No officer is going to allow a subordinate to make a mistake and perhaps ruin a career. However, in war, initiative, if it is successful, reflects positively on both the officer responsible as well as his superiors.

a democracy. To do this should be the focal point of the theoretical training." This was not desired by Baudissin. According to Baudissin's ideas, the military is not the primary socializing agent. It is not "the school of the nation." Rather, it follows the dictates of society. Thus, to ask the Bundeswehr to be primarily responsible for the success or failure of the democratic commitments of the recruits misses the point. If it is to do this, then it is the resurrection of the Prussian idea that the army is the primary institution in the state, something Baudissin did not desire nor intend. Indeed, by the time the Bundeswehr becomes responsible for education, its members should have been taught civic responsibility by the educational institutions, religious institutions and other agents of socialization. To blame the Bundeswehr completely misses the entire point. Moreover, Innere Fuehrung is a means of politicizing the Bundeswehr so that the military does not have a monopoly on political information and socialization. In this respect, the activities of the labor unions, political parties, and factions within the army play a most important role. Indeed, the Bundeswehr has experienced a growing controversy over political education and Innere Fuehrung. There are groups who want more, and groups who want less. The debate is indicative of the success of the reform.⁸ In addition, the lack of

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Hessler, Klaus, Militaer-Gehorsam-Meinung is indicative of this debate. This edited work includes the famous Schnez

civic commitment is also indicative of the social environment. Civic education was designed to fulfill two functions: to insure complementary values between the military and the democratic state, and to psychologically fortify the soldier for combat under modern conditions (geistige Ruestung, spiritual defense). The idea was an outgrowth of the cold war when a Soviet threat to central and Western Europe was perceived by both the military and society. Therefore, spiritual defense was a military necessity as well as a political requirement. Today, in the era of detente, there has been a relaxation of tensions. The Western societies do not perceive the Warsaw Pact in the same way they did ten or fifteen years ago, and society and the recruits will not tolerate indoctrination by the military.

Finally, the most critical problem is tradition, an area where Baudissin is at his weakest. It was his intention to select those traditions which complement the democratic state. There are few, if any, precisely because the German military has a poor record in support of democratic ideas or regimes. Baudissin points specifically to the participants of July 20, 1944. However, "(m)ost of these were connected with the political and social ideas of

study, as well as articles by soldiers critical of the future of civic education and the lack of commitment by the hierarchy to Innere Fuehrung. For example, "Soldat 70" von 13 Wehrpflichtigen von Mai 1970 and "Der Leutnant 1970" von acht Leutnanten vom Dezember 1969.

the Wilhelmian era--a state which has little to do with the democratic Federal Republic."⁹ Indeed, Baudissin is well aware of this problem, especially sanctifying military conspiracy. Moreover, some of the traditions other than July 1944, may be useful to the German military. Loyalty and the willingness to defend the nation are necessary to all military organizations, and this is certainly part of German military tradition. In addition, the Prussian tradition did not sanction atrocities and many officers were outraged by the Nazi behavior during the War.¹⁰ Thus, von Hassel's "tradition" directive permitting the Bundeswehr to discuss the problem of tradition makes some sense. Moreover, the question of tradition developed in the late 1960's, precisely when the cold war was ebbing and anti-communism was becoming less of a motivating factor. Tradition, therefore, was seen as a substitute mechanism of motivation. Indeed, as Janssen rightly suggests, the problem of tradition will not be settled until the Bundeswehr develops its own traditions complementary to the Federal Republic.¹¹

Has Innere Fuehrung succeeded? The question can only be answered provisionally. Today, the Bundeswehr is not

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Janssen, Karl-Heinz, "Was ist heute noch soldatische Tradition?", Die Zeit, No. 18, April 29, 1977, Section 5, p. 2.

10

General Blaskowitz protested vehemently for the behavior of the S.S. during the Polish campaign and was promptly removed.

11

Ibid, p. 2.

the isolated organization that the Reichswehr or any other German military was. In that sense, it has succeeded. However, the true test will be if the Bundeswehr engages hostile troops, or if the Federal Republic faces a crisis of the magnitude of 1933. Hopefully, neither will be necessary.

The politics of the Bundeswehr demonstrates the usefulness of hypothesis four developed in Chapter II. In the post-war period, the Federal Republic possessed leadership, both civilian and military, which desired a thorough reform of the military and a reduction of its political influence. Through the principles of Innere Fuehrung and recruitment policies, this was accomplished. Moreover, due to the altered geo-political situation, the role of the military was further reduced. Today, West Germany is not only an integral member of the NATO Alliance but has also come to the realization that she can no longer be militarily self-sufficient. Consequently, military and defense issues do not have the impact they had in the past. As a result of the development of a strong and stable polity and the absence of important defense issues, the role of the military is diminished. Indeed, for the first time in the twentieth century, Germany (at least the western portions) possesses a strong and stable political regime where the role of the military is circumscribed greatly. Yet, the costs have been tremendous. Germany had to experience the ill-fated Weimar Republic, the

barbarism of the Third Reich, and defeat, occupation, and partition before the military was finally domesticated and subject to stable, constitutional rule.

For the most part, the behavior of the German military in the twentieth century demonstrates the utility of three of the four hypotheses put forth in Chapter II. However, something must be said, at this point, about the third hypothesis. Hypothesis three suggested that the political role of the military will increase in stable societies when the issue of national security becomes a major domestic concern. In conducting research for this study, nothing was uncovered which questions the theoretical validity of this hypothesis. Moreover, recent trends in West Germany suggest that the Federal Republic may be moving in the direction outlined by this hypothesis. Today, West Germany contributes the largest land force to NATO. More importantly, with the inability of the United Kingdom to adequately support the British army of the Rhine as well as the questionable role of France in West European defense, the Germans may be forced to rely more and more upon their own and American resources. Recently, the Germans have been more active in the development of West German weapons systems.¹² Furthermore, there is evidence that there will be a sub-

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For example, the International Defense Review reported that the West Germans have ordered 1,800 Leopard 2 Main Battle Tanks, 212 PAH anti-tank helicopters, the Troika mine countermeasure system and the development of the type 122 frigate. International Defense Review, Vol. 10, Aug. 1977, pp. 608-610.

stantial increase in the West German defense budget as well as an increase in West German troop strength.¹³

Though it is too soon to tell, it does appear that the role the defense establishment plays is increasing in the Federal Republic.

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In a recent discussion with a member of the Bundestag Committee on Foreign Affairs, this person confirmed the budgetary increase and would not deny the possibility of an increase in troop strength for the Bundeswehr.

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