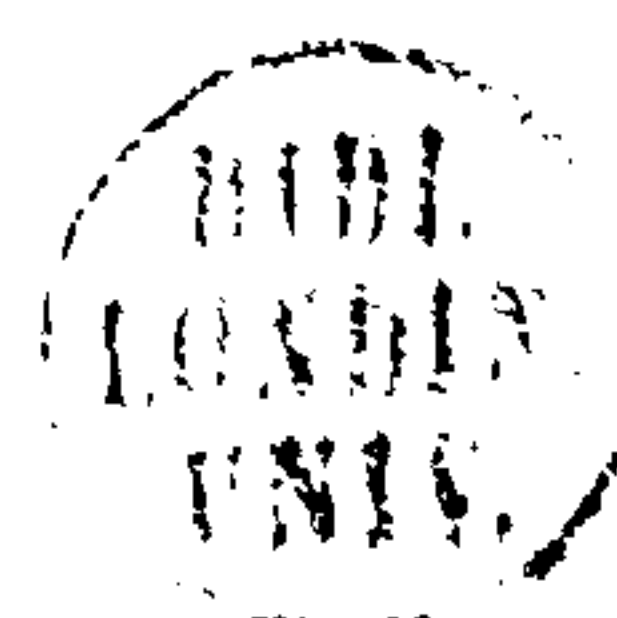


A SOCIOGRAPHY OF THE SS OFFICER CORPS, 1925-1939

by

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## RÉSUMÉ

### A SOCIOGRAPHY OF THE SS OFFICER CORPS, 1925-1939

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This quantitative study of the SS Officer Corps was designed to discover who in German society joined the SS between its inception in 1925 and the outbreak of the war in 1939. The study is based on data contained in 5250 SS officer personnel files which were selected from 61,340 personnel files housed at the Berlin Document Center. The selection criteria used were, (1) the officer had to have reached commissioned rank prior to 1 September 1939, and (2) the personnel file had to supply an answer to all the questions deemed important by the investigator. The selection of cases can be called random since there was no indication that certain files were incomplete because of any systematic bias, i.e., interference by the SS Personalhauptamt.

In order to determine who joined the SS at specific stages of its pre-war history, the fourteen year time span under investigation was divided into six time periods determined by a date important to either the NSDAP or the SS. The four major branches of the SS - the Allgemeine SS or general SS, the Totenkopfverbände or deaths head units, the Sicherheitsdienst or security service, and the Verfügungstruppe or the armed SS - were looked at separately. This division further allowed for an analysis of the composition of the various branches of the Black Order over the time periods of interest.

The information gathered on each officer, i.e., date of joining, highest rank achieved, date of birth, place of birth, education, occupation, other organizational affiliations, religious background, marital status and number of children was coded and transferred to computer cards. (The material is presently available on magnetic tape). The information was analyzed on the IBM computer at the University of Guelph using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) subprogram Crosstabs.

The results show that there was a tendency for those with little education to have joined the SS in its early stages. While the lower Mittelstand in the sampled Führerkorps was overrepresented prior to Hitler's seizure of power on 30 January 1933, it was the educated segment of society that flocked to the elite formation of the Third Reich after that date. As might be expected, the median age of the incoming officers after January 1933 also increased. While the proportion of officers born north of the Main River roughly equalled that of the general population, there was a marked tendency for southern rural-born men to dominate the Führerkorps prior to September 1930. A levelling

process then took place with norther-born officers dominating the Führerkorps after January 1933. As far as the family life of the officers was concerned, the quantitative analysis showed that Himmler had little influence over his officers. About 80% of the sampled officers did not meet the guidelines set by Himmler of four children per family. Also only about 20% of the officers' wives were party members.

Differences were also found in the officers who served in the various branches of the SS. Thus the Führerkorps of the general SS and the security service had the highest percentage of university graduates, while the armed SS had the largest percentage of officers who gave the Abitur as their highest educational achievement. The death's head units had the highest percentage of elementary school educated officers.

This study shows that the SS attracted different men at different times and that the social composition of the officer corps varied from branch to branch. While the lower educated joined the SS during the early days of the Kampfzeit, it was the educated and established segment of German society that rushed to join the élite formation of National Socialism after Hitler assumed power.



## PREFACE

A few years ago when I was employed as a military historian at the RCAF Staff College, I was involved in the teaching of a course entitled "The Officer in Society." It was after lectures that dealt with the traditional role of the officer in German society and the changes that occurred during the Nazi era that a number of questions were raised about the character and role of the officers of Hitler's élite formation, the SS. Who were the men who became officers in such a notorious organization? Did they have special characteristics, or were they simply individuals who would do anything to get ahead? Were they social misfits? Were there any systematic differences between the officers who led crack panzer units and those who selected people for the gas chambers? Who were the men who methodically planned the murder of thousands of men, women, and children in the eastern territories? At that time, I was unable to give satisfactory answers to these questions.

This study is an attempt to supply answers to questions such as those posed above. Who in German society volunteered for service in an organization of which even Himmler said,

Ich weiss, dass es manche Leute in Deutschland gibt, denen es schlecht wird wenn sie diesen schwarzen Rock sehen, wir haben Verständnis dafür und erwarten nicht, dass wir von allzu vielen geliebt werden.<sup>1</sup>

Forty years have gone by since Heinrich Himmler uttered these words, and

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<sup>1</sup>Heinrich Himmler, Die Schutzstaffel als antibolschewistische Kampforganisation, Zentralverlag des NSDAP, (München 1936), p. 29.



thirty-two years have passed since Hitler committed suicide in his bunker in Berlin. With his death came also the ignoble end of his creation, the Reich that was to last a thousand years. While the Nazi regime could be brought to an end by the conquest of arms, many of its effects can be felt to this day. Hundreds of small children abducted in the conquered territories in the mad scheme to salvage all members of 'pure blood,' were never returned to their homes. Their parents will never forget the terror of the Black Order in their homelands. In Germany, too, the son of a former concentration camp commandant is haunted by the past. Even today he tries to discover what made his father do the things of which he is accused.

Yet not all people are haunted by the Nazi past. The high ranking SS officer who in 1942 advised Himmler that to kill Jews from a political motif was not punishable, is to this day a practising lawyer in Stuttgart. The professor of anthropology who lectured SS officers on the subject of race and heredity only recently retired from the University of Tübingen. It took the courts of the German Federal Republic twelve years to bring to justice the former chief of the security police in Warsaw. The senior officer who could claim to have "cleansed" Holland of 71% of its Jewish population remained employed for years as a senior civil servant in the Bavarian state government, even though the authorities knew of his past.

This study is not intended to serve as a roster of those SS men who are still active and contributing members of society. Whenever the names of former SS officers are mentioned, it is not to embarrass them or their families, but to help complete the picture of those Germans, prominent or unknown, who were attracted to the SS. It is my hope that this study

will provide some valuable sociographic data on the pre-World War II members of the élite formation of the Third Reich whose aim it was to provide the "Führungsschicht für ganz Europa"<sup>1</sup> in the post-war, Nazi-dominated, era.

This study is submitted to the University of London for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History. To Professor F. L. Carsten, under whose guidance this study was written, I would like to express my thanks for his encouragement and helpful comments. I should also like to thank the Central Research Fund of the University of London. This study was made possible by the generous grants given to me by the funding committee.

It goes without saying that I am indebted to a number of people for the completion of this study. I would like to express my thanks to the late Richard Bauer, of the National Archives and deputy director of the Berlin Document Center, for making it possible for me to have complete access to the holdings of the Center. Regretably, Richard Bauer passed away before he could see the completed version of this study in which he took such an interest. I should also like to thank Herrn Pix, Herrn Kronenberg, Herrn Weber and Frau Teetz, who, over the years, eased the burden of research at the Document Center, whenever possible.

I am also indebted to Professor Michael Kater of York University, Toronto, Canada, who in the early stages of the study not only aided me in the setting up of a classification system, but also pointed out the

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<sup>1</sup>Himmler's address to senior SS officers, 4 October 1943. Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal (Nuremberg 1948), vol. xxxix, Document 1919-PS, p. 171 (Henceforth listed as IMT).

many pitfalls associated with quantitative research. To Dr. Simon Wiesenthal of the Dokumentationszentrum in Vienna, I owe my thanks for his generously taking time out of his busy schedule to answer my many questions, and in supplying me with many documents dealing with the post-1945 fate of a number of SS officers. To my friend and colleague, Dr. John Neill, Department of Psychology, University of Guelph, a special word of thanks for undertaking the difficult task of introducing a historian to the world of the computer. I also wish to acknowledge the help of my friend Gordon Russell of Lambton College for securing much out-of-print material which was used in this study. To Pat Law, who spent many a weekend at the typewriter, and who showed great perseverance in coping with the numerous German passages, thanks are also given.

Finally I want to thank my wife, Dr. Joanna Bartlett Boehnert, who, as a loyal wife shared the rigours of a Berlin winter with considerable fortitude, as a trained social scientist advised me in the preparation of the numerous tables in this study, and untiringly demonstrated her skills as editor and critical commentator.



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## INTRODUCTION

In the voluminous literature that has been published on the SS since 1945, few authors have devoted more than a few pages to the socio-economic background of the men who wore the dreaded black uniform and carried out Hitler's orders with unquestioning loyalty.

One of the first books to be published after the war which dealt with the SS and the horrors of the concentration camp system was Eugen Kogon's, Der SS Staat.<sup>1</sup> Concerning the social origin of the SS men Kogon wrote:

Eine Untersuchung der Herkunft der SS Angehörigen ergibt fast in jedem einzelnen Fall, dass es sich bei Ihnen um Tiefunzufriedene, Nichterfolgreiche, durch irgendwelche Umstände zurückgesetzte, um Minderbegabte aller Art und häufig genug um sozial gescheiterte Existenzen handelte.<sup>2</sup>

Kogon continued his description of the SS men by saying:

Alle Leute, die meine Freunde und ich kennengelernt haben, waren in diesem Sinne Barbaren, trugen kein Element echter Kultur in sich, das heisst die Fähigkeit, Geist und Triebe in einer beständigen kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit sich, mit der Umwelt und im allgemeinen gültigen Normen zu einer höheren seelischen Einheit zusammenwirken zu lassen.<sup>3</sup>

Kogon thus saw the SS man as a socially underprivileged and educationally deprived being, who, by joining the Black Order, sought a way of obtaining

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<sup>1</sup>Eugen Kogon, Der SS Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager (Berlin 1947). The book appeared in English translation under the title The Theory and Practice of Hell, translated by Heinz Norden (London 1950). For this study the latest pocket book edition published in Munich 1974 by Kindler Verlag was used.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 346.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 344.

social status and recognition.

Almost a decade later Erminhild Neusüss-Hunkel completed her study on Die SS.<sup>1</sup> She recognized the problem in dealing with the SS, in so far as "eine eindeutige Beurteilung sämtlicher Angehörigen der Waffen SS ebenso wenig möglich ist wie bei der Gesamtmitgliedschaft der SS."<sup>2</sup>

She recognized the multi-facet aspect of the SS and analysed the various branches of the organization and the men who joined them. Thus she saw in the general SS (Allgemeine SS)<sup>3</sup> a means of attracting "die gute Gesellschaft" in Germany.<sup>4</sup> This absorption of the upper stratum of German society into the élite formation of National Socialism was described by Himmler in 1937 as "die geräuschlose Revolution."<sup>5</sup> That this attempt was not entirely unsuccessful can be seen by the fact that according to the Dienstaltersliste of 1938, 58 out of 648 SS officers<sup>6</sup> - or 9% - in the

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<sup>1</sup>Erminhild Neusüss-Hunkel, Die SS, Schriftenreihe des Instituts für wissenschaftliche Politik in Marburg/Lahn, No. 2 (Hannover 1956).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>The concept "Allgemeine SS" was created in mid-1934 in order to distinguish the old SS from the other branches. Hans Buchheim, Martin Broszat, Hans-Adolf Jacobson, Helmut Krausnick, Anatomy des SS Staates, 2 vols. (Olten & Freiburg in Breisgau 1965), p. 256. For this study the translated version, Anatomy of the SS State, with an introduction by Elizabeth Wiskemann (London 1968), has been used.

<sup>4</sup>Neusüss-Hunkel, Die SS, p. 15. SS Brigadeführer Schellenberg, former head of the SD foreign intelligence section stated that when he was a student "the black uniform of the Fuehrer's special guard was dashing and elegant and ... that in the SS one found the "better type of people." Walter Schellenberg, Hitler's Secret Service, Memoirs of Walter Schellenberg, translated from the German by Louis Hagen (New York 1956), p. 21. The edition used in this study is the Pyramide edition published in New York 1974.

<sup>5</sup>In a speech given by the RFSS to the national political indoctrination course of the army in January 1937, entitled, "Wesen und Aufgabe der SS und Polizei," IMT, vol. xxix, document 1992 (A)-PS, p. 207.

<sup>6</sup>In this study the terms SS officer and SS Führer are used interchangeably. While the commissioned ranks in the SS were officially referred to as Führer, the term officer was also frequently used. The same applies to the terms SS Führerkorps or SS officer corps.



rank of Standartenführer and above belonged to the traditional German nobility.<sup>1</sup>

The armed SS (Verfügungstruppe, better known as Waffen SS)<sup>2</sup>, which Himmler referred to as "den schönsten Teil den ich in der SS habe,"<sup>3</sup> attracted, according to Neusüss-Hunkel the young man who, in spite of the fact that many did not meet the pre-requisite educational standards set by the regular army for its officer applicants, was nevertheless eager and in many instances quite capable of becoming an effective officer.<sup>4</sup>

The security service (Sicherheitsdienst, more commonly known as the SD), which was the creation of Reinhard Heydrich, attracted a type of man to whom ideology was less important than power. According to Neusüss-Hunkel this man came from the highly intelligent yet unscrupulous group of young academically trained men who wanted to get ahead.<sup>5</sup>

The Death's Head units (Totenkopfverbände) were responsible for the guarding of the concentration camps. They, according to Neusüss-Hunkel, attracted the unemployed SS men of the early Kampfzeit, the pre-1933 SS ruffians, who saw in full-time SS service a means of achieving some form of social status.<sup>6</sup> Benedikt Kautsky, a one-time concentration camp inmate,

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<sup>1</sup>Neusüss-Hunkel, Die SS, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>It was not until 1940 that the term Waffen SS was used. George Stein, The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1939-1945 (Ithaca 1966), p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>Himmler's speech to the officers of the "Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler" in Metz, 7 September 1940, IMT, vol. xxix, document 1918-PS, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup>Neusüss-Hunkel, Die SS, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 53ff.

voiced a similar view when he wrote that the guards represented

den stumpfsten und faulsten Teil der Bevölkerung, der nach der Beseitigung der Arbeitslosigkeit meist keine andere Möglichkeit vor sich sah, ehrlicher Arbeit aus dem Weg zu gehen und es doch zu etwas zu bringen, als den Eintritt in die SS.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Führerkorps of the SS was able, in spite of its rejection of formal, educational standards, and of intellectual qualities under the motto "Intellekt verdirbt Willensbildung und Energie,"<sup>2</sup> to offer a large number of university educated men unparalleled career opportunities while at the same time absorbing the poorer educated and underprivileged.

Robert Koehl in an article entitled "The Character of the Nazi SS," analysed the social composition of the SS chronologically, stating "that the SS was quite different in different periods of its evolution, in its many branches and its many different recruits."<sup>3</sup> He likened the SS to a "swiftly moving river, fed by enormous brooks and tributaries, then overflowing its banks and separating into divergent streams."<sup>4</sup> Koehl's approach in looking at the SS in chronological terms was a significant step forward. However, his division, making 1933 the watershed in the social make-up of the SS is somewhat too broad. The assertion, "before 1933 came the 'bruisers' and misfits, the unemployed and the unemployable" is too general. So is his description of the group that flocked to the recruiting offices of the SS after January 1933, when, he maintains,

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<sup>1</sup>Benedikt Kautsky, Teufel und Verdamnte (Zürich 1946), p. 91ff.

<sup>2</sup>Himmler's address to the Gruppenführerntag, Posen 4 October 1943, IMT, vol. xxix, document 1919-PS, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Koehl, "The Character of the Nazi SS," The Journal of Modern History, No. 3, September 1962, p. 281.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

"the police, ... the high bureaucrats and the foreign ethnic Germans joined."<sup>1</sup>

While Neuss-Hunkel conducted her social analysis of the SS by studying the various branches of the organization, and Koehl viewed the Black Order as an everchanging organization over the years, Heinz Höhne in his general study of the SS entitled Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf<sup>2</sup> made an attempt at combining the two approaches. Höhne was aware that different strata of German society were attracted to the SS at different times. He also recognized that different types of men preferred different branches of the SS. But he still spoke in general terms when he said,

From the social point of view the SS picture was changed radically, men of an entirely new class of society streamed in after 1933. The original SS had consisted primarily of Ex-Free Corps men, intellectuals whose careers had been cut short by the economic crisis, and the lower middle class veteran.<sup>3</sup>

Höhne then proceeded to list a number of prominent members of the German aristocracy that joined the SS either during the dying days of the Weimar Republic or during the early months of 1933. In the process he erroneously listed two aristocrats as having joined in early 1933.<sup>4</sup> Actually they did not do so until much later. The first was Prinz Franz Josef v. Hohenzollern-Emden,<sup>5</sup> a member of the erstwhile royal house, who

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Heinz Höhne, Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf (Gütersloh 1967). For this study the translated version, The Order under the Death's Head, translated by Richard Barry (New York 1969) was used.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Prinz Franz Josef v. Hohenzollern-Emden, SS# 276,691, born 30.8.1891 in Heiligendamm. Berlin Document Center (henceforth listed as BDC).



did not join the SS until June 1936. The second was Edler v. Daniels<sup>1</sup> who did not don the black uniform until July 1935.

Much like Neuss-Hunkel, Höhne saw the SD as a collecting point for the young university educated "man of the 20th century."<sup>2</sup> Höhne does not explain what he means by this phrase, but presumably he was referring to those who no longer accepted the social structure or the moral values of the nineteenth century. Representatives of this Weltanschauung will be discussed in greater detail in this study. The armed SS, or Verfügungstruppe, according to Höhne was able to attract in the middle 30's members of the former German officer corps, who provided the infant SS military formation with a much needed military and technical expertise. The bulk of the recruits was made up of young rural lower middle class lads eager to advance in an organization unhampered by tradition and class consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

Höhne expressed the opinion that the social make-up of the Death's-Head units or Totenkopfverbände was largely determined by their commander, SS Obergruppenführer Theodor Eicke.<sup>4</sup> Eicke, imbued with an undying hatred for the professional officer corps and its values, was known to emphasize the difference between the armed SS and the Death's-Head units. He could not be more explicit when he said, "Commanders who act like officers,

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Edler v. Daniels, SS# 258,002, born 31.3.1895 in Arolson. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 447.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Obergruppenführer Theodor Eicke, SS# 2,921, born 17.10.1892, in Hampont, Elsass. BDC. The personal influence Eicke exerted on the Totenkopfverbände is also stressed by Buchheim et al., Anatomy, p. 431.

junior officers who act like NCO's, and men who act like private soldiers will be posted to the Allgemeine SS."<sup>1</sup> Denying any connection with a military organization and emphasizing the unique character of the formation in which it was everybody's duty to overcome "den inneren Schweinehund,"<sup>2</sup> that is pity and concern for human suffering, it is not surprising that the men who remained in that branch did not have a high cultural or moral niveau.

While all of the above mentioned studies have made valuable contributions to a better understanding of whom, or what type of man would don the black uniform, they have, nevertheless, remained vague on certain points. To establish that "bruisers and social misfits" and fragments of old German elites joined the SS prior to January 1933 or that intellectuals with interrupted studies joined after 1933 does not tell us very much. What about the larger, law abiding, hard working German Mittelstand, the shopkeeper, the department store sales clerk, the tradesman? Was he not to be found in the SS? If so when did he join? Conversely, were the educated and established strata of society, the lawyers, the physicians, the university professors found on the membership rolls of the SS? If so, when did they join? Was there a clearly definable pattern in their joining behavior? Did the majority of "bruisers" join prior to Hitler's Machtergreifung and did the educated segment of society wait until National Socialism had become the party in power? It is hoped that this study will provide some answers to these questions.

This study aims to establish the regional and socio-economic origins of the SS Führer. As such it does not delve into the psychology

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 331.

<sup>2</sup>Kogon, Der SS Staat, p. 345.

of the SS officer corps. This is not to deny the general interest in this topic, but such information is not generally available and if it were available it would be outside the area of expertise of the historian to interpret. However, there is a body of social-psychological research which will be mentioned here as it provides a basis for understanding "man's inhumanity to man" which was legitimized by the Nazi government and implemented by all branches of the SS.

The fact that many people will accept a decision that their senses tell them is wrong has been known for some time. In the 1950's a social psychologist, Solomon Asch, found that in an experiment which involved line matching, individuals would go along with a group decision even though this decision contradicted the evidence of their own eyes.<sup>1</sup> Molly Harrower<sup>2</sup> has quite rightly pointed out that, "Guessing the length of a line is not the same as sending people to the gas chamber."<sup>3</sup> However, Stanley Milgram has shown in an experimental situation that an "average" person under certain conditions may find himself obeying orders with which he does not agree. If Milgram could get 65% of his sample to deliver what they believed to be severe shock to a middle-aged man with a history of heart trouble simply by having a white-coated experimenter urge them on, is it necessary to believe that SS officers were sadistic

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<sup>1</sup>Solomon Asch, "Effects of Group Pressure upon the Modification and Distortion of Judgments," in E. Maccoby, T. Newcomb, and E. Harteleley, eds., Readings in Social Psychology, third edition (New York 1958), pp. 175-183.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Harrower was one of ten experts asked to evaluate the results of the Rorschach test administered to the major defendants at Nürnberg.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Molly Harrower, "Were Hitler's Henchmen Mad?", Psychology Today (July 1976), p. 76.



and maladjusted?<sup>1</sup> Harrower, for instance, found the defendants at Nürnberg represented "... a wide range of personalities, from severely disturbed to the superbly well adjusted."<sup>2</sup>

In his book Obedience to Authority, Milgram points out that even a person, who with inner conviction loathes stealing, killing and assault may find himself performing these acts with relative ease when commanded by authority.<sup>3</sup>

The applicability of Milgram's statement to the SS situation is demonstrated by the remarks made by Rudolf Hoess who in 1946 admitted responsibility for the killing of two million persons during the time that he was Commandant of Auschwitz.<sup>4</sup> In his autobiography he described his own

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<sup>1</sup>In 1953 Dr. Elie Cohen, a Dutch psychiatrist and former concentration camp inmate, dealt with the question whether the SS men were criminals. In Freudian terms he stated, that since 1933 the superego of the SS men was taught that "Jews are our ruin" and "Jews must be exterminated." He concluded that "... the SS acquired a criminal superego and came to belong to the category of normal criminals." He did, however, voice the following reservation. "This conclusion holds good only from our point of view, for the SS did not regard themselves as criminals, as they only translated into practice what they had been taught to look upon as right by the standards of their society." Elie Cohen, Human Behaviour in the Concentration Camps, translated from the Dutch by M. Braaksma (New York 1953), p. 232.

<sup>2</sup>Harrower, "Hitler's Henchmen," Psychology Today, p. 76. Harrower quotes from a report which an American psychiatrist, Dr. Douglas Kelly, submitted after interviewing the Nürnberg defendants. Kelly states "... that such personalities are not unique or insane and could be duplicated in any country today." Reitlinger viewed the SS Führerkorps not as sadistic or ruthless, but as a group of amateurs. He thought muddlers like Karl Wolff or Gottlob Berger were far more typical examples of the SS Führer than were men like the "savagely brutal Heydrich or Kaltenbrunner." Gerald Reitlinger, The SS; Alibi of a Nation, 1925-1945 (New York 1957), p. 220. In this study the Viking Press edition (New York 1968) was used.

<sup>3</sup>Stanley Milgram, Obedience to Authority (New York 1974), p. xi.

<sup>4</sup>Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of Auschwitz, with an introduction by Lord Russell of Liverpool, translated from the German by Constantine FitzGibbon (New York 1959), p. 11.

feelings and reactions on witnessing a flogging for the first time. The year was 1934 and Hoess, still a novice in the Death's Head units, states that he was "compelled" to look on "because if I had been in the rear of the company I would not have looked."<sup>1</sup> This later-hardened camp commander wrote that "when the man began to scream I went hot and cold all over. In fact, the whole thing, even the beating of the first prisoner /who did not scream/ made me shudder."<sup>2</sup> As he went through the "toughening up" course, which made him gradually immune to the suffering of others he admitted that when "... at the beginning of the war, I attended my first execution, it did not affect me nearly so much as witnessing this corporal punishment. I am unable to give an explanation of this."<sup>3</sup>

Milgram points out that, among other things, the degree of obedience is dependent upon the authority giving the command. The authority must be relevant to the individual for him to obey.<sup>4</sup> Hoess obeyed not only because he was part of the system, but also because "the soldier's life held me in thrall."<sup>5</sup> Even though the training to become part of the Totenkopfverbände was extremely tough - Kogon wrote that the recruits were drilled and hounded "bis ihnen das Wasser im Arsch kochte"<sup>6</sup> - it was worth

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>4</sup>Milgram, Obedience, p. 140.

<sup>5</sup>Hoess, Commandant, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup>Kogon, SS Staat, pp. 35-36. Hoess recounted how during his training period he would walk around the camp expressionless so as to convince his superiors that he required no further 'toughening up.' Hoess, Commandant, p. 71.

it in the end to serve as "the only soldiers who even in peace time faced the enemy day and night, the enemy behind the wire ...."<sup>1</sup> To admit that one was too soft for the job would have resulted in dismissal and dishonour.

Dr. Henry V. Dicks, a London psychiatrist who recently completed a study on 26 SS war criminals still serving their sentences, indirectly substantiated Milgram's results. In his interview with the former SS Hauptsturmführer Franz Hofmann,<sup>2</sup> Dicks discovered that this Number Two man at Auschwitz still associated very much with Eicke, the Inspector of Concentration Camps from 1934-1939. Hofmann exclaimed when Dr. Dicks mentioned Eicke, "Now Eicke - that was something quite different - he was 'Papa' to us all. Ah! He died a hero's death at the head of his troops on the Russian front."<sup>3</sup> Much like Hofmann, Hoess also held Eicke in high esteem claiming that the successes of the Death's Head Division "were only possible because of the ironclad training which Eicke had given the troops, and because of the affection which they had for Eicke himself."<sup>4</sup> Eicke was undoubtedly able to enact his notorious orders "Zur Aufrechterhaltung der Zucht und Ordnung, Disziplinar-und Strafordnung für die Gefangenenlager,"<sup>5</sup> because he represented the authoritarian father to so many.

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<sup>1</sup>Buchheim, et. al., Anatomy, p. 433.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Franz Hofmann, SS# 40,651, born 5.4.1906, in Hof. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Henry V. Dicks, Licensed Mass Murder; A socio-psychological study of some SS killers (London 1972), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup>Hoess, Commandant, p. 231.

<sup>5</sup>Buchheim, et. al., Anatomy, p. 431.



That well-adjusted people may get caught up in the tangle of social forces<sup>1</sup> which makes it possible for them to commit such abominations as the calculated execution of six million Jews or the systematic elimination of the elderly and unproductive, has recently been challenged by a psychologist and a political scientist.<sup>2</sup> Miale and Selzer have tried to show, on the basis of their interpretation of the Rorschach tests<sup>3</sup> done on the Nürnberg defendants, that the Nazi leadership was, in fact, a very distinctive group. They found depression, proclivity to violence, rejection of responsibility, and a depersonalized male-chauvinist view of sex to be fairly common characteristics of the group. They concluded that fifteen of the sixteen defendants were in varying degrees "psychopathic." The results of their study have been challenged. In a recent review, Rubenstein has accused the authors of reading into the test results characteristics which they associate with war criminals. He concludes his review with the following words:

It is tempting to portray the Nazis as demons or perverts, for such a view protects our illusions about ourselves. To see the Nazis as more or less ordinary men is neither to excuse their deeds nor minimize the threat they pose. On the contrary, it is to recognize how fragile are the bonds of civility and decency that keep any kind of human community from utter collapse.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Reitlinger recognized the influence that social and political forces can exert on an individual when he wrote, "If Himmler had not grown up in Germany, the tortured Germany of the 'twenties, he might have projected that dimly artistic, speculative side of his nature. Buried in the Cotswolds Heinrich Himmler and his Marge could have cultivated their herbs, clothed in homespun wool and nurtured wholemeal bread, occasionally throwing peasant pottery or playing duets on reconstructed mediaeval instruments." Reitlinger, The SS, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Florence Miale and Michael Selzer, The Nuremberg Mind; The Psychology of the Nazi Leaders (New York 1976).

<sup>3</sup>The Rorschach test consisted of a number of inkblots not intended to resemble anything. The idea is that when a person describes the blots he "... reveals aspects of his personality particularly his unconscious needs and desires." Harrower, "Hitler's Henchmen," Psychology Today, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Rubenstein's review of The Nuremberg Mind, *ibid.*, p. 84.

## Chapter I

### SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

#### Data Collection

The primary source materials used in this study were the SS officer personnel files housed at the Berlin Document Center.<sup>1</sup> Since the collection contains the personnel files of 75% of the SS officer corps for the years 1925-1945<sup>2</sup> certain criteria for selection had to be applied. As it is the purpose of this study to show who in German society between 1925-1939 went into the SS and belonged to its Führerkorps, the first criterion for selection was that the officer had to be a member of the SS, and have reached commissioned rank, prior to 1 September 1939. Selected cases were chronologically categorized according to the joining date and not the commissioning date. While in many cases the joining and commissioning dates were the same, this was especially true among the more socially prominent officers, differences of up to ten years between the two events were also found. This tended to be more common among the very early joiners.<sup>3</sup>

As this writer did not want to work with any missing data classification, the second criterion for selection was that the file was

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<sup>1</sup>61,465 SS officer personnel files are stored at the Berlin Document Center.

<sup>2</sup>Information obtained from Richard Bauer, former deputy director of the BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Especially in the sample of 1925-1927 joiners it was not uncommon to find a gap of several years separating the enrolment date from the commissioning date.



able to answer every question on the specially devised questionnaire. Should the personnel file fail to do so, a back-up source, the Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt (RuSHA) file was consulted, provided the officer had one.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of the two criteria, joining and commissioning date prior to 1 September 1939, and a no missing data file, 5250 cases were selected. The information gathered was coded, translated onto punch cards and analysed by the computer at the University of Guelph.<sup>2</sup>

The questionnaire used in this study to collect the social data on the SS Führer was a revised form of the questionnaire used by the Canadian Armed Forces in their officer selection procedures. The questionnaire contained the following questions:

A. SS Career Data

1. Rank (highest rank attained).
2. Branch of service /general SS (A/SS), security service (SD), death's head units (TV), armed SS (VT)/.
3. Date of joining the SS.

B. Personal Data

4. Name of SS officer (given only in detailed histories).

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<sup>1</sup>The BDC houses some 238,000 RuSHA files. A RuSHA file was started on every SS member who intended to marry. It contained a detailed medical record of the SS man, as well as of his proposed bride, a hand-written biography (Lebenslauf) of both, and the enormously detailed ancestral record dating back to 1750 for officers and to 1800 for NCOs and other ranks. It was Himmler's intention to eventually retrace the family trees of his chosen men to 1648, the end of the Thirty Years War. Hans Peter Bleuel, Strength Through Joy; Sex and Society in Nazi Germany, translated from the German Das Saubere Reich, by J. Maxwell Brownjohn (London 1973), p. 198.

<sup>2</sup>The computer sub-programme 'Crosstabs' from SPSS, The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (New York 1970) was used in the analysis of the data.



5. Date of Birth.
6. Place of Birth.
7. Age (at time of joining the SS).
8. Education (highest educational level attained).
9. Occupation (includes the learned occupation and the applicant's father's occupation).
10. Organization affiliation and military background.
11. Family (marital status, number of children, political affiliation of wife, SS marriage selection and moral code).

Although this study concentrates on the SS Führerkorps prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, certain items of information which pertain to the officer's war-time record have been included. One such item is rank. The rank quoted in this study is the highest rank the officer held prior to the collapse of the Third Reich, in order to determine how far the officer progressed in the rank structure of the SS. Other post-1939 data used were the officer's marital status and the number of children he sired. In specially selected case histories the officer's war-time record and assignments are reviewed. In some cases the officer's post-1945 fate has also been included.

#### Branch

The branch in which each officer served prior to September 1939 was considered an important factor. The major branches used were first, the general or Allgemeine SS; second, the security service or Sicherheitsdienst; third, the Death's Head units or Totenkopfverbände; and fourth, the armed SS or Verfügungstruppe or more popularly the Waffen SS. In order to overcome the problem of inter-service transfers, an officer was classified in a particular branch other than the general SS, when he

became a member of it. If an officer served in two branches of the SS, other than the general SS, he was classified in the branch in which he served longest.<sup>1</sup> The reason for the breakdown of the selected cases into the four major branches of the SS, was to allow an assessment of the social composition of each branch. One of the purposes of this study was to see whether the branches were distinguishable from each other in terms of the social, educational, and regional backgrounds of their members.

### Age and Birthplace

In the Personal Data Section the age was determined by the applicant's age at the time that he joined the SS. Unfortunately the SS records did not list the place of enrolment, or the applicant's place of residence. The only geographical information available was the officer's birthplace. This writer was, therefore, confronted with the situation, that if a geographic analysis was to be included in this study, it would have to be based on the birthplace information. It is fully recognized that by using the birthplace of the officer some inaccuracies may occur. For instance, Wolfgang Köllmann has shown in a study of geographic mobility in Germany, that in 1907 of 60.7 million Germans only about half, some 31.4 million were still residing in their birthplace.<sup>2</sup> In view of this evidence the reader is cautioned not to

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<sup>1</sup>Only .1% of the sampled Führerkorps fell into this category.

<sup>2</sup>Köllmann showed that internal German migration could be divided into two distinct phases. During the first phase, which lasted until 1880, short distant migration was more prevalent, that is, migration to the nearest larger town. The only long distance migration of any significance at this time was to Berlin. During the 1890's long distance migration gained in importance, the most conspicuous one being from east to west. Wolfgang Köllman, "The Population of Germany in the Age of Industrialization," in Population Movements in Modern Europe, ed. by Herbert Moller (New York 1964), p. 102ff. The article appeared in German in Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft: Mitteilungen, 27. Folge, Heft 3. November 1962.

confuse the geographic origin of the sampled SS Führer with their major place of residence or the location where they joined.

The birthplaces of the selected officers were first categorized into northern and southern Germany, with the Main river as the dividing line between north and south Germany. According to this division the Länder Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden and Hessen, as well as the administrative districts (Regierungsbezirke), Trier and Sigmaringen were placed in south Germany.<sup>1</sup> A further breakdown of the birthplaces into cities (Grosstädte), towns (Kleinstädte) and rural areas (Land) was undertaken. Centres with a population of 100,000 and over were categorized as cities, those with a population between 10,000-100,000 as towns, and those under 10,000 as rural areas.<sup>2</sup> For those applicants born outside the borders of Germany three special regional categories were used: these were for those born in Austria, the Sudetenland and in other foreign countries.

### Education

The educational categories used in this study conformed to the generally accepted progression of education in Germany. The first category included all applicants who had attended and completed elementary school (Volksschule). Trades training outside the school system was not taken

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<sup>1</sup>In the geographic organization this writer adopted the categories used by Professor Kater in his article, "Zur Soziographie der Frühen NSDAP," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Heft 2, April 1971, pp. 136-37.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Ritter's Geographisch-Statistisches Lexikon über die Erdteile, Länder, Meere, Häfen, Seen, Flüsse, Inseln, Gebirge, Staaten, Städte, Kanäle, Eisenbahnen, Post und Telegraphenämter, 9. Vollständige umgearbeitete, sehr vermehrte und verbesserte Auflage, 2 vols. (Leipzig 1905), was used as a guide in determining the size of cities and towns.



into consideration. The second category was designed for all SS members who had attended a secondary school, either a Mittelschule, Realschule or Gymnasium. Although they may have obtained a school-leaving certificate, such as mittlere Reife or Einjährige, as long as they did not hold the Abitur they were placed in this category. The third category was reserved for anyone who held the coveted Abitur.<sup>1</sup> There were three university categories. The first included those who attended an institution of higher learning but never completed a course of study. The second was for those who graduated from a recognized institution, a Universität or Technische Hochschule, but did not obtain the doctorate. The third category included all doctorates, Dr. phil., Dr. med., Dr. jur., etc. There is a special category for those who after 1933 attended one of the newly-founded National-Politische Erziehungsanstalten (Napola), or National Socialist secondary schools.

### Occupation

The occupational classification system was perhaps the most difficult one to establish.<sup>2</sup> After some consideration Theodor Geiger's basic occupational categorization of German society was adopted.<sup>3</sup> Rolf

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<sup>1</sup>Charlotte Engelmann, German Education and Re-Education, with an introduction by L. M. Terman (New York 1945), p. 25. Dr. Engelmann was one of the first women to be granted a Dr. phil. from the University of Berlin in 1908. A well-known Social Democrat, she was active in the educational reform movement of the 1920's. In 1933, after Hitler came to power, she had to resign her senior government post and emigrated to the USA. On the importance of the Abitur see, pp. 21-25.

<sup>2</sup>For the advice this writer received in establishing the occupational categories, he should like to thank Professor Michael Kater of York University, Toronto, Canada.

<sup>3</sup>Theodor Geiger, Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes, Soziographischer Versuch auf statistischer Grundlage (Stuttgart 1967), first printed Stuttgart 1932.

Dahrendorf wrote of this classification system,

Es gibt in der Geschichte der deutschen Soziologie ein Vorbild für eine Analyse sozialer Schichten, die unseren Ansprüchen genügt, zumal auch sie in eine Gesamtanalyse der deutschen Gesellschaft in politischer Absicht eingebunden erscheint.<sup>1</sup>

In categorizing occupations, Geiger not only considered the economic factors but also the socio-psychological ones. As Geiger stated:

Die Mentalität ... ist geistig-seelische Disposition, ist unmittelbare Prägung des Menschen durch seine soziale Lebenswelt und die von ihr ausstrahlenden, an ihr gemachten Lebenserfahrungen.<sup>2</sup>

Thus he recognized that it was as important to consider how a given occupational group viewed itself, as how it was viewed by others. Geiger's work is also important insofar as he tried to explain through his classifications the advances made by National Socialism during the last years of the Weimar Republic.

Geiger divided the German Mittelstand, which so readily succumbed to the overtures of National Socialism into the old and the new Mittelstand. He showed how the old Mittelstand, comprised of artisans, small independent businessmen, and peasant proprietors - the pre-industrial occupations<sup>3</sup> - felt threatened by modern conglomerates in industry and business. These occupational groups were afraid not only of losing their livelihood but also of losing their social status and of being dragged down to the proletarian level. It was in the new Mittelstand, that Geiger saw "den sozialen Nährboden des Nationalsozialismus."<sup>4</sup> He ascribed to the new

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<sup>1</sup>Rolf Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland (Stuttgart 1965), pp. 101-102.

<sup>2</sup>Geiger, Soziale Schichtung, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Hermann Lebovics, Social Conservatism and the Middle Classes (Princeton 1969), p. 6. The study was a doctoral dissertation at Yale University.

<sup>4</sup>Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft, p. 103.



Mittelstand

die ideologische Unsicherheit des Siedlers auf gesellschaftlichem Neuland; in seiner Standorttypischen Mentalität noch unsicher und ... das gegebene Einzugsfeld 'falscher Idologien.'<sup>1</sup>

This new Mittelstand was composed largely of clerical workers, lower management employees, lower civil servants, and the new industrial technicians; in other words the occupational group also referred to as the "white collar worker,"<sup>2</sup> or "pencil pusher."<sup>3</sup> The "ideologische Unsicherheit" of the rapidly growing new Mittelstand<sup>4</sup> was brought about by the fact that it was squeezed between the very cohesive bloc represented by the German upper class and the highly organized and unionized working class.<sup>5</sup> It is arguable that there were more similarities than differences between the "white collar worker" and the proletariat.

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<sup>1</sup>Geiger, Soziale Schichtung, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup>Cecil Wright Mills, White Collar, The American Middle Class (New York 1951). In contrast to the nineteenth-century clerk, the white collar worker had virtually no prospect of ever replacing his boss. For the career opportunities of an ambitious nineteenth-century clerk who through hard work and honesty rose to the position of partner, see Gustav Freytag's novel Soll und Haben.

<sup>3</sup>For a useful discussion of the new and old Mittelstand see, Walter Struve, "Hans Zehrer as a Neo-conservative Elite Theorist," American Historical Review, LXX, July 1965, pp. 1035-1057; see also, Kater, "Soziographie," p. 135.

<sup>4</sup>According to the 1925 census 48% of German society belonged to the new Mittelstand, see, Geiger, Soziale Schichtung, pp. 72-73. The growth of the new Mittelstand is demonstrated by Fritz Croner in Soziologie der Angestellten (Köln und Berlin 1962), p. 199. Croner showed the growth of the new Mittelstand by comparing the ratio of wage earners to salaried employees. In 1882 the ratio of wage earner to salaried employee was 1:21. By 1907 the ratio stood at 1:9, and by 1925 at 1:4. See also, Struve, "Hans Zehrer," p. 1039.

<sup>5</sup>Lebovics points out that under the Republican governments of Weimar, the Junker, business and labour groups were sufficiently well organized to protect their interests. The new Mittelstand, on the other hand, had to fend for itself, it was unable to unite into a single pressure group. Lebovics, Social Conservatism, p. 32.



Walter Struve in his discussion of the "white collar worker" pointed out that in terms of the relationship to the means of production and income level both social groups were similar. What divided the two groups, however, was the relationship of the "white collar worker" to his employer, the non-manual nature of his work and equally important the "white collar workers" consistent aversion to identify himself with the working class.<sup>1</sup>

Since the new Mittelstand was largely a creation of industrialized Germany, the stability of this segment of society depended upon the success of industry. When this success was threatened in the late 1920's and early 1930's the social repercussions were immediately felt. The old fears of loss of income and social status burst into the open. The result was that many neo-conservative elite theories were revived.<sup>2</sup> Often the demand for an elite was accompanied by the cry for a great leader to "save" Germany. The weakness of contemporary politicians promoted a longing for a successor of the great Bismarck.<sup>3</sup> The "soziale Nährboden" for National Socialism was there.

In the actual breakdown of the occupations this writer has, with minor alterations, adhered closely to Professor Kater's categories, which

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<sup>1</sup>Struve, "Hans Zehrer," p. 1039.

<sup>2</sup>Struve is of the opinion that the insecurity of the middle class, and the decline of monarchism during the 1920's, encouraged this class to accept elite theories that were "non-monarchical and highly authoritarian." Struve, "Hans Zehrer," p. 1041.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1043. During the Wilhelmine period and the Weimar Republic school texts stressed the virtue of strong leadership and authoritarian government. See, R. Hinton Thomas, Education and Society in Modern Germany (London 1949), pp. 71-81. The failure of the Republic to educate its first generation according to republican guidelines was also recognized by Charlotte Engelmann in German Education, pp. 72-76.

in turn were based on Geiger's work. The following occupational categories were used:

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|--|---|
| 1. unskilled workers                         | (ungelernte Arbeiter)                       |
| 2. skilled workers                           | (Facharbeiter)                              |
| 3. tradesmen                                 | (Handwerker)                                |
| 4. lower & middle level private employees    | (untere & mittlere (privat) Angestellte)    |
| 5. lower & middle level civil servants       | (untere & mittlere (öffentliche) Beamte)    |
| 6. Military - officers                       | (Militär - Offiziere)                       |
| 7. military - NCO's and other ranks          | (Militär - Unteroffiziere und Mannschaften) |
| 8. peasant proprietors                       | (Landwirte)                                 |
| 9. businessmen                               | (Kaufleute)                                 |
| 10. artists                                  | (Künstler)                                  |
| 11. entrepreneurs                            | (Unternehmer)                               |
| 12. senior private employees                 | (Höhere (privat) Angestellte)               |
| 13. senior civil servants                    | (Höhere (öffentliche) Beamte)               |
| 14. professionals                            | (Freiberufliche - Akademiker)               |
| 15. students                                 | (Studenten)                                 |
| 16. jurists                                  | (Juristen)                                  |
| 17. elementary school teachers               | (Volksschullehrer)                          |
| 18. secondary school and university teachers | (Gymnasium and Hochschullehrer)             |

The unskilled worker category included all labourers who performed jobs which required no specialized training beyond elementary school. Most unskilled labourers classified themselves in the personnel files as ungelernte Arbeiter. The skilled workers (spezialisierte Handarbeiter) in contrast required specialized training. The difference between the skilled worker and the tradesman lay in the fact that the traditional trades rested on a guild tradition (Zunfttradition)<sup>1</sup> which was lacking in the Facharbeiter category. Thus technicians, laboratory assistants and non-university educated engineers, the nur-Ingenieur,<sup>2</sup> were included in this category. Tradesmen included all the traditional trades with a guild tradition. Found in this category were a number of trades that were barely able to support themselves in the highly industrialized Germany of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

The lower and middle level private employees represented the mass employed in administering the vast industrial and commercial complexes that sprang up in modern Germany. Of the 5.27 million private and public salaried employees, 63% worked in administration in industry, commerce, and government.<sup>4</sup> Included in this category was also the bank clerk, rather confusingly called Bankbeamter in Germany although he is no civil servant or Beamter. Also included were the many sales clerks employed

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<sup>1</sup>Kater, "Soziographie," p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Trades such as Brunnenbauer, Mühlenbauer, and Flaschner fell victim to the growing industrialism in Germany. Kater, "Soziographie," p. 134.

<sup>4</sup>Lebovics, Social Conservatism, p. 31.



by the rapidly expanding department stores,<sup>1</sup> and men employed in the service area such as waiters and bell-hops.<sup>2</sup> The lower and middle level civil servants included all traditional Beamte. Although Geiger also included in this category elementary school teachers, since they were Beamte, they were excluded from the category in this study and treated separately (see category 18). This was not done because this writer disagreed with their Beamten status, but because he wanted to determine whether this occupational group, which holds such a unique status in German society,<sup>3</sup> differed significantly from their more educated colleagues who taught in high-schools and universities as far as their joining pattern was concerned.

The military category, which Geiger and Kater treated as one, was divided into two parts. From personal experience as a professional officer this writer realized that the political orientation of officers, NCO's and other ranks can differ significantly. Therefore, officers were classified as one category and NCO's and other ranks as another. In a

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<sup>1</sup>By 1925 the well-known Karstadt department store chain, which was founded in 1920, operated 32 outlets across Germany. The Leonard Tietz store operated 17 outlets in Germany by 1928. Ibid., p. 25. More information on the growing department store chains in Germany is provided by Karl Schleunes, The Twisted Road to Auschwitz, Nazi Policy toward the German Jews, 1933-1945 (London 1972), p. 7ff.

<sup>2</sup>One SS officer listed his father's occupation as Kutscher. He was included in the lower private employee category.

<sup>3</sup>The elementary school teacher occupied a peculiar social position in pre-1914 German society. Although he was considered a professional, his profession was the only one that did not require a university education. Without a university education the elementary school teacher could never be considered an 'Akademiker,' and he was, therefore, unacceptable in that stratum of society. For a more detailed discussion on the social position of the elementary school teacher, see, Engelmann, German Education, p. 16ff.

more detailed analysis of the military profession, NCO's and other ranks were each looked at separately.

The peasant proprietor category was easily recognizable as most described themselves as either Landwirt, Bauer, or Kleinbauer.

The businessmen group was easy to categorize as most labeled themselves Kaufmann. One can assume that this category contains the smaller businessmen; wealthier and more prestigious businessmen described themselves as "Importeur" or "Grosskaufmann."<sup>1</sup>

The artist category not only included performing artists but also teachers of art, music, drama and dance. It should be emphasized that men with this particular background were not too frequently found in the SS. Two cases of note were SS Sturmbannführer Waldemar Klingelhofer,<sup>2</sup> a trained opera singer who for 2½ years was a member of Einsatzgruppe 'B',<sup>3</sup> and SS Obersturmbannführer Walter Ilges,<sup>4</sup> an author and playwright who became a prominent member of the SD.<sup>5</sup>

The category of entrepreneur was a difficult one to define. According to Geiger it included estate owners (Rittergutsbesitzer and

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<sup>1</sup>For a good description of the term Kaufmann see, Kater, "Soziographie," p. 135. The fate of the small businessman during the depression is described by Lebovics, Social Conservatism, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Waldemar Klingelhofer, SS #52,704, born 4.4.1900, in Moscow. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Michael Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos (Philadelphia 1961), p. 210. Captain Musmanno, US Navy, was the US appointed judge at the Einsatzgruppen trial held at Nürnberg in 1947.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Walter Ilges, SS #36,239, born 31.5.1870, in Breslau. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>Shlomo Aronson, Reinhard Heydrich und die Frühgeschichte von Gestapo und SD; Studien zur Zeitgeschichte, herausgegeben vom Institut für Zeitgeschichte (Stuttgart 1971), p. 14.



other Gutsbesitzer) from rural Prussia as well as small pub owners in Munich. Kater described the category in the following terms,

Die Unternehmer bilden eine Berufsgruppe manigfacher sozialer Abstufungen, Kapitalisten jeder Schattierung, alle im Besitz von Produktionsmitteln & Betriebs-kapital, wobei 'Kapitalismus' hier nicht als klassenbegriffliche Norm, sondern als professionelles Kriterium verstanden werden soll.<sup>1</sup>

In strict adherence to this definition the trained carpenter who ran an independent business in one of the many basement shops in Berlin, should have been classified as an Unternehmer. But the personnel files supplied very little of this kind of information. In the majority of cases the men described themselves as Tischler or Tischlermeister not giving any indication as to employment status, i.e. independent businessman or employee. In order to be consistent in the classifying of occupations, all men who gave their occupation as Tischler or Tischlermeister were categorized as Handwerker.

Senior private employees were men in responsible and leading positions in private industry. They corresponded to our managers, department heads of major departments, or personnel managers of larger firms. Kater also classified Diplom - Ingenieure and Diplom - Kaufleute in this category on the assumption that most academically trained engineers and business administrators would be employed by industry in upper level positions. This writer did not follow this practice but categorized these professionals in the Akademiker or Freiberufliche category.

Senior civil servants were easily recognized because of their preference for titles i.e., Regierungsrat, Kriminalrat, or Medizinalrat,

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<sup>1</sup>Kater, "Soziographie," p. 135.



in describing their position.

The independent professional (Freiberufliche and Akademiker) category included all academically educated professionals such as medical doctors, architects, pharmacists. As pointed out above, university educated engineers and business administrators were also placed in this category. Geiger as well as Kater also placed lawyers in this category. While this writer does not disagree with this categorization, he placed jurists in a separate category in order to subject them to a more detailed examination. The reason for the separate analysis of jurisprudence graduates was that it was soon discovered that an inordinate number of jurists had been members of the SS Führerkorps. As law studies have traditionally served in German society as a means of insuring membership in the governing élite,<sup>1</sup> the question arose as to whether many of the jurists in the SS used their affiliation with the Black Order for professional, political, and social advancement.<sup>2</sup> Another factor that made the law graduate such an important member in German society was the tight hold this profession had, and still has, on the senior civil service positions. According to Dahrendorf "Mehr als die Hälfte aller deutschen Juristen sind Beamte. Mehr als die Hälfte aller Beamten des Höheren Dienstes sind Juristen."<sup>3</sup> Because of the involvement of German jurists in both the civil

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<sup>1</sup>Dahrendorf compared German jura studies to the English public schools and the French Grandes Etudes as a means of training a future élite. Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie, pp. 264-265.

<sup>2</sup>One should be cautious and not overstress the fact that jura studies can serve as a social mobility factor. As late as 1959 only 3.5% of all jura students in Germany came from working class background, as compared to 10% who had fathers that were Juristen. Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>3</sup>Dahrendorf points out that in the Wilhelmine era, the Weimar Republic and during the Third Reich, more than half of the Cabinet ministers were jurists. Ibid., p. 262.

service and the SS<sup>1</sup> special attention was paid to this group.

Similarly the final two professional groups, the elementary school teacher and the secondary school and university teachers were extracted from their respective categories of civil servants. The unique position of the elementary school teacher in German society has been mentioned.<sup>2</sup> The secondary school teachers and university professors were grouped together because of their education. At a time when many secondary school teachers held the Dr. phil. the two professions stood quite close in the social hierarchy.<sup>3</sup> There is also little doubt that the Studienräte felt a much closer affinity toward the university professor than toward the underprivileged elementary school teacher.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The surrender of the German legal profession to National Socialism is further demonstrated by an article written by Werner Best, which appeared in the legal journal Deutsches Recht. According to the Nazi jurist there was to be no independent justice apparatus in the Third Reich. Judges and lawyers were to act like loyal state employees, and, just like the police, they were to be mere executors of state policy. Werner Johe, Die gleichgeschaltete Justiz (Frankfurt/Main 1967), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>See p. 24, note 3.

<sup>3</sup>Bolte, a German sociologist, ranked thirty-eight occupations and professions according to their prestige value in German society. According to his findings the university professor ranked highest in prestige, the secondary school teacher fifth, just after the senior civil servant. This study was undertaken in the 1950's, and the prestige value of certain professions was undoubtedly affected by the events of the war. For instance, in post-war West Germany the army officer (Major), ranked eleventh on the scale, even behind the elementary school teacher who ranked ninth. There is little doubt that in pre-1939 German society the army officer had a higher social position. Karl Bolte, Sozialer Aufstieg und Abstieg (Stuttgart 1959), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>It was not until 1920 that professors, secondary and elementary school teachers came together at a joint conference, and began to look at the educational process from Volksschule to university as a continuous process. Even then university professors and secondary school teachers met in one session, elementary school teachers in another. Engelmann, German Education, p. 43.



### Family Life and Morality

In dealing with this aspect of the Führerkorps statistical and quantitative information on the marital status, including divorces, political orientation of the SS officers' wives, and the number of children per family was looked at. In addition extensive use of case histories was made in order to illustrate 1. the application of the unique SS marriage code, 2. procedures used in divorce proceedings, 3. the attitude toward homosexuality and the fate of those convicted or merely suspected of homosexuality.

### Home and Family Life

In dealing with this aspect of the SS Führerkorps quantitative information on the marital status, political orientation of wives, and number of children was looked at. In addition case histories are used to illustrate the unique marriage code of the SS and the moral standards applied to the officer and his family.

### Organization of Quantitative Data

The study of the SS Führerkorps from the founding of the SS in 1925 to the outbreak of the Second World War has been divided into three major phases which in turn were each divided into two parts for a total of six time periods. The length of each chronological division was determined by an event (or events) of importance for the development of National Socialism or for the SS.

The major chronological divisions are:

Phase I: The Infancy Period, April 1925-December 1930;



Phase II: The Formative Period, January 1931-June 1934;

Phase III: The Functional Period, July 1934-September 1939.

The six chronological sub-categories are:

Phase I: 1. April 1925-December 1927;  
2. January 1928-December 1930.

Phase II: 3. January 1931-January 1933;  
4. February 1933-June 1934.

Phase III: 5. July 1934-December 1936;  
6. January 1937-September 1939.

#### Phase I. The Infancy Period, April 1925-December 1930

Phase I covers the period from the founding of the SS in April 1925<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>There is some dispute over the actual founding date of the SS. Neusslöss-Hunkel gives the founding date as 9 November 1925. Die SS, p. 7. So does the Statistische Jahrbuch der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP, 1937 (Berlin 1938), p. 3. Buchheim stated that the SS made its first appearance at Ernst Pöhner's funeral in April 1925. Anatomy, p. 30. Höhne stated that Schreck was given the task to form a new loyal Stabswache in April 1925. The Order, p. 23. Stein ignored the issue. He merely stated that after his release from Landsberg prison Hitler felt politically isolated and, therefore, decided to form a loyal bodyguard. The Waffen SS, p. xxvi. This view is also expressed by Weingartner in his study on the Leibstandarte. James Weingartner, Hitler's Guard, The Story of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler, 1939-1945 (Carbondale 1974), p. 1. Günter d'Alquen, in his official history of the SS, refers to the founding date as 1925. Geschichte und Aufgabe der SS (Berlin 1939), p. 7. The personnel files for this early period of the SS prove to be equally inconclusive. The personnel file of Ulrich Graf, SS #26, lists 1 November 1925 as the entry date. Emil Maurice, SS #2, just has 1925 as the joining date. Julius Schreck, SS #5, the man whom Hitler delegated to form a loyal bodyguard, has 1 November 1925 as the joining date. All three men were said to be founding members of the SS. This writer is inclined to agree with Buchheim and Höhne who place the founding date in April 1925. If Hitler's feeling of political isolation played any part in the decision to form a new bodyguard, then this feeling was probably strongest in April when he broke with Roehm. It is also difficult to ignore the appearance of eight black capped pallbearers at Pöhner's funeral on 16 April 1925. Finally, how could Schreck have issued his Order No. 1 in September 1925 when the organization was not created until November. The problem appears to be one of semantics. The early group, founded in April was not called Schutzstaffel but Stabswache. The name Schutzstaffel was not coined until some months after the creation of the Stabswache. Höhne, The Order, p. 23. If, therefore, the Stabswache is seen as a direct forerunner of the SS, April 1925 is the founding date. If one wants to determine when the actual Schutzstaffel was formed, November would be a more suitable date.

to the breakthrough of the NSDAP at the polls in the Reichstag elections of September 1930. The first phase is divided into two periods. The first period deals exclusively with officers whose SS numbers were under 1000. The decision to look at the period 1925 to 1927 was based on an interest in the very early members of the SS, i.e., those who had an SS number under 1000.<sup>1</sup> The second part of the Infancy Period, 1 January 1928 to 31 December 1930, included Himmler's promotion to Reichsführer SS<sup>2</sup> as well as the September 1930 Reichstag elections.

Phase I was entitled the Infancy Period because it was during this stage in the development of the SS that the basic characteristics of the organization were established. The first characteristic to be established was that of selectivity. It began when the SS sought to differentiate itself from the mass organization of the SA. In order to appear outwardly different, the SS immediately adopted the uniform of the former Stosstrupp Adolf Hitler which was disbanded in November 1923. The first SS men wore the black cap with the silver death's head, the black tie, and black rimmed swastika armband.<sup>3</sup> Circular No. 1, dated 21 September 1925, which was sent to

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<sup>1</sup>The cut-off date for the first period of Phase I is based on a letter of SS Obergruppenführer Herff, head of the SS Personalhauptamt. It stated: "In der SS wurden die SS Nummern 850-1050 in der Zeit vom 1.1.1927 bis zum 31.12.1927 verliehen." Letter of Herff to SS Brigadeführer Christian Weber, dated 17.2.1943, in Weber's personnel file.

<sup>2</sup>Julius Schreck stayed as head of the SS until April 1926, when the one-time Stosstrupp Hitler leader, Julius Berchtold returned from political exile to assume command. Berchtold was the first leader of the SS permitted to call himself Reichsführer SS. He remained RFSS until March 1927, at which time the innocuous Erhard Heiden took over. Heinrich Himmler became the third RFSS, and fourth leader of the SS on 6 January 1929. Karl Dietrich Bracher, Wolfgang Sauer, Gerhard Schulz, Die national-sozialistische Machtergreifung. Studien zur Errichtung des totalitären Herrschaftssystems in Deutschland, 1933-1934 (Köln 1962), p. 838.

<sup>3</sup>Neusslöss-Hunkel, Die SS, p. 7.



every local party group (Ortsgruppe) urged all party groups to establish an SS formation. It stressed, however, that "... they were to be small, efficient, élite groups, at most a leader and ten men."<sup>1</sup> Julius Schreck<sup>2</sup> whom Hitler delegated in the spring of 1925 to form "... a body guard ... ready even to march against their own brothers...",<sup>3</sup> stressed that in accordance with the National Socialist élite theory only specially selected men were to be taken into the SS.<sup>4</sup> Applicants to this selected group were to be between the age of 23-35, have two sponsors, and have been registered by the police (polizeilich angemeldet) as residents of five years standing. "Habitual drunkards, gossip mongers (Waschweiber) and other delinquents were not to be considered."<sup>5</sup> The selectivity principle was further emphasized when an SS instruction stated that "The SS man is the most exemplary party member conceivable."<sup>6</sup> With all the emphasis on élitism

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<sup>1</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 24; see also, Edgar Knoebel, Racial Illusion and Military Necessity: A study of SS Political Objectives in Occupied Belgium, p. 5. The study was a Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Colorado, 1965.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Julius Schreck, SS #5, born 13.7.1897, in München. Schreck died of natural causes on 16 May 1936. Völkischer Beobachter, 17.5.1936.

<sup>3</sup>Reitlinger, The SS, p. 13. On Hitler's view of the first SS members see, Henry Picker, Hitler's Table Talk, translated from the German, Hitlers Tischgespräche, by Norman Cameron and R. Stevens (London 1953), p. 167.

<sup>4</sup>When it was discovered that in a Munich Ortsgruppe 15 former SA men began to form an SS unit, Schreck protested. He wrote, "This new formation is no more than the old SA rechristened .... The SS is an organization laboriously built up upon the sound foundations and its unique image must not be tarnished by imitation copies." Letter of Schreck to Party Headquarters, dated 27.9.1925. Höhne, The Order, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup>This order was part of the guidelines for the formation of the SS issued by SS headquarters. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Konrad Heiden, Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus (Berlin 1932), p. 98.



it is not surprising that the newly created SS soon began to see itself as the "imperial guard of the new Germany."<sup>1</sup>

The other basic characteristic established during the Infancy Period was the special relationship, the special bond of loyalty to the Führer,<sup>2</sup> and the evolvement from being the Führer's special protective squad to being the party's security force. Whereas the special loyalty extended to the Führer only, the SS began very soon to take over responsibility for guarding the lives of other party functionaries when on speaking tours. The Schutzstaffeln also became the special security force at major party meetings. The early assumption of responsibility for the security of the Führer and party functions was to transform the Black Order in later years into the major security force of the Third Reich.

#### Phase II: The Formative Period, January 1931-June 1934

The time span between January 1931 and June of 1934 was not only of vital importance in the history of the NSDAP but also in the development of the SS. In this study the years are called the Formative Period of the SS. It was in this period that the major branches of the SS were created

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<sup>1</sup>The SA was to be the infantry of the line, the SS the Guard. Just as the Persians, the Greeks, Caesar and Napoleon had a Guard, so was the Third Reich to have one. Höhne, The Order, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Höhne quotes Alois Rosenwink, the "real organizer of SS Headquarters" as saying, "We carry the death's head on our black cap as a warning to our enemies and an indication to our Führer that we will sacrifice our lives for him." Ibid., p. 24. Dawidowicz sees in the death's head a symbol that the SS was willing "... to carry out Hitler's murderous ideology with fanatical idealism." Lucy Dawidowicz, The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945 (New York 1975), p. 73. This is perhaps reading too much of Auschwitz and the The Final Solution into the purpose of the SS of the early days. The adoption of the death's head was more of a transference of the symbol of the former Stosstrupp Hitler. Hans Volz, Daten der Geschichte der NSDAP (Berlin 1935), p. 120.

Numerically the SS grew from a force of under 15,000 men<sup>1</sup> and fewer than 350 officers<sup>2</sup> to an organization of 221,000 men<sup>3</sup> with a Führerkorps of 3,227 officers.<sup>4</sup>

The Formative Period has been divided into two parts; the first extends from January 1931 to January 1933, the second from February 1933 to June 1934. The reason for dividing Phase II into two parts is that it makes it possible to study the social composition of the SS during the last two years of the Weimar Republic as well as during the first 17 months of the Third Reich. Any changes in the social composition of the SS brought about by the Machtergreifung should become apparent at this point. It is a well established fact that the SS expanded enormously in the first 17 months of Hitler's rule - it grew from 52,000 in January 1933 to 221,000 by 1 July 1934<sup>5</sup> - however, a detailed study of the social composition of the force during this period has never been done.

An important event for the development of the SS that occurred during the first half of the Formative Period was the introduction of the marriage law.<sup>6</sup> Himmler explained the law in the following words:

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<sup>1</sup>Statistisches Jahrbuch der SS, 1937, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>The first official count of the SS Führerkorps is dated 1 January 1932. At that time there were 350 SS officers. Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffeln der NSDAP, 1938 (Berlin 1939), p. 526.

<sup>3</sup>Statistisches Jahrbuch der SS, 1937, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Dienstaltersliste der SS, 1938, p. 526.

<sup>5</sup>Statistisches Jahrbuch der SS, 1937, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>The marriage law is discussed in greater detail in Chapter VII.



Kein SS Mann kann heiraten ohne Genehmigung des Reichsführer SS. Dazu wird verlangt eine gesundheitliche Untersuchung der Braut, es sind Bürgen für diese Frau in weltanschaulicher und menschlicher Beziehung zu bringen.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore the bride and groom had to submit three photographs of themselves, one front facial, one side facial and one showing the total person.<sup>2</sup>

It was in the Formative Period that the important branches of the SS were founded. In addition to the Allgemeine SS,<sup>3</sup> the Sicherheitsdienst or SD,<sup>4</sup> the Totenkopfverbände or TV and the Verfügungstruppe or Waffen SS or VT were established.

The responsibility for security arrangements had been established in Phase I of the SS, but it was not until 1931 that Himmler appointed the new arrival, Reinhard Heydrich, to build up a security service for the party.<sup>5</sup> This service was first called the Ie Dienst and during the SA prohibition days (13 April-14 June 1932) P I Dienst.<sup>6</sup> This was the

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<sup>1</sup>From a lecture delivered by Himmler to a course of national political studies for the armed forces, January 1937, IMT, vol. xxix, document 1992 (A)-PS, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>Himmler's "scientific" selection procedures can be illustrated by the following example: "Ich habe keine Leute unter 1.70m genommen ... weil ich weiss, dass Menschen, deren Grösse über einer bestimmten Zentimeterzahl liegt, das erwünschte Blut irgengwie haben müssen." Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>3</sup>Kogon called the Allgemeine SS das "grosse Sammelreservoir" der SS. Der SS Staat, p. 347.

<sup>4</sup>The SD was referred to by Hess as the "Gehirn von Partei und Staat." Ibid., 23.

<sup>5</sup>Aronson, Reinhard Heydrich, p. 38ff; see also, Neuss-Hunkel, Die SS, p. 8. For a more anecdotal and at times dubious account of the SD see, Schellenberg, Hitler's Secret Service, p. 22ff.

<sup>6</sup>Aronson, Reinhard Heydrich, p. 57.



forerunner of the notorious SD, initials which were to become synonymous with cold blooded calculated murder throughout occupied Europe.

It was in the second half of the Formative Period, February 1933-June 1934, that the foundations of the Death's Head units and the later Waffen SS were laid. In June 1933 Himmler chose the then SS Oberführer Theodor Eicke a former policeman, pulled off the psychiatrist's couch, to become commandant of the already established K. L. Dachau.<sup>1</sup> Eicke was so successful that in time his methods of running a concentration camp were applied throughout Germany.

The first step in creating an armed SS was taken in March 1933 when Hitler delegated his one-time bodyguard Josef (Sepp) Dietrich, at the time SS Gruppenführer,<sup>2</sup> to establish in Berlin an armed detachment of some 120 specially selected SS men.<sup>3</sup> This was to be the third time within 10 years that Hitler ordered the creation of a loyal bodyguard. This bodyguard, named "Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler" in September 1933,<sup>4</sup> was to become the most prestigious Panzerdivision in the Waffen SS.<sup>5</sup>

Thus by the end of the Formative Period, all of the major branches of the Third Reich's élite formation had been established, and the Black

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<sup>1</sup>At the time Eicke was a patient at the psychiatric clinic of the University of Würzburg. Höhne, The Order, p. 202; see also, Aronson, Reinhard Heydrich, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberstgruppenführer Josef (Sepp) Dietrich, SS #1,177, born 28.5.1892, in Hawangen, Bayern. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 4. See also, Weingartner, Hitler's Guard, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. Weingartner is of the opinion that as the Leibstandarte increased in size, mobility, and firepower, the unit was no longer intended as a "guard," but as an active striking force. Hitler's Guard, p. 8.

Order was ready to enter the Functional Period or Phase III of its development.

Phase III: The Functional Period, July 1934-September 1939

The Functional Period of the SS began with the elimination of the SA Stabschef Ernst Röhm on 1 July 1934<sup>1</sup> and ended with the outbreak of the Second World War. During this period the various branches of the SS had renewed opportunities to demonstrate not only their loyalty to Hitler but also their utter ruthlessness and military efficiency. During the Anschluss of Austria units of the Verfügungstruppe were employed for the first time in a purely military role.<sup>2</sup> In the occupation of the Sudetenland in the autumn of 1938 and in the seizure of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939, four Totenkopf battalions and the entire Verfügungstruppe were placed under Army command.<sup>3</sup> The active role of the SD in creating the Gleiwitz radio station incident which "forced" Hitler to attack Poland, in 1939, is also well-known.<sup>4</sup>

The Functional Period has been divided into two parts with the dividing date 31 December 1936. The reason for dividing the third Phase at the end of 1936 was the issue of the Führer decree in 1936, by which the position of the Reichsführer SS was formally amalgamated with the

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<sup>1</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 127. See also, Süddeutsche Zeitung, 30 and 31 March 1947, 11 and 14 May 1947; also, Frankfurter Rundschau, 8 May 1957.

<sup>2</sup>Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Schellenberg, Hitler's Secret Service, p. 64; see also, Höhne, The Order, pp. 260-65; also, Jürgen Runzheimer, 'Der Überfall auf den Sender Gleiwitz,' Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, No. 4, October 1962, pp. 408-426.



governmental office of Chief of the German Police. According to Buchheim this "was the all-important step in the transformation of the German Police into the instrument of the Führer's authority."<sup>1</sup> Not only were the German police forces from then on centralized, a merger which the Ministry of the Interior had also tried to bring about, but more important, the police were now firmly riveted to the SS. Dr. Werner Best,<sup>2</sup> one of the younger highly ambitious lawyers attracted to the SS prior to 1933, wrote in 1936 in the German legal journal Deutsches Recht,

Die deutsche Polizei ist unter der Führung des Reichsführer SS zum Schnittpunkt der Bewegung und des Staates geworden. Die Bedeutung dieser Tatsache kann überhaupt nicht unterschätzt werden - nicht nur in ihrer Bedeutung für die Entwicklung des Reichsneubaues sondern auch in ihrer Bedeutung für die Sicherung der Zukunft unseres Volkes.<sup>3</sup>

It was then during the second part of Phase III, that the SS was enlarged by the addition of the traditional police officers as well as by the many recruits from the annexed Austria and Sudetenland who now could join the SS freely without fearing prosecution.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Buchheim et. al., Anatomy, p. 157. For a more detailed analysis, see, Hans Buchheim, SS und Polizei im NS Staat (Duisdorf b. Bonn 1964).

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Obergruppenführer Dr. Werner Best, SS #23,377, born 10.7.1903, in Darmstadt. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Werner Best, Deutsches Recht, 15.7.1936, p. 258.

<sup>4</sup>Although the SS was established in Austria in the early 1930's as SS Abschnitt VIII, it became progressively more difficult for SS members to survive Austrian prosecution, especially after the abortive coup in 1934. A major exodus of Austrian Nazis took place after 1934. Alan Bullock, Hitler, A Study in Tyranny (New York 1961), first published in January 1953, p. 283. Many of the Austrian Nazis were housed in the SS camp at Lechfeld, on the German side of the Austrian border. Shortly after the Anschluss the SS assumed many of the police functions in Austria, and young men could openly join the formation. Reitlinger, The SS, pp. 75, 108-110.



### Description of Tables

Two approaches will be used in presenting the sociographic data for this study. In the first approach, each category group, i.e., unskilled labourers in the occupation category, is considered individually. The total for any such group in the sample, then, equals 100%. Each group is looked at in terms of the six periods (two for each of the three phases). The percentage of SS officers falling into a particular occupational group, for instance, during any of these periods is readily apparent. For example, Table 1.1 depicts the joining pattern for two

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Table 1.1

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occupational groups, the unskilled labourers and the secondary school and university teachers, over the period covered by the study. It can be seen that by the end of Phase I, 35.7% of the unskilled labourers in the sample had joined with 8.9% coming in between 1925 and 1927 and the remaining 26.8% joining between 1928 and the end of 1930. For this same group, 41% joined during Phase II and 23% in Phase III. When these percentages are compared with those for the secondary school and university teachers, one sees that very few (only 2%) joined during Phase I. The majority (61.6%) entered during Phase II, while 44% joined between February 1933 and June 1934.

For the second approach the emphasis is on the six individual time periods. Thus, the periods from 1925 to 1927, 1928 to 1930, and so on are looked at in terms of the sociographic characteristics considered in this study. Each period, summed over the groups of interest, equals 100%. Reference to Table 2 will illustrate this approach. For this table

Table 1.1

Example Illustrating First Approach to the Data:

Joining Pattern of Two Occupational Groups over the Six Time Periods

PHASES		OCCUPATION	
		Unskilled Labourers	Secondary school & University teachers
I	4/1925-12/1927	8.9%	---
	1/1928-12/1930	26.8	2.2%
	TOTAL PHASE I	35.7	2.2
II	1/1931-1/1933	35.7	17.6
	2/1933-6/1934	5.4	44.0
	TOTAL PHASE II	41.1	61.6
III	7/1934-12/1936	7.1	16.1
	1/1937-9/1939	15.4	20.9
	TOTAL PHASE III	23.2	36.3
TOTAL		100.0	100.0

the two time periods of Phase II are looked at in terms of the education levels of the joiners. It can be seen that during the 1931-1933 period,

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Table 1.2

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37.9% of the applicants to be elevated to commissioned rank had only an elementary school (Volksschule) education. A further 33% attended a secondary school but did not obtain the Abitur. Thus the total of non-Abitur officers for the period was 71.7%. If one compares these data with those for the 1933-1934 period, it is obvious that there is a decrease in the percentage of non-Abitur officers being taken into the SS from the first to the second part of Phase II. That is, during the first part of the period 37.9% and 33% of the joiners had only an elementary school or secondary school education, respectively. During the second part of the phase, however, the percentages had dropped to 17.4% for the elementary school group and to 24.5% for the secondary school group. While the lower educational categories registered a decline for the post-1933 period, the opposite trend is noticeable in the higher educational category. Thus officers with an Abitur increased from 5.8% in the 1931-1933 period to 9.2% in the 1933-1934 period. Upward trends are noticeable in the university-graduate and doctoral categories. The percentage of university graduates went up from 9.3% in the pre-1933 period to 16.4% for the 17-month time span after Hitler assumed power. The percentage of doctorates in the SS Führerkorps soared from 9.7% to 27.6%.

It is by the use of these two approaches that the descriptive analysis of the social data of the SS Führerkorps prior to World War II will be undertaken in this thesis.



Table 1.2

Example Illustrating Second Approach to the Data:

Distribution over Phase II of Educational Level of Joiners

EDUCATION	PHASE II	
	1/31-1/33	2/33-6/34
Elementary School	37.9%	17.4%
Secondary School	33.8	24.5
TOTAL NON-ABITUR	71.7	41.9
Abitur	5.8	9.2
Attended University	4.3	4.8
Graduated University	9.2	16.4
Doctorates	9.0	27.7
TOTAL UNIVERSITY GRADUATES	18.2	44.1
Napola	---	---
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

## Chapter II

### SOME FACTORS INFLUENCING PROMOTION IN THE PRE-WAR SS

In 1937, the then 42-year-old SS Sturmbannführer Joseph Dirschl<sup>1</sup> wrote to Himmler, "... dass jeder, der nach 1933 zur SS gegangen ist, besser behandelt wird, ... und scheinbar meine alte SS Ausweisnummer (548) ein ständiger Hinderungsgrund ist."<sup>2</sup> He continued his complaint by saying that "... als einer der 70 Ältesten SS Führer Deutschlands"<sup>3</sup> he felt superseded when it came to promotions and discriminated against when he applied for full-time SS service.

This kind of documentary evidence, of which the above quoted letter is only an example,<sup>4</sup> as well as Robert Koehl's statement that "... very few of the early SS distinguished themselves in any way ...."<sup>5</sup> led this writer to investigate the rank structure of the SS. Since the rank held in the SS, as is the case in most military and para-

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Josef Dirschl, SS #548, born 23.11.1895, in Rehschall b. Passau. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of Dirschl to Himmler, dated 2 March 1937. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>In June 1934 an "old time" SS member, a basket-maker, wrote a detailed letter about conditions in the SS, especially in terms of promotions for alte Kämpfer. He asked that the letter be passed on to the highest authority, "... ich übernehme die Verantwortung, dass ist die Wahrheit." In this instance the letter reached Himmler, who promoted the letter writer to Untersturmführer in April 1935. Personnel File: SS Untersturmführer Martin Hegele, SS #9,699, born 27.6.1885, in Zettlitz. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>Koehl, "The Character of the Nazi SS," Journal of Modern History, p. 282.

military organizations, was a symbol of success or failure of a member to function within the organization, it should be of interest to see who it was in the SS that was promoted, and, conversely, who it was that failed to be promoted. Because great value was attached in the NSDAP as well as in the SS to holding a low membership number,<sup>1</sup> because a low number identified an early member of the Nazi movement, the first question that will be investigated in this chapter is, was seniority in the SS an important criterion for promotion to senior or general rank<sup>2</sup> or did it interfere with promotion? Was Dirschl, the alte Kämpfer from the Bavarian Woods, correct when he asserted that the promotion policy of the SS discriminated against old-timers like himself?

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<sup>1</sup>In 1943 SS Brigadeführer Christian Weber, SS #265,902, requested a lower SS # in view of his early services in the SS and the NSDAP (he held party #15). The SS Personalhauptamt replied that the best they could do for him is give him SS #65,965. Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Christian Weber, SS #265,902, born 25.8.1883, in Polsingen. BDC. How important a low membership # could be is illustrated in the following case. In 1943 it was discovered that SS Obergruppenführer Demelhuber was not a party member. When questioned, Demelhuber replied that he had belonged to the pre-1925 NSDAP with #4,933. He rejoined the NSDAP in 1925 but was urged by Strasser to leave the party for tactical reasons. After 1933 he reapplied for party membership requesting a number under 100,000. When this request was denied, Demelhuber decided not to enrol in the party. Himmler promised to look into the matter, but no action was taken to reinstate the alte Kämpfer in his rightful place on the numerical roll of the NSDAP. As a result this high-ranking SS general remained a non-Nazi party member. Personnel File: SS Obergruppenführer Karl-Maria Demelhuber, SS #252,392, born 27.5.1896, in Freising, Oberbayern. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>The ranks are categorized and analysed in terms of the three major rank classifications in use by all Commonwealth Forces. 1. Junior officer category, Untersturmführer (2nd lieutenant) to Hauptsturmführer (captain); 2. Senior officer category, Sturmbannführer (major) to Standartenführer (colonel); 3. General officer category Oberführer (senior colonel) to Oberstgruppenführer (general).



Table 2.1 shows the highest rank achieved by the sampled officers in relation to the period in which they joined.

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Table 2.1

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A visual examination of the sub-totals for the junior, senior, and general ranks over the time periods shows at least two things. First, it shows that in most cases (the period from 7/34-12/36 provides the exception) over half of the commissioned officers remained in the junior ranks regardless of the period in which they joined; that roughly a third (the exceptions are in the periods 4/25-12/27 and 2/33-6/34) are to be found in the senior ranks, while only a seventh or fewer are to be found in the general ranks. Second, it shows that there is no systematic trend across time periods for each of the rank categories considered. That is, 58.2% of those who joined during the first period considered remained in a junior rank as did 63% of those who joined in the latter part of Phase II and as did 56.3% of those who joined in the latter half of Phase III. Similarly, 14.7% of the initial joiners reached a general rank while 13.5% of those who joined in the first half of Phase III obtained one of these ranks.

A Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of independence was done to see whether there was any statistical relationship between the phase in which an officer joined and the rank which he obtained. The resulting Chi-Square of 41 was significant beyond the .001 level, indicating that there was at least a slight relationship between these variables.<sup>1</sup> An examination

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<sup>1</sup>Although the value of Chi-Square is significant, an index of strength of relationship (Cramer's Phi) is very close to 0 indicating that although a relationship between the variable does exist, it is not a very strong relationship. See Appendix A, Table 1, p. 254, for Chi-Square and Cramer's Phi calculations.

TABLE 2.1 RANK DISTRIBUTION FOR EACH OF THE SIX TIME PERIODS

RANK	TOTAL CORPS	PHASE I		PHASE II		PHASE III	
		4/25-12/27	1/28-12/30	1/31-1/33	2/33-6/34	7/34-12/36	1/37-9/39
Untersturmführer	17.4	9.8	17.0	16.9	21.4	10.6	17.6
Obersturmführer	20.0	23.8	20.5	19.9	20.8	19.4	18.7
Hauptsturmführer	19.9	24.6	18.3	19.5	20.8	18.9	20.0
Sub-total for jr. commissioned ranks	57.3	58.2	55.8	56.3	63.0	48.9	56.3
Sturmbannführer	19.4	11.5	15.8	20.5	19.6	21.9	18.7
Obersturmbannführer	8.9	6.6	9.2	9.7	7.9	8.9	9.4
Standartenführer	6.0	8.2	9.9	5.8	4.3	6.8	6.2
Sub-total for sr. commissioned ranks	34.3	26.3	34.9	36.0	31.8	37.6	34.3
Oberführer	3.1	4.9	3.7	3.6	2.0	4.8	2.5
Brigadeführer	2.7	5.7	2.7	1.7	1.8	4.5	3.9
Gruppenführer	1.1	.8	.9	.6	.9	2.0	1.9
Obergruppenführer	1.3	3.3	1.8	1.6	.5	2.0	1.1
Oberstgruppenführer	.1	---	.2	.2	---	.2	---
Sub-total for general rank	8.3	14.7	9.3	7.7	5.2	13.5	9.4
TOTAL	99.9*	99.2*	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*Adding the one RFSS brings these totals to 100.0



of the major sources of deviation indicates that (1) in Phases I and III more officers obtained general ranks than would be expected on a statistical basis,<sup>1</sup> and that in Phase II fewer reached this rank level than would be expected; and (2) during Phase II more men remained in the junior ranks while during Phase III fewer men remained at this level than would be expected statistically.

If one were to answer Dirschl on the basis of these data, one would have to say that he was right, but then not entirely right. That is, although a large number of those who joined before February 1933 stayed at the junior rank level, an even greater number than would be expected of those who joined between 1933 and 1934 remained at this level. There was no significant deviation from the expected at the senior ranks across the time periods, but there certainly were deviations from the expected in the general ranks, for Phase I as well as for Phases II and III. In answer to the earlier-posed question, then,

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<sup>1</sup>This conclusion is also supported by qualitative material. On 30 December 1942 the Chef des SS Personalhauptamtes, Herff, sent a communique to Himmler in which he expressed his growing concern about the unwarranted promotions of officers to general rank, "... die 1. der SS nur kurze Zeit angehören, 2. weder besondere Verdienste um die SS aufweisen können ... und 3. sich in ihrer SS mässigen Haltung und Gesinn keineswegs bewährt haben." Herff asked whether "... diese Beförderungen die im wesentlichen politisch bedingt sind ... notwendig und richtig sind?" In conclusion he recommended to Himmler "... bei der Ernennung und Beförderung Solcher Führer besonders vorsichtig zu sein und schärfste Masstäbe anzulegen." Letter of SS Brigadeführer Herff to Himmler found in Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Graf Bassewitz-Behr. BDC.

Similar reservations concerning promotions of SS officers with little seniority to general rank were expressed by Kaltenbrunner, who wrote on 20 June 1944, "... wir müssen verhindern, dass ein SS Führer seine Endstellung so jung an Jahren erreicht, dass ihm später keine Aufstiegsmöglichkeiten mehr übrig bleiben." On 28 June 1944 Herff wrote, "Dann habe ich auch sonst doch grundsätzliche Bedenken dass wir unsere Dienststellen durch zu hohe Dienstgrade überziehen .... Was sollen unsere SS Führer denn noch werden, wenn Sie bereits in nachgeordneten Stellen die höchsten Dienststränge in der SS erreichen?" This correspondence was found in Personnel File: SS Gruppenführer Dr. Wilhelm Harster. BDC.



one can answer that seniority did not appear to be a criterion for promotion to senior or general rank. On the other hand one cannot conclude from the data or from the analysis that it interfered with such promotion.

It is interesting to speculate on why seniority in the SS did not lead automatically to promotion. One such speculation might focus on the type of man who joined during the infancy stage of the SS. A closer look at some selected case histories will provide more information on this point.

### The Early Joiners

Hans Kronwitter,<sup>1</sup> the son of a bricklayer was one of the men who followed the call of Julius Schreck in 1925 to join the newly established élite formation of the NSDAP. It took Kronwitter nine years to reach the lowest commissioned rank in that organization. An entry in his personnel file in 1935 gives some indication of why it took this early adherent until 1934 to become an officer. When in 1935 the Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt enquired why Kronwitter had not yet submitted his racial record, the Amt was informed that the SS Führer had found it impossible "... wegen seiner Schriftungewandtheit ... die Ahnentafel zu erstellen."<sup>2</sup>

Another early joiner of the Black Order was Franz Danzer.<sup>3</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Untersturmführer Hans Kronwitter, SS #488, born 13.8.1902, in Obersteinhöring, Bayern. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Untersturmführer Franz Danzer, SS #476, born 24.2.1900, in München. BDC.

took Danzer fourteen years to reach commissioned rank. The son of an unskilled labourer, Danzer was a drifting agricultural labourer (Landarbeiter) when he joined the SS in 1925. He only found permanent employment after 1933, when the party in an effort to place alte Kämpfer into permanent jobs, gave him a labouring job with the German post office. Danzer's tenure in the officer corps of the Nazi élite, however, was short-lived. The Rasse und Siedlungshauptamt discovered that Danzer lived common-law with a woman who suffered from tuberculosis, hardly the specimen of health demanded by the strict marriage code of Himmler's SS. In addition the woman neglected her children. When an SS welfare officer discovered that the 15-month-old daughter was unable to stand, and that the oldest child bore marks of abuse on his body<sup>1</sup> Himmler ordered the children removed from the home, had the mother sent to a concentration camp, and ignominiously dismissed Danzer from the SS.<sup>2</sup>

Albert Sämann,<sup>3</sup> like Danzer was the son of an unskilled labourer. Sämann eked out a meagre living as a casual labourer in a shoe factory. In 1935, ten years after joining the SS, he was promoted to the rank of Untersturmführer. But he was not even suitable NCO material. In 1939 he volunteered for the Waffen SS which he joined as a private. He held this rank until 1944 when he was committed to a

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<sup>1</sup>Report by the SS welfare officer, dated 3 June 1940. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Danzer was dismissed "wegen Ungeeigntheit" on 17 July 1940. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Untersturmführer Albert Sämann, SS #885, born 4.1.1905, in Pirmasens. BDC.

mental institution.<sup>1</sup>

Christian Barth<sup>2</sup> was the illegitimate son of a laundry-woman. He was a Hilfsarbeiter when he joined the SS in 1925. Like Danzer, he drifted from job to job until 1933 when the party tried to provide him with permanent employment. Yet he was unable to hold on to a job. In 1934 he was commissioned in the SS. In 1936 the party gave Barth the task of meter reader for the city of Nürnberg. But it was soon discovered that Barth "... ist den Aufgaben eines Ablesers ... nicht gewachsen."<sup>3</sup> Because of his frequent misreadings he had to pay for the shortages out of his own pocket. One day Barth was missing. It was assumed, quite correctly, that he was somewhere in a drunken stupor. The police were notified, with the proviso, "... diese darauf aufmerksam zu machen dass es sich um einen der ältesten SS Männer und um ein Mitglied der alten Garde handelt."<sup>4</sup> Barth did not remain a member of the old guard for long following this incident. Only because of his long service in the SS was he permitted to resign his commission.<sup>5</sup>

At this point it should be emphasised that the above-mentioned case histories were not unusual for the early joiners. There was also

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<sup>1</sup>Sämann's case is a good illustration of how the SS took care of its members. Although he was diagnosed as "... dauernd untauglich für die Allgemeine-SS und Waffen-SS," Himmler ordered that "... Sämann nicht aus der SS zu entlassen ist. Seine Zugehörigkeit zur Schutzstaffel soll lediglich ruhen." The Totenkopfring was kept in safekeeping and his family was taken care of by his home SS Oberabschnitt. Letter of Herff to OA Süd-west, dated 20 December 1944. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Christian Barth, SS #68, born 23.12.1903, in Nürnberg. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Meldung an die 3. SS Standarte, dated 5 June 1936. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Barth resigned from the SS on 22 February 1937. Ibid.



SS Obersturmführer Heinrich Bottelberger<sup>1</sup> who committed suicide in 1936 when he was unable to make a go of his business as barrel maker and innkeeper.<sup>2</sup> Also included in this group is SS Obersturmführer Robert Bednarek<sup>3</sup> who with his frequent public brawls "... das Ansehen der Bewegung und der Schutzstaffel schwerstens geschädigt hat."<sup>4</sup> Similarly SS Obersturmführer Karl Ehmann<sup>5</sup> was released from the SS in 1938 after it was shown that he had eight previous convictions under the criminal code. While he was an SS officer Ehmann shot blindly at the house of the judge who had handed down the latest sentence.<sup>6</sup>

So many case histories of the early joiners were presented in order to illustrate the social background from which they came and the behaviour in which they engaged. It is thus easier to understand why

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Heinrich Bottelberger, SS #753, born 26.11.1890, in Bechtheim, Hessen. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Comments concerning the suicide made by Bottelberger's SS comrades were, "Ich habe das kommen sehen. Geglaubt habe ich allerdings er würde seine Frau und Schwiegermutter mit erschiessen." Said by Ortsgruppenleiter and former SS comrade, Schickert. Standartenführer d'Angelo said, "Er hat das einzige getan, was ihm in seiner Lage zu tun übrig blieb." Report on suicide of Bottelberger by Sturmbann II/33, dated 12 October 1936. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Robert Bednarek, SS #467, born 16.3.1899, in Gleiwitz, Schlesien. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Report to the Oberste Parteigericht München. Bednarek was released from the NSDAP and the SS in March 1939. Upon his dismissal, Bednarek's wife threatened the court that she, as Golden Party Badge holder, was left no choice but to commit suicide if the court did not reinstate her husband. The court, however, refused to reconsider the sentence, nor is there evidence to suggest that Frau Bednarek carried out her threat. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Karl Ehmann, SS #2,111, born 10.12.1898, in Augsburg. BDC.

<sup>6</sup>"Der Staatsanwalt," München, dated 30 June 1934. Ibid.

these men were not promoted beyond the junior commissioned ranks. A man like Bednarek was useful during the Kampfzeit in the numerous street battles with communists and other political opponents, but he became an embarrassment when after 1933 he repeatedly assaulted Nazi party members. Similarly, men like Ehmann and Barth, whose anti-social behaviour was widely known in their respective communities, became an obvious liability to an organization that after 1933 tried to create a reputation of being the élite force of the new Germany.

While 58.2% of the men who joined the SS between April 1925 and December 1927 were not promoted beyond the rank of Hauptsturmführer, Table 2.1 shows that 26.3% of the early joiners attained senior or field rank, with an additional 14.7% reaching general rank.

The case histories of those officers that failed to be promoted showed, without a doubt, that these men represented the flotsam of German society, an element of society that was unable to lead constructive and productive lives under normal conditions. The anti-social behaviour shown by the members of this group on the other hand was exploited during the Kampfzeit. But once "normal" times returned and the anti-social behaviour of the men persisted, they became an embarrassment to the new masters of Germany. It should be of interest to see what discernible differences, if any, there were between those SS Führer who received no further promotions beyond the rank of Hauptsturmführer and those who did.

Emeran Schmid,<sup>1</sup> the son of domestic servants, was raised in

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Emeran Schmid, SS #34, born 22.12.1901, in München. BDC.

working class surroundings in Munich. After completing eight years of elementary school, he began training as a goldsmith.<sup>1</sup> When the First World War ended, Schmid was a footlose youth of 17, and since he had difficulties in settling down, he joined the Freikorps Rossbach. In 1923 Schmid was fortunate to be taken into the Reichswehr, but a few months later "... wurde ich wegen Teilnahme am Putsch wieder entlassen."<sup>2</sup> Between 1924 and 1927 he was mostly unemployed, and it was during this period that he joined the NSDAP and the SS.<sup>3</sup> In 1928 Schmid found employment in one of the NS printing establishments. Even after he reached the rank of Untersturmführer he remained an employee of the Party. In 1936, when he had reached the rank of Sturmbannführer, Schmid was taken into the hauptamtliche SS. At the outbreak of the Second World War Schmid was an administrative officer in the annexed part of what used to be Czechoslovakia. But it soon became apparent "... dass eine Verwendung des Obersturmbannführers Schmid beim Bodenamt des Protektorates restlos unerwünscht ist."<sup>4</sup> The report continued, "Da S. als hauptamtlicher SS Führer völlig versagte, muss er sich damit abfinden in seinen erlernten Beruf zurückzukehren, zumal allem Anschein nach jegliche anderwärtige Verwendung mangels Kenntnisse des S. scheitert."<sup>5</sup> However, this

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<sup>1</sup>In his "Lebenslauf" Schmid claimed to have learned the trade of goldsmith, in his service record the learned trade recorded is Werkzeugschleifer. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Schmid. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>He joined the NSDAP in April 1925 with party #5,428. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Letter to SS Personalhauptamt, dated 18 September 1939. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



was easier said than done. As a full-time SS Führer in the rank of Obersturmbannführer, Schmid had become accustomed to a life style he could ill afford on the salary of a printer or goldsmith. Schmid was finally taken on as a printer by the Eher Verlag, and received a subsidy from the SS.

The SS also encountered difficulties with the alte Kämpfer Anton Binner.<sup>1</sup> Binner, the son of a labourer, joined the NSDAP in August of 1925 and the SS a few months later. Nine years later, on Hitler's birthday in 1934, he was commissioned Untersturmführer. In 1936 he became a full-time SS officer, but by 1941, Binner, as a Sturmbannführer, could no longer cope with the demands of the job. The staff officer of Oberabschnitt Südost therefore wrote the Personalhauptamt, "... dass eine Weiterverwendung des Sturmbannführers Binner, SS Nr. 789 auf Schwierigkeiten stossen wird wenn B. seine Leistungen im Innendienst nicht wesentlich verbessert."<sup>2</sup> It appeared that Binner lacked the necessary tact and manipulative skills which were essential in order to cope with the ever increasing competition among factions within the SS. Thus the one-time Bavarian Schäffler was demoted and sent as a junior commissioned officer to the SS Gebirgsdivision "Nord."<sup>3</sup>

While Schmid and Binner saw their SS careers cut short because

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Anton Binner, SS #789, born 22.2.1906, in Landshut. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to SS Personalhauptamt, dated 17 June 1941. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Binner. Ibid.

they lacked the abilities to cope with the tasks expected of a field officer, SS Standartenführer Jakob Grimminger<sup>1</sup> obtained his position of relative prominence in the Third Reich by pure chance. Grimminger, a trained cabinet maker from Munich, joined the NSDAP (#789) and the SS in the summer of 1925. Although it took Grimminger until 1931 to reach commissioned rank, the incident which propelled him to prominence occurred in 1926. It was in July 1926 that Heinrich Trambauer, the original bearer of the Nazi movement's most hallowed symbol, the Blutfahne, had to give up his job because of poor health. Grimminger took over from him.<sup>2</sup> From that time on the stony-faced ex-NCO of the First World War could be seen on the screen and before thousands of spectators, carrying the flag which Trambauer had carried in Munich on that fateful day in November 1923. Thus Grimminger became over the years "... ein Bestandteil der äusseren und innerlichen Symbolik, die die Partei entwickelte."<sup>3</sup>

Whereas Schmid, Binner and Grimminger came from working class or lower middle class homes, attended only an elementary school, then proceeded to learn a trade, and owed whatever position they later attained to their membership in the SS, the following case warrants a closer look because it does not fit the established pattern of the

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Jakob Grimminger, SS #135, born 25.4.1895, in Augsburg. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Article in honour of Grimminger's 50th birthday, Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (Berliner Abendausgabe), 25 April 1942.

<sup>3</sup>Völkischer Beobachter, 24 April 1942, "Jakob Grimminger 50 Jahre alt." Grimminger married in 1936 at the age of 44, and worked, whenever he was not required to carry the Blutfahne, as a municipal welfare officer in charge of settling veterans claims.

early joiners. Standartenführer Gerhard Ruehle<sup>1</sup> would without doubt, have become a successful professional man even if he had not committed himself to National Socialism. He came from a well-to-do professional upper-middle-class family. With his doctor father, it was a foregone conclusion that the son would enter the Gymnasium in preparation for university studies. In 1928, at the age of 23, Ruehle completed his legal studies at the University of Frankfurt.

But even before Ruehle had completed his studies he was known as an active National Socialist. He joined the NSDAP (#694) in April 1925 - a month after turning twenty - shortly thereafter he became a member of the newly established SS. His activities in the pre-1933 Nazi Party are most impressive. Between April 1925 and February 1933 he held twelve - some rather senior - appointments in the party. He was stellvertretender Ortsgruppenleiter in 1926, Leiter der Rechtsabteilung der Gauleitung Hessen-Nassau from 1928 to 1931, Gauführer der H.J. für Hessen-Nassau in 1931, and Reichsführer des NSD Studentenbundes in 1931 and 1932.<sup>2</sup> In 1932, at the age of 27, he was made a member of the Landtag, and a year later he was promoted to the Reichstag. After Hitler's Machtergreifung Ruehle compiled the Nazi study Das Dritte Reich: Dokumentarische Darstellung des Aufbaues der Nation, and after the proclamation of the Nürnberg Laws he brought out the book Rasse und Sozialismus im Recht.<sup>3</sup> In 1939, by then a 34-year-old Standartenführer, he

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Gerhard Ruehle, SS #290, born 23.3.1905, in Weinenden b. Stuttgart. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Ruehle's "Lebenslauf" contains 4 typed pages outlining his numerous party functions. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Bracher, Sauer, Schulz, Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung, p. 46, 999.



transferred to the German Foreign Office. Ruehle's personnel file gives no further information concerning his post-1939 SS or political career.

In January 1942, at the time when Hitler encountered his first serious set-backs in Russia, he reminisced about the old days, and talked of the men who had been around him some twenty years earlier. He especially mentioned the names of Emil Maurice, Julius Schreck, Ulrich Graf and Julius Schaub. He spoke of them as "... men who were ready for revolution, and knew that some day things would come to hard knocks."<sup>1</sup> Joachim Fest wrote of these men that made up Hitler's inner circle during the early Kampfzeit:

Auch der bevorzugte Spiessgesellen-Typus in seiner engsten persönlichen Umgebung, die derbe und primitive "Chauffeureska" der Schaub, Schreck, Graf oder Maurice, spiegelte forciert dieses Resentiment /Hitlers Bürgerhass/, das nur von wenigen einzelnen auf Zeit durchbrochen werden konnte.<sup>2</sup>

The men whom Fest referred to as "bevorzugte Spiessgesellen-Typus," were also early joiners of the SS who reached general rank in the corps d'élite. Julius Schaub<sup>3</sup> was the only member of Hitler's former inner circle to stay with his Führer until the very end. The German dictator's ubiquitous adjutant only left the Führerbunker on 22 April 1945 after Hitler had decided to stay in the beleaguered

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<sup>1</sup>Bullock, Hitler, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup>Joachim Fest, Hitler: Eine Biographie (Frankfurt/M 1973), p. 426. Of men like Hanfstaengl and Speer, who were able to make the Führer's inner circle, Hitler said, "Sie kommen aus einer Welt, die mir fremd ist."

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Obergruppenführer Julius Schaub, SS #7, born 20.8.1898, in München. BDC.

German capital.<sup>1</sup>

Ulrich Graf,<sup>2</sup> was Hitler's first bodyguard, who, in Nazi mythology, was accredited with saving Hitler's life on 9 November 1923.<sup>3</sup> Graf, whose father eked out a meagre living as a proprietor of a small parcel of land in Swabia, joined the Bavarian army at the age of 18 after learning the miller's trade.<sup>4</sup> He was released from the army in 1904 with the rank of sergeant due to ill health, and given the position of a lower ranking civil servant in the municipal administration of the city of Munich. He remained in the employ of the city until 1923, when he was dismissed for his involvement in the Novemberputsch. In April 1925, belonging to the group of former "Stosstrupp Hitler" members that met regularly in the Torbräu beer cellar near the Isartor in Munich,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fest, Hitler, p. 1008; see also, Hugh Trevor-Roper, The Last Days of Adolf Hitler (London 1947), p. 111. In 1938 Hitler made a will in which he bequeathed on Schaub a legacy of 10,000 RM, and an annuity of 6,000 RM. The will, which came to light in 1953, was found by an electrician who worked on the underground cables of the chancellery shortly after the fall of Berlin. Robert Payne, The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler (New York 1973), p. 349.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Ulrich Graf, SS #26, born 6.7.1878, in Bachhagel, Schwaben. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Völkischer Beobachter, 6 July 1938. According to the Nazi story Graf was severely wounded at the Feldherrnhalle when the police opened fire on the Nazi insurgents. It was claimed that Graf threw himself on Hitler, thereby getting hit by the bullets aimed at Hitler. See also, Payne, Life and Death of Adolf Hitler, p. 180.

<sup>4</sup>In the post-war literature on National Socialism Graf has consistently been referred to as either a butcher or butcher's apprentice. Bullock, Hitler, p. 56; Höhne, The Order, p. 20; Werner Maser, Frühgeschichte der NSDAP (Frankfurt 1965), p. 357; Fest, Hitler, p. 199. In his SS personnel file and his handwritten "Lebenslauf" there is no reference to Graf ever having learned the trade of butcher, or of having been a butcher's apprentice.

<sup>5</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 22.



Graf was among the first to respond to the call of Schreck when he founded the new Stabswache. Graf, however, never again rose to any position of prominence in the Nazi hierarchy. He was made a Ratsherr of Munich, a member of the impotent Reichstag, and reinstated as a civil servant so he could claim eligibility for a civil service pension. In addition Graf was named assistant to Walter Buch when he took over "Uschla" (Untersuchungs-und-Schlichtungs-Ausschuss) in 1926. Aside from this, Graf lived a retiring life at Harthausenstrasse 94 in Munich, from which he emerged into temporary prominence on special anniversaries.<sup>1</sup>

The man who held the coveted SS membership number 2 was Emil Maurice.<sup>2</sup> Maurice who was described as a "Saalschlachthero"<sup>3</sup> and a "watchmaker by trade and a cutthroat by profession,"<sup>4</sup> was instrumental in establishing with Lieutenant Klintzsch the "... Versammlungsschutz der damaligen Partei, aus dem sich dann die SA entwickelt hat."<sup>5</sup> He was one of Hitler's closest companions, and belonged to the extremely small circle of men who addressed Hitler with the familiar "Du." Maurice was the first secretary to Hitler at Landsberg and helped the

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<sup>1</sup>Graf was prominently written up in the Nazi Press in 1938 and 1943 when he celebrated his 60th and 65th birthday respectively. See, Völkischer Beobachter (Berliner Ausgabe) 7 and 9 July 1938; also, Völkischer Beobachter (Berliner Ausgabe) 6 July 1943, and Das Schwarze Korps, 10 July 1943.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberführer Emil Maurice, SS #2, born 19.1.1897, in Westermoor. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Fest, Hitler, p. 199.

<sup>4</sup>Payne, Life and Death of Hitler, p. 196.

<sup>5</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Emil Maurice, dated 15 March 1937. Personnel File: Maurice.



imprisoned Hitler with the initial typing of Mein Kampf. After the refounding of the NSDAP Maurice once more became Hitler's chauffeur.<sup>1</sup> It was in 1928 that the relationship between the two men became somewhat strained with the result, "... dass ich mich wieder ganz meinem Geschäft widmete, das ich heute noch inne habe."<sup>2</sup> The reason for the cooling of relations between Maurice and Hitler appears to have been Hitler's niece Geli Raubal. According to accounts Hitler surprised his niece with Maurice in rather compromising circumstances<sup>3</sup> from which the chauffeur could only save himself by jumping out of a window.<sup>4</sup> Although the Führer dismissed Maurice from the inner circle after this incident, a special bond of friendship seems to have prevailed between them. During the height of the Röhm crisis, some six years later, Maurice reappeared beside Hitler. He is accused by some of having been the murderer of Edmund Heines, the homosexual SA Obergruppenführer from Silesia,<sup>5</sup> and of Father Stempfle, the one-time proofreader of Mein Kampf.<sup>6</sup> There is, however, no concrete evidence which links Maurice with either

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<sup>1</sup>Maurice held party #39. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Emil Maurice. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Bullock wrote in his Hitler: A Study in Tyranny, that "Hitler was beside himself with fury when he discovered that she /Geli/ had allowed Emil Maurice, his chauffeur, to make love to her ...," p. 342; Payne wrote in The Life and Death of Hitler, that "Hitler exploded with rage when he discovered Geli in the arms of Emil Maurice .....", p. 225.

<sup>4</sup>Fest, Hitler, p. 361.

<sup>5</sup>Reitlinger, The SS, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup>Konrad Heiden, The Führer; Hitler's Rise to Power (Boston 1944), p. 389.

murder.<sup>1</sup> If Hitler held a grudge against Maurice, either for his love affair with Geli or for the murder of Father Stempfle, he did not continue to hold it. On the contrary, Hitler twice intervened on Maurice's behalf, thereby showing considerable loyalty towards his former companion. The first instance in which Hitler came to the aid of Maurice was at the time when it was discovered that SS man #2 was "... ohne Zweifel nicht-arischer Abstammung."<sup>2</sup> This fact was discovered in a routine racial check on Maurice when he married in 1935. Himmler wanted to dismiss Maurice from the SS immediately, but "Der Führer entschied, dass in diesem einzigen Ausnahmefall Maurice ... in der SS verbleiben könne."<sup>3</sup> While Himmler accepted the fact "... dass lediglich Adolf Hitler selbst das Recht hat, auch für die SS eine Ausnahme in blutlicher Hinsicht zu bestimmen," he strongly emphasized: "Kein Reichsführer-SS jedoch hat heute und in aller Zukunft die Berechtigung in den

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<sup>1</sup>Reitlinger's statement that "... Edmund Heines was taken into one of the waiting cars, where Emil Maurice and Christian Weber shot him," is disputed by Höhne who stated that Heines was brought to Stadelheim prison in Munich where he was held in Cell 483 until he was shot in the early evening hours of 30 June 1934 by members of the Leibstandarte. The Order, pp. 117-118. Höhne's statement is based on the list of entrants to the Munich prison, Proceedings of State Court I, Munich, and the Sepp Dietrich Trial held in Munich in July 1956. Reitlinger questioned the fact that Maurice was involved in the murder of Father Stempfle. He substantiated his viewpoint by the fact that Hitler never took any action against "... the swine /that/ have also murdered my good Father Stempfle." Heinrich Roffmann, Hitler was my Friend (London 1955), p. 76. The above statement is found in Reitlinger, The SS, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Taken from a letter written by Himmler to the Chef des Rasse-und Siedlungshauptamt, dated 31 August 1935, and marked "Secret." Personnel File: Emil Maurice.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



blutlichen Forderungen der SS Ausnahmen zubewilligen."<sup>1</sup> He, therefore, issued the order that while Maurice could remain in the SS, none of his offspring would ever be allowed to wear the black uniform of Germany's élite formation.<sup>2</sup>

The second instance in which Hitler protected his erstwhile chauffeur occurred in September 1935. It was during the Nurnberg Party Rally that Maurice, in full uniform, took a rubber trencheon and beat a 71-year-old man over the head. It appears that the old man could not get out of the path of Maurice's Mercedes fast enough. Maurice became impatient and beat the man into a state of unconsciousness. The fact that the old man was a party member did not help Maurice's case. When two months after the incident the man wrote to Himmler asking for justice, the SS Gericht, obviously on higher authority, wrote, "... das Strafverfahren gegen den SS-Standartenführer Maurice ist mangels öffentlichen Intresses von der Staatsanwaltschaft eingestellt ...."<sup>3</sup> Not only were all charges against Maurice dropped, but he was also promoted to Oberführer a short while later.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. An appendix to the letter gave instructions that only two copies of this letter were to be made, that one was to be included in Maurice's RuSHA file, in sealed form, and that one was to be deposited, also in sealed form, with the Chef des Rasse-und Siedlungshauptamt. The third copy was to be included in Maurice's personnel file marked "Secret" and sealed. The copy which the author found must have been the third copy, attached to Maurice's personnel file. The copy in Maurice's RuSHA file was not in the file at the BDC.

<sup>2</sup>This instruction was written in Himmler's handwriting on a copy of a letter sent to Maurice congratulating him on the birth of his first son, dated 4 March 1936. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from SS-Gericht, dated 24 April 1936. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Emil Maurice. Ibid.



Julius Schreck,<sup>1</sup> the man whom Hitler called upon in April 1925 to form a new Stabswache, was little heard from after he was replaced by Berchtold in April 1926 as head of the infant SS.<sup>2</sup> It appeared that Schreck was too easy going and it was feared by other SS members that he would become a tool of such powerful party bureaucrats as Philp Bouhler and Franz Xavier Schwarz.<sup>3</sup> Schreck lived in relative obscurity from 1926 until he died on 15 May 1936 in Munich. It was only then that he was heralded as the "Begründer der ersten Staffel der gesamten SS."<sup>4</sup> As a lasting honour the first Standarte of the Munich SS would henceforth carry the name "Julius Schreck Standarte."<sup>5</sup>

Two other SS officers who held SS numbers under 1000 and who reached general rank, should be mentioned in this chapter. They were unusual men, much like Ruehle, who did not fit the general description of the average early joiner of the SS. Unlike any of the early SS members these two men were charged with murder in the post-1945 war crime proceedings conducted by the Allied and later by German courts. One SS officer was sentenced to death and executed at Landsberg prison in June of 1951,<sup>6</sup> the other received a 15 year sentence in 1961.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Julius Schreck, SS #5, born 13.7.1898, in München-Gräfeling. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Bracher, Die Nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung, p. 837.

<sup>3</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Himmler's "SS-Befehl," dated 18 May 1936. Personnel File: Julius Schreck; see also, Völkischer Beobachter (Berliner Ausgabe), dated 20 May 1936.

<sup>5</sup>Himmler's speech at the funeral of Julius Schreck. Copy of the speech is included in the personnel file of Julius Schreck.

<sup>6</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 264.

<sup>7</sup>Hermann Langbein, Im Namen des deutschen Volkes; Zwischenbilanz der Prozesse wegen nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen (Wien 1963), pp. 156-157.

The most unusual of the early joiners "... a typical neurotic sharp-tongued intellectual know-all"<sup>1</sup> was Otto Ohlendorf.<sup>2</sup> Unlike most of the early SS men who came from either lower-middle-class or working-class homes, Ohlendorf was the son of a well-to-do farmer. Höhne described SS officers like Ohlendorf as "... typical hard-boiled technocrats, the 'social engineers' who provided the Führer dictatorship with the necessary veneer of legality and organization."<sup>3</sup> The type of SS officer that Ohlendorf represented was highly realistic, did not care much for ideology other than that of power, and was completely free from what one may term accepted norms of conduct. Ohlendorf attended the Universities of Leipzig and Göttingen, and graduated from Göttingen in political science and law. He joined the SS in 1925 at the age of 18 while still a student at the University of Göttingen. Like Ruehle, Ohlendorf played an important role in the NSDStB, and served on numerous occasions as speaker and Schulungsleiter.<sup>4</sup> In November 1936 Ohlendorf accepted a full-time position in the Sicherheitsdienst with the rank of Hauptsturmführer.<sup>5</sup> The most realistic picture of Ohlendorf was presented by Judge Musmanno who presided over the Einsatzgruppen trial where Ohlendorf was the major defendant. Musmanno described Ohlendorf as a man of forty, "slender and with delicate features ...." The only blemish in the perfection of his personality was that he had

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<sup>1</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Gruppenführer Otto Ohlendorf, SS #880, born 4.2.1907, in Hohengelsen. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup>Letter of Ohlendorf requesting old SS #, dated 18 May 1936. Personnel File: Otto Ohlendorf.

<sup>5</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Ohlendorf. Ibid.



killed ninety thousand people." Visitors at the trial would crane their necks in order to "... get a good look at Ohlendorf sitting in the dock exuding an air of confidence and authority ... as if he were still the Brigadeführer in charge of Einsatzgruppe D."<sup>1</sup> Musmanno was of the opinion that with the exception of Hermann Göring, Otto Ohlendorf stood out as the most compelling personality of those Nazis tried at Nuremberg.<sup>2</sup>

Another less dramatic personality was the former senior police officer and Diplom-Kaufmann Carl Zenner.<sup>3</sup> Zenner, like Ohlendorf, came from an upper-middle-class background, attended the Gymnasium and later the university. In 1921, at the age of 22, he obtained his Diplom-Kaufmann from the University of Cologne. In August 1925 he joined the SS as well as the Nazi Party, and became Reichs and Gauredner. For his services to the Nazi cause during the early Kampfzeit, he was named member of the Reichstag in 1932.<sup>4</sup> It was in 1941 that Zenner, a member of the SD since 1938, was posted to eastern Europe as SS and Polizeiführer for the district of Minsk.<sup>5</sup> By July 1942, when he was recalled to Berlin Zenner had "... das Land /Generalbezirk Weissruthenien/ mit einem fast lückenlosen Netz von Polizeistationen überzogen."<sup>6</sup> The letter which praised his services as SS and Polizeiführer continued: "Wenn

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<sup>1</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>Beside Hjalmar Schacht, the one-time Nazi Finance Minister, Ohlendorf scored the highest I.Q. rating among the Nürnberg defendants. Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Carl Zenner, SS #176, born 11.6.1899, in Oberlimburg, Krs. Saarlautern. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Carl Zenner, undated. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Carl Zenner. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Letter from Generalkommissar Weissruthenien, dated 17 July 1942. Ibid.



während Ihrer Amtstätigkeit besonders das uns feindliche Judentum zu 10.000den vernichtet werden konnte, dann ist das auch Ihr Verdienst."<sup>1</sup>  
 After the war Zenner was charged with the murder of several thousand people in the Minsk area while he was SS and Polizeiführer. The court at Koblenz sentenced him to 15 years in the penitentiary.<sup>2</sup>

### The Later Joiners

Himmler's attempt to make the SS the true élite of the Third Reich is also reflected in the rank distribution in Table 2.1. The high percentage of officers who joined the SS during Phase III, that is between July 1934 and September 1939, and who reached general rank, raises the question, who was it that joined the SS at such a late date and was able to advance to general rank? What qualities did these men have that warranted such fast promotion? Höhne pointed out that in an attempt to make the SS socially acceptable Himmler tried various means of attracting the old élites in Germany. First, he created a new form of membership, the honorary SS Führer (Ehrenführer).<sup>3</sup> Secondly, he tried to incorporate whole organizations such as the Kyffhäuserbund

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Langbein, Im Namen des deutschen Volkes, pp. 156-157. The relatively light sentence which Zenner received from the German court, prompted Langbein to say: "Die allgemeine Haltung der Gerichte bei der Entscheidung über das Strafausmass zwingt zu dem Schluss, dass es von deutschen Richtern in den allermeisten Fällen als nicht sehr erschwerend angesehen wird, wenn die Zahl der Mordopfer in die Tausende geht," p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>The honorary SS Führer was given an SS rank which corresponded to his position in society. Along with this came the privilege of wearing the SS uniform during official functions. The Führer had no command function within the SS and was not assigned an SS membership number. This type of Führer was not included in this study. More information on the Ehrenführer is found in Reitlinger, The SS, pp. 51 and 113.

into the SS in the hope of making the newly incorporated SS Führer more favourably inclined toward the new regime. As part of incorporating old elite organizations into the SS, Himmler took over the equestrian associations, which automatically put a large number of socially prominent members of German society into the black uniform of the new regime's élite.<sup>1</sup> It will be shown repeatedly in this study that the attempt to incorporate members of certain former élites proved successful only in some instances. For example, the leading horseman from East Prussia, Anton Freiherr von Hohberg und Buchwald, Rittmeister a.D. and SS Oberabschnittsführer of East Prussia, was shot on 2 July 1934 by SS Obersturmbannführer Karl Deinhard.<sup>2</sup> The reason for the execution was that Hohberg had made some uncomplimentary remarks about the SS to Reichswehr officers. Apparently the nobleman from East Prussia had not comprehended what it meant to be an SS officer, even if only an equestrian officer.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The International Military Tribunal at Nürnberg recognized the difference between the regular SS and the equestrian formations when it handed down the sentence on the SS. The court labelled the SS as a criminal organization, except the "riding units." IMT, vol. xxii, p. 517.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Karl Deinhard, SS #6,520, born 12.11.1892, in Bremen. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>The Deinhard file contains an interesting letter which the widow of the murdered Hohberg wrote to SS Obergruppenführer Freiherr von Eberstein, "... als Edelmann ... und zum Nachdenken über die bei uns unter hochtönenden Phrasen stark in Verwirrung geratenen Begriffe von Recht und Anstand." The letter is a clear example of the fact that the East Elbian Junker drawn into the SS were completely unaware, not only of the type of organization they had joined, but also of the true nature of National Socialism. Reitlinger quite rightly said that the German higher society "succumbed to the joys of the black uniform and the silver runes, not realizing that they were like the Arab who has eaten bread and salt with his enemy." Reitlinger, The SS, p. 51. The Hohberg killing created unfortunate repercussions for the SS with the result that Deinhard had to be released from the SS in 1936. Hohberg's murder was discussed during the trial of the former SS Obergruppenführer Bach-Zelewski in Die Welt, 24 December 1958. Deinhard was tried for the crime in Munich in June 1961. Süddeutsche Zeitung, 19 June 1961.



Ten years later SS Sturmbannführer Hans-Viktor Salviati,<sup>1</sup> who was head of the SS riding school at Hamburg until the outbreak of the Second World War, was executed because of his involvement in the abortive July 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler.<sup>2</sup>

Another prominent member of German society who, in 1935, requested to be taken into the SS, was Gottfried Graf von Bismarck-Schönhausen.<sup>3</sup> Bismarck-Schönhausen, a descendent of the "Iron Chancellor," in nine years rose in the SS from Untersturmführer to Brigadeführer. Unfortunately for him he was suspected of having been involved in the 1944 plot against Hitler, and dishonourably discharged from the SS in September 1944. He was later executed.<sup>4</sup>

That prominent members of the SS Führerkorps could encounter difficulties with the Reichsführer even though their own conduct was impeccable is illustrated by the case of SS Standartenführer Herbert Edler von Daniels.<sup>5</sup> Daniels joined the Allgemeine SS in July 1935 while

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Hans-Viktor von Salviati, SS #277,083, born 23.8.1897, in Stuttgart. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>The most damaging evidence against Salviati was found by the SD in his diary after his arrest. Himmler was so enraged by what he read in the diary, that he wrote on Salviati's discharge letter, "Ich erkläre heute schon: Wenn das Volksgericht ihn nicht verurteilt, lasse ich Herrn Salviati als treulosen SS Mann erschiessen, denn es steht fest dass S. seinen auf den Führer geleisteten Eid, der ihn zu besonderer Treue verpflichtet, ohne Zweifel gebrochen hat." Letter of discharge, dated 14 October 1944. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Gottfried Graf von Bismarck-Schönhausen, SS #231,947, born 29.3.1901, in Berlin. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Letter of discharge, dated 1 September 1944. Ibid.; see also, Dietrich Orlov, The History of the Nazi Party, 1933-1945 (Pittsburgh 1973), p. 150, n. 213.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Herbert Edler von Daniels, SS #258,002, born 31.3.1895, in Arolson. BDC.



he was employed as a senior civil servant with the University of Berlin. In 1939 he enlisted in the Waffen SS, and because of his profession - he was a specialist in physical education - he was made head des Amtes für Leibesübungen im SS Hauptamt. This kept him essentially out of the war until 1944. Unfortunately for Daniels he had a brother, Lieutenant-General von Daniels, who was captured at Stalingrad and shortly thereafter joined the communist-directed Freiheitskommittee. When this was drawn to the attention of Himmler, he ordered that v. Daniels should immediately be posted to the front "... um so die Schande, die sein Bruder, der dem Freiheitskommittee angehörige Generalleutnant von Daniels, auf die Sippe gebracht hat, zu sühnen."<sup>1</sup> That this dedicated and loyal SS Führer at the homefront was not the slightest bit interested in atoning for the sins of his brother, is understandable. Throughout December 1944 and January 1945 Daniels manoeuvred to avoid a direct posting to the front. In the end friends were able to post him, the 49-year-old Standartenführer to a Panzergranadierschule to prepare him for combat.<sup>2</sup>

The determination with which Himmler proceeded to incorporate members of the old élite groups into the SS, at times even against the advice of the Sicherheitshauptamt, is illustrated by the following case. Ernst von Kretschmann<sup>3</sup> was a retired lieutenant-colonel, a Stahlhelm member from 1921 to 1933, and later a Kyffhäuserbund member. He

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Chef des SS Hauptamtes to SS Personalhauptamt, dated 8 November 1944. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of v. Daniels. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Ernst von Kretschmann, SS #277,320, born 12.11.1874, in Hergisdorf, Mansfelder Seekreis. BDC.

belonged to the well-established German nobility. His mother was the Freiin von Esebeck, his wife the former Gräfin zu Eulenburg. Kretschmann had a successful military career. He spent four years as a subaltern in China, and he won the Pour le mérite during the First World War. When, as a ranking member of the Kyffhäuserbund, Kretschmann was absorbed into the SS in 1936, the Sicherheitshauptamt informed Himmler that Kretschmann "... ist der Typ des reaktionären Deutschnationalen. Er gehört weder der NSDAP noch irgend einer Gliederung derselben an." The lengthy report concluded with the negative assessment "Von einer innerlichen Umstellung des v.K. zum Nationalsozialismus ist nichts zu merken. Eine nat.-soz Zuverlässigkeit kann ihm in keiner Weise bescheinigt werden."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the adverse assessment Himmler admitted Kretschmann to the SS, promoted him three times in 1937,<sup>2</sup> and elevated him to the rank of Brigadeführer in 1942.<sup>3</sup>

The last five case histories have shown who was able to reach senior and general rank in the SS although they joined at a relatively late date. The difference in the caliber of the men who failed to be promoted and those who were, was clearly revealed in the life stories outlined above. On the one hand there were the "bruisers" whom Robert Koehl referred to, those who had a difficult time in establishing a normal life even within the narrow confines of the untere Mittelstand or

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<sup>1</sup>Report of Sicherheitshauptamt on v. Kretschmann, dated 27 November 1936. Kretschmann finally joined the NSDAP on 1 May 1937 with party number 5,713,240. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>He was promoted Obersturmbannführer on 30 January 1937, Standartenführer on 20 April 1937, and Oberführer on 9 November 1937. "Dienstlaufbahn" of v. Kretschmann. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



the Arbeiter milieu, while on the other hand there were men, who were members of well-established families, that made up the pre-1918 elite of Germany.

It is not the intention of this writer to ignore the fact that some prominent persons - members of former élites - could be found in the SS prior to the Machtergreifung. Yet the SS officer with the social background of the Erbprinz zu Waldeck und Pyrmont<sup>1</sup> who joined the SS in March of 1930, or that of the Freiherr von Eberstein<sup>2</sup> who came to the SS in April 1929, was a rare phenomenon. For the lone upper class representative like the Erbprinz there were several Emil Fausts,<sup>3</sup> a man known as the "Schläger" of Koblenz.<sup>4</sup> For every SS officer coming from the social background of Freiherr von Eberstein, there were numerous Adolf Beckers,<sup>5</sup> whose long histories of anti-social behaviour resulted in their dismissal from the SS in 1936.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obergruppenführer Erbprinz zu Waldeck und Pyrmont, SS #2,139, born 13.5.1896, in Arolson. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Obergruppenführer Karl Freiherr von Eberstein, SS #1,386, born 14.1.1894, in Halle. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Emil Faust, SS #2,3 (the next two numbers not readable due to fire and water damage), born 3.3.1899, in Oberlahnstein. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Faust who joined the SS in April 1929 was a blacksmith by trade. His reputation for picking fights was an asset during the Kampfzeit but proved to be a liability after January 1933. He became intolerable for the Party and the SS and was dismissed from both in 1936. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Adolf Becker, SS #2,600, born 15.2.1900, in Friedberg, Hessen. BDC.

<sup>6</sup>Becker's 17 page typed Lebenslauf reads like a novel. He began to show anti-social behaviour traits while he was still in primary school. He continued to be a misfit, although his lawlessness came to be lauded during the Freikorps days. Between 1921 and 1929 he was convicted for various crimes on several occasions. He concluded his Lebenslauf with the sentence "Mich drückt noch jetzt im Jahre 1935 die innere Angst, durch meine Vorstrafen meine Stellung zu verlieren, und mit meiner Frau und meinem 2 Jahre alten Sohn auf die Strasse gesetzt zu werden." Becker was released from the SS in 1935 when he was convicted of extortion. Ibid.



The investigation of the rank held by the officer in relation to the time period in which he joined the SS, had shown that there was no relationship between seniority and rank. From the case histories, which were to illustrate who was and who was not promoted in the SS, it was seen that an overwhelming number of the men who reached the general rank category and who had joined after July 1934, also belonged to previous élites in German society. Therefore, the question that Kater poses in his recent article, "Zum gegenseitigen Verhältnis von SA und SS in der Sozialgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus von 1925 bis 1939,"<sup>1</sup> of whether the old differences in social standing, education and occupation continued to play an important role in the social stratification of the Third Reich, can also be asked here. While further quantitative analysis of the educational and occupational factors is necessary before an attempt can be made to answer this question, the qualitative data used in this chapter would suggest that there was a more visible relationship between promotion and social position held prior to enrolment in the SS, than between seniority and rank.

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Kater, "Zum gegenseitigen Verhältnis von SA und SS in der Sozialgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus von 1925 bis 1939." Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, vol. 62 (1975), p. 340.

### Chapter III

#### THE GEOGRAPHIC ORIGINS OF THE SS FÜHRERKORPS

In the literature on the SS very little attention has been paid to the geographic origins of the SS members. Where this aspect of the SS membership has been discussed at all, the conclusions have been vague and unsubstantiated. Thus Neusüss-Hunkel wrote of the Totenkopf recruits "Zum grossen Teil waren es Bauernburschen, aber auch Städter die sich ... verleiten liessen sich auf 12 Jahre zu verpflichten."<sup>1</sup> Concerning the geographic origin of the Verfügungstruppe officers, Felix Steiner, the erstwhile SS Obergruppenführer, wrote that 90% of the Waffen SS commanders were raised on the land.<sup>2</sup> Höhne suggests that the "... Verfügungstruppe never made its mark on the bourgeoisie and the town-dwellers;<sup>3</sup> it remained an army of peasants and artisans."<sup>4</sup> Concerning the regional origin of the men of the Totenkopfverbände Höhne writes, that they came primarily from the peasantry who saw no future on the land.<sup>5</sup> Steiner, after the war, went so far as to claim that in the Länder Schleswig Holstein, Lower Saxony, Frankonia and the Saar,

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<sup>1</sup>Neusüss-Hunkel, Die SS, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Felix Steiner, Die Armee der Geächteten (Göttingen 1963), pp. 96-97.

<sup>3</sup>In the original German text Höhne used the term Grosstädter which Richard Barry translated as town-dweller. Höhne, Der Orden unter dem Totenkopf (Gütersloh 1967), p. 413.

<sup>4</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 447.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

one out of every three farmer's sons went into the Verfügungstruppe.<sup>1</sup>

Statements such as these are not based upon a systematic examination of the personnel files of the SS Führerkorps. This study can serve to substantiate or correct these general statements as well as to provide specific information on the geographic origins of the SS Führer who joined between 1925 and 1939. The questions to be answered in this chapter are first, did recruits from specific regions in Germany join the SS at different times during the pre-war years? and second, was there a relationship between the geographic origin of the SS applicant and the branch in which he eventually served?

Before considering these questions, however, the general picture of the geographic origins of the Führerkorps between 1925 and 1939 will be considered. According to the birthplace data of the sampled SS Führer, 60.2% came from north of the Main river dividing line, and 29.7% from south of it.<sup>2</sup> This division corresponds to the general population distribution of Germany. Furthermore, 10.1% of the officers were Germans born in Austria, the Sudentenland, or in another country.<sup>3</sup> A look at the geographic origins of the SS Führer in terms of the

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from the article entitled, "Die reformerischen Leistungen der ehemaligen Waffen SS," in Wiking-Ruf, No. 4, 1955, p. 12. Wiking-Ruf is a monthly publication founded by the former SS Gruppenführer Gille in 1951. It soon took on the character as the official organ of the post-war SS veterans' organization HIAG (Hilfsgemeinschaft auf Gegenseitigkeit). Kurt Tauber, Beyond Eagle and Swastika; German Nationalism since 1945, 2 vols., (Middleton 1967), vol. I, pp. 347, 351, 357.

<sup>2</sup>The criteria for the regional division of Germany were discussed in chapter I, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>SS officers born in these areas were classified in the special region category.



population centres, shows that 30.3% of the officers were born in urban centres, 22.4% in towns, and 37.1% in rural areas.<sup>1</sup> Table 3.1 shows a

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Table 3.1

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finer breakdown of the regions of North and South Germany into cities, towns and rural areas from which the sampled officers came. It can be seen that the north provided more officers to the corps than did the south. Similarly, it is apparent that the overall northern contribution was twice that of the southern. Does this 2 to 1 ratio hold throughout the period considered in this study, or are there discernible joining patterns in the six time periods delineated earlier? Table 3.2 shows

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Table 3.2

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the percentage of Führer from the North, South, and Special Regions who joined during each of the six time periods. Thus it is seen that during the period April 1925 to December 1927, when the SS was a formation primarily centered in Bavaria, South Germans outnumbered North Germans by a ratio of 2 to 1. It was during the second part of Phase I, between January 1928 and December 1930, that North Germans began to come into the SS at a faster rate than South Germans. The table shows that during this period 50% of the sampled officers were born north of the Main river as compared to 44% who were born south of it. It was not until the beginning of Phase II, January 1931, that the ratio of northern to southern recruits became established at 2 to 1. This distribution pattern prevailed until the latter part of Phase III, when the ratio was

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<sup>1</sup>In this study cities are urban centres with 100,000 people, towns with a population between 10,000 and 100,000, and rural areas centres with a population under 10,000. See chapter I, p.17.

Table 3.1

Breakdown of the Geographic Origins for the Total Corps Sample

AREA	TYPE OF COMMUNITY	PERCENTAGE
NORTH	City	21.2
	Town	14.2
	Rural	24.8
TOTAL NORTH		60.2
SOUTH	City	9.1
	Town	8.3
	Rural	12.3
TOTAL SOUTH		29.7
SPECIAL REGION		10.1
TOTAL		100.0

Table 3.2  
North-South and Special Regional Origins of SS Officers during the Different Time Periods

AREA	PHASE I		PHASE II		PHASE III	
	4/25-12/27	1/28-12/30	1/31-1/33	2/23-6/34	7/34-12/36	1/37-9/39
NORTH	32.8%	50.7%	65.4%	63.6%	62.9%	54.4%
SOUTH	63.9	44.0	27.4	29.2	28.7	20.6
SPECIAL REGIONS	3.3	5.3	7.2	7.2	8.4	25.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0



somewhat offset by the influx of men from Austria and Sudentenland.

It can be seen that the percentage of officers born in Austria, the Sudentenland and other foreign countries rose only slightly from 3.3% in the 1925 to 1927 period to 8.4% for the years 1934 to 1936. It was during the second part of Phase III, January 1937 to September 1939, that the percentage of officers in the Special Region category rose to 25%. This sudden increase was undoubtedly due to the influx of Austrians and Sudeten Germans who, since the annexation of their territories to the Reich in 1938 were able to join the SS without having to immigrate to Germany first.

A Chi-Square test of independence between the three phases and the areas from which the SS officers came proved to be significant beyond the .001 level indicating that there is a relationship between these two variables. An examination of the Chi-Square table indicates that the differences seen in the joining patterns in Table 3.2 were real differences.<sup>1</sup>

A more detailed breakdown of the north-south joining pattern for the years 1925 to 1939 is provided in Table 3.3. The table shows

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Table 3.3

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the north-south regional origin of the sampled Führerkorps in terms of the officers' birthplaces. The information which Table 3.3 provides is that the differences between urban centres, towns, and rural areas are marginal after December 1930. The real difference in the joining rate takes place between North and South Germany regardless of whether the

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<sup>1</sup>The Chi-Square tabulations are shown, Appendix A, Table 2, p. 255.

Table 3.3

Distribution over the Six Time Periods of the Population Centres  
in the North and South from which the Führer Came

CENTRE	PHASE I		PHASE II		PHASE III		
	4/25-12/27	1/28-12/30	1/31-1/33	2/33-6/34	7/34-12/36	1/37-9/39	
NORTH	City	13.9	16.5	22.0	24.0	21.6	18.8
	Town	8.2	11.3	15.8	15.5	13.2	12.6
	Rural	10.7	23.1	27.5	24.1	28.1	23.0
Sub-total	32.8	50.8	65.3	63.6	62.9	54.4	
SOUTH	City	18.0	14.7	8.6	8.6	8.3	6.0
	Town	14.6	12.1	7.2	9.0	8.5	5.4
	Rural	31.3	17.2	11.6	11.7	11.9	9.2
Sub-Total	63.9	44.0	27.4	29.3	28.7	20.6	
Special Regions	3.3	5.3	7.2	7.2	8.4	25.0	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

the candidate was born in a large city, in a Kleinstadt, or came from a rural district. This suggests that it was the location of their birthplaces in either North or South Germany that influenced the joining pattern of the SS applicants rather than the size of their birthplaces.

A Chi-Square test of independence between phase during which an officer joined and type of population centre proved not to be significant lending support to the conclusion drawn from a visual examination of Table 3.3.<sup>1</sup>

In summary it can be said that the 2 to 1 predominance of northern born officers over their southern born counterparts did not always hold true. During the initial phase, 1925 to 1930 the SS Führerkorps was made up to a large extent of South Germans. With the growing popularity of National Socialism in Germany, as manifested in the party's breakthrough at the polls in September 1930, one detects an increasing percentage of North Germans joining the SS. It is during the 1931 to 1933 period that the 2 to 1 ratio in favour of North Germans is established for the first time. This predominance of North Germans continues until 1937 when the large influx of Austrian and Sudeten Germans offset the established north-south ratio. It has also been shown that after 1930 the factor that influences the difference in the joining rate of the officers lies in the north-south location of their birthplaces rather than the size of the population centres in which they were born.

At this point of the study the north-south distribution of the Führerkorps will be looked at in terms of the particular branch in which

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<sup>1</sup>The Chi-Square tabulations are shown, Appendix A, Table 3, p. 256.



the officer chose to serve. Table 3.4 shows the north-south distribution in relation to the branches of the SS. It is readily seen that the

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Table 3.4

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north-south ratio of the total corps sample is most closely reflected by the Allgemeine SS and the Verfügungstruppe, while the Totenkopf and Sicherheitsdienst show patterns which differ from that of the total corps sample. The TV pattern shows an almost 50-50 distribution between North and South Germany. Compared to the distribution patterns of the other Branches, the TV had the highest percentage of southerners in its ranks and the lowest percentage of northerners. The SD distribution pattern, on the other hand, with 64.9% from North Germany and only 25.2% from South Germany reflected the highest percentage of officers born north of the Main and the lowest percentage of officers born south of the river.

Table 3.4 also showed that the percentage of officers whose birthplaces fell into the Special Region category varied from branch to branch. Whereas 10.1% of the total corps sample were either Austrians, Sudeten Germans, or Germans born in other countries, 5.6% of the Totenkopf Führerkorps fell into this category, as compared to 9.9% of the SD officers and 12.8% of the Verfügungstruppe officers. But some caution should be exercised in the interpretation of this distribution. The fact that only 5.6% of the TV officers fell into the Special Region category as compared to 12.8% of the VT officers does not necessarily mean that fewer applicants from these regions enrolled in the Totenkopf-verbände. Rather the difference is due to the different promotion policies in those branches. Table 3.2 has clearly shown that the

Table 3.4  
Distribution over the Four SS Branches  
of the Geographic Regions from which the Führer Came

REGION		BRANCHES			
	Total Corps	A/SS	TV	SD	VT
NORTH	60.2	59.4	49.4	64.9	58.8
SOUTH	29.7	29.9	45.0	25.2	28.4
SPECIAL REGIONS	10.1	10.7	5.6	9.9	12.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

majority of applicants from these regions joined the SS between 1937 and 1939. This meant that in order to be included in this study the Special Region candidates had less than two years to qualify for commissioned rank. Aside from a certain number of prominent men who received their SS commissions on enrolment, there is no doubt that the Verfügungstruppe applicants who took the Junkerschulen route to be commissioned could reach the rank of Untersturmführer much quicker than their colleagues who elected to become guards in the KL (concentration camp). In my opinion, the various avenues of promotion available to Totenkopf and Verfügungstruppe applicants account for the different percentages in the Special Region category rather than that fewer Austrians and Sudeten Germans volunteered for KL guard duty.

A Chi-Square test of independence between the branches of the SS (omitting the Allgemeine SS) and the areas from which they came proved to be significant beyond the .001 level. Most of the variability was provided by the Totenkopfverbände (TV). That is, fewer officers from the North and Special Regions served in this branch than would be expected on statistical grounds, while there were more officers from the South in this branch than would be expected. The larger percentage of officers from the Special Regions in the Verfügungstruppe (VT) also contributed to the statistically significant relationships between branch and area which was found to exist.<sup>1</sup>

The preceding analyses have shown that officers born in northern Germany outnumbered those born in the southern part by a ratio of 2 to 1. Furthermore they have shown that the north-south distribution varied

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<sup>1</sup>The Chi-Square tabulations are shown, Appendix A, Table 4, p. 257.



from branch to branch. It remains to be seen whether there was a relationship between the size and/or location of the population centres in which the officers were born and the branch in which they chose to serve. Table 3.5 shows this distribution of the sampled SS Führer and

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Table 3.5

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the branch in which they served. It is interesting to note that the TV had the highest percentage of rural-born officers (46.7%), and the lowest percentage of Grossstadt-born (21.0%) officers of any branch. The SD distribution differed from that of the other branches insofar as it showed an equal percentage of officers (35%) who were born in the urban and rural parts of Germany. If one continues the comparison, however, it can be seen that the SD attracted the highest percentage of urban-born officers and the lowest percentage of rural-born officers. As in the north-south regional distribution, the A/SS and VT distributions resemble the total corps pattern most closely.

The absence of any discussion of the German Kleinstädte (those population centres between 10 and 100 thousand inhabitants) is due to the lack of notable variation from branch to branch. It appears that a relatively constant percentage of applicants born in the Kleinstadt milieu was attracted to the SS regardless of the branch. A closer inspection of Table 3.5 reveals that the German towns and rural areas contributed a higher percentage (73.4%) of the Führer to the Totenkopf-verbände than to the other branches. As can be seen only 55% of the sampled SD officers, 58.6% of the sampled VT officers, and 60.7% of the A/SS officers came from population centres of less than 100,000 inhabitants.

Table 3.5  
Distribution over the Four SS Branches  
of the Population Centres from which the Führer Came

POPULATION CENTRES		BRANCHES			
		A/SS	TV	SD	VT
	Total Corps				
City	30.3	28.6	21.0	35.1	28.6
Town	22.5	22.4	26.7	20.0	20.6
Rural	37.1	38.3	46.7	35.0	38.0
Special Regions	10.1	10.7	5.6	9.9	12.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

At this point a closer look will be taken at the population centres in North and South Germany in relation to the contributions they made to the various branches of the Führerkorps, Table 3.6 shows the

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Table 3.6

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relationship between the size and location of the officers' birthplaces and the branches in which they served. When looking at the TV figures, it should be recalled that Table 3.4 showed that the TV had the highest percentage of southern-born officers and the lowest percentage of northern-born officers in its Führerkorps. Similarly, Table 3.5 shows that 46.7% of the KL systems Führerkorps came from rural areas. Table 3.6 further substantiates these findings by showing that, compared to the total corps sample as well as to the other branches, the rural areas of Germany supplied the highest percentage of the men who served in the Totenkopfverbände. Table 3.5 also shows that the largest variation in the otherwise rather stable town category occurred in the TV distribution pattern, with 26.7% of the KL officers coming from a Kleinstadt milieu. Table 3.6 reveals that in addition to the high southern rural contribution to the TV, a large number of the Totenkopf officers came from South German towns. On the other hand, the TV distribution shows that the death's head units compared to the other branches attracted a low percentage of northern urban-born officers.

It will be recalled that, the SD regional distribution as outlined in Table 3.4 revealed that almost two thirds of the sampled security service officers were born in the northern part of Germany. In contrast only 25% of the SD officers in this study were born in the southern part of the country. Table 3.5 showed an almost equal



Table 3.6

Distribution over the Four SS Branches of the Population Centres  
in the North and the South from which the Führer Came

REGION	POPULATION CENTRES	TOTAL CORPS	BRANCHES			
			A/SS	TV	SD	VT
NORTH	City	21.2	20.5	12.2	26.6	16.8
	Town	14.2	13.9	13.1	13.9	14.6
	Rural	24.8	25.0	24.1	24.4	27.4
TOTAL NORTH		60.2	59.4	49.4	64.9	58.8
SOUTH	City	9.1	8.1	8.9	8.6	11.7
	Town	8.3	8.5	13.6	6.0	6.0
	Rural	12.3	13.3	22.5	10.6	10.7
TOTAL SOUTH		29.7	29.9	45.0	25.2	28.4
SPECIAL REGIONS		10.1	10.7	5.6	9.9	12.8
TOTAL		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

distribution between urban centres and rural areas for the SD. Table 3.6 further reveals that compared to the total corps sample the SD Führerkorps consisted of a higher percentage of northern urban officers, while the southern population centres registered a slight under-representation.

How do these findings fit with the statements made by Steiner, Neusüss-Hunkel and Höhne concerning the regional and geographic origins of members of the SS? Although initially it was this writer's intention to compare the quantitative results of this study with more general statements on the backgrounds of the SS Führer in the literature. The difficulty of such a task, however, became apparent in the attempt. Steiner's assertion that 90% of the Verfügungstruppe commanders were raised in rural areas, is clearly not supported by these data. On the other hand, Höhne's statement that the recruits of the Totenkopfverbände came mostly from Germany's rural areas is born out by the quantitative data. Other statements, however, are not dealt with so easily. The major difficulty is fitting the results of the published literature into the framework of this study. Neither Steiner nor Neusüss-Hunkel nor Höhne give any indication as to the time period to which they are referring. If one attaches any credence to Robert Koehl's theory that the social composition of the SS was always in a state of flux, then specific time references are of considerable importance. Similarly Neusüss-Hunkel's statement that a large number of "... Bauernburschen ... aber auch Städter" were attracted to the Totenkopfverbände is difficult to fit into the more clearly defined framework of a quantitative study.

## Chapter IV

### THE AGE OF THE SS FÜHRER UPON JOINING THE CORPS

The emphasis on youth in the propaganda and the political orientation of National Socialism is a well known fact. The National Socialist conquest of power has been interpreted as an upsurge and victory of youth.<sup>1</sup> National Socialist leaders themselves claimed that the Nazi Party, more than any other party, represented "a mission of the younger generation in contrast to the rotten and crumbling world of yesterday."<sup>2</sup> There is no denying that Hitler hoped to destroy with the help of German youth the last remnants of liberalism, conservatism, parliamentarianism, and democratic order in the country. Thus according to the Nazi doctrine, youth had right, hope, and the future on its side, age only death. With slogans like "Make way, You old ones" Gregor Strasser already stressed the importance of youth during the early days of the Kampfzeit.<sup>3</sup> Baldur von Schirach, the Reich Youth Leader, proclaimed on several occasions that "the NSDAP is a party of youth."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fest, The Face of the Third Reich, p. 332. The Daily Mail of 10 July 1933 reported that youth seemed to have taken command in Germany.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Lerner in his analysis of the age of the Nazi leadership pointed out that the "... youthfulness of the Propagandists suggests that they must have commenced their Nazi activities at an early age." Daniel Lerner, I. de Sola Pool and G. Schueller, The Nazi Elite, with an introduction by Franz Neumann, (Stanford 1951), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Fest, The Face of the Third Reich, p. 332.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. On the importance of youth in the Nazi movement see also, Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair; A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology (Cambridge 1961); also H. W. Koch, The Hitler Youth; Origins and Development (London 1975).



The propaganda directed at the youth of Germany was not without the expected results. Inge Scholl, the sister of Hans and Sophie Scholl who were executed in 1943 for distributing anti-Hitler literature on the campus of the University of Munich, wrote after the war, that on the day Hitler assumed power;

... for the first time politics entered our lives ....  
We had heard a great deal of talk about Fatherland,  
comradeship, community of the Volk, and love of homeland.  
All this inspired us ....<sup>1</sup>

In the struggle for power, youth was frequently pitted against the older generation, and a "... war of the young against the old was as great a possibility as the mobilization of the déclassé against the established."<sup>2</sup> In the words of Paul Oestreich, "The Hitler cult subverted the family ..." while parents, "... looked on shuddering and lamenting only in silence."<sup>3</sup>

In the Schutzstaffeln too, the emphasis on youth was present. As early as 1925 Julius Schreck, the first leader of the newly created Stabswache, clearly stated in his Circular No. 1, that only men between 23-35 need apply for service in the new élite formation.<sup>4</sup> Neuss-Hunkel in her study on the SS assigned considerable importance to the youthful trend in Hitler's new élite force, when she wrote:

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<sup>1</sup>From the book Die weisse Rose by Inge Scholl, (Frankfurt 1961), in George Mosse, Nazi Culture; Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich (New York 1966), p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>David Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution, Class and Status in Nazi Germany, 1933-1939 (New York 1967), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>From the book by Paul Oestreich, Aus dem Leben eines politischen Pädagogen: Selbstbiographie (Berlin, Leipzig 1947), in Mosse, Nazi Culture, p. 275. Inge Scholl recounts the struggle between her brother and their father who "... did not happily and proudly say 'yes' to it all." Hans Scholl's illusions were shattered one by one through experiences in the Hitler Youth. Ibid., p. 272 ff.

<sup>4</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 25.

Die Tatsache, dass hier jüngeren Jahrgängen, die weder Teilnehmer des ersten Weltkrieges, noch selber am 'Kampf um die Macht' beteiligt waren, teilweise sehr rasche Karrieremöglichkeiten geboten wurden, ist eines der<sup>1</sup> wesentlichsten Strukturmerkmale des SS Führerkorps.

It was, therefore, not by chance that out of the ranks of the younger generation such well-known Waffen SS commanders as Kurt Meyer<sup>2</sup> and Fritz Klingenberg<sup>3</sup> emerged.

In order to facilitate the study of the age distribution in the sampled Führerkorps, the age range from under 20 to above 60 has been divided into six categories. Table 4.1 shows the age distribution of the

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Table 4.1

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total corps sample, the Allgemeine SS, the Totenkopfverbände, the Sicherheitsdienst, and the Verfügungstruppe. The age shown is the age of the applicant on the day of his enrolment in the Schutzstaffel. The age distribution of the total corps sample shows that the largest single age group, with 43.5% is that of the 20-29 year olds. When one adds to this the 12.5% of the applicants that joined the SS prior to their 20th birthday, it emerges that 56% of the sampled Führerkorps became SS members before reaching the age of 30. The next largest age group with 28.6% is that of the 30-39 year olds. Again if one adds to this percentage the 12.2% of the men who joined the SS in their forties, it is seen that 40.8% of the sampled officers were between 30 and 49 at the time that they

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<sup>1</sup>Neuß-Hunkel, Die SS, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer, SS #17,559, born 23.12.1912, in Jerxheim. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Fritz Klingenberg, SS #51,487, born 17.12.1912, in Rövershagen, Mecklenburg. BDC.

Table 4.1

Age Distribution for Total Corps Sample, A/SS, TV, SD, and VT

Age Ranges	Total Corps	A/SS	TV	SD	VT
under 20	12.5%	5.3%	12.8%	8.3%	66.5%
20-29	43.5	41.0	37.2	51.9	22.0
Subtotal	56.0	46.3	50.0	60.2	88.5
30-39	28.6	33.4	37.2	25.5	6.4
40-49	12.2	16.0	11.7	11.9	1.5
Subtotal	40.8	49.4	48.9	37.4	7.9
50-59	2.8	3.7	1.1	2.3	3.2
over 59	.4	.6	---	.1	.4
Subtotal	3.2	4.3	1.1	2.4	3.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0



donned the black uniform. The Table also shows that only 3.2% of the Führer joined after the age of 50.

Compared to the total corps sample, the age distribution of the Allgemeine SS, shows that fewer men under the age of 20 joined the part-time branch of the SS. For that matter, compared to the other branches, the Allgemeine SS also shows the lowest percentage of under 30 joiners. On the other hand, the distribution shows the highest percentage of applicants who joined between the ages of 30 to 49. The higher percentage of older recruits in the Allgemeine SS extends to the 50 and above categories, with 4.3% of the sample.

The TV age distribution shows, that while the percentage of under 20 joiners resembles the total corps representation most closely, the age groups 20-29 and 30-39 are most heavily and evenly represented. This indicates that the KL guard units, compared to the total corps sample, attracted fewer of the 20-29 year old applicants and more of the 30-39 year olds.

The SD relied most heavily on the 20-29 year olds to fill its ranks. Compared to the total corps sample which showed that 43.5% of the applicants joined while in their twenties, the SD distribution shows that 51.9% of the men that went into the security branch were in their twenties when they came into the SS.

The Table clearly shows that the VT attracted the highest percentage of the very young candidates. With 66.5% of the future Waffen SS commanders joining the SS prior to reaching their 20th birthday, and with a further 22% joining the SS while they were in their twenties, one can say without reservation that the Verfügungstruppe was a young man's

branch. On the other hand the Verfügungstruppe distribution shows a slight increase in the percentage of officers in the 50-59 age group. This increase undoubtedly reflected the influx of the older professional military element which provided the fledgling Verfügungstruppe with the much needed military expertise.<sup>1</sup>

Table 4.1 has shows that the various branches attracted men of different age groups. Whereas the majority of the sampled officers joined the SS between the ages of 20 to 39, the distribution of the Allgemeine SS shows that that branch contained a higher percentage of the older element. While 15.4% of the sampled officers were over 40 when they joined, 20.3% of the Allgemeine SS Führerkorps joined after reaching their fortieth birthday. The distribution of the TV shows that the age groups 20-29 and 30-39 were equally represented. The SD, on the other hand, was joined by over 50% of its officers while they were in their twenties. The VT had the highest percentage of officers who joined prior to reaching their twentieth birthdays.

A Chi-Square test of independence between the branches of the SS and the age at which the men joined the various branches was significant beyond the .001 level. This statistically substantiates the fact that different age groups tended to predominate in different branches of the SS.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>An example of a senior aged military expert who volunteered for service in the Verfügungstruppe was the former Lieutenant-General Paul Hausser, later SS Oberstgruppenführer. He joined the SS at the age of 54. Personnel File: SS Oberstgruppenführer Paul Hausser, SS #239,795, born 7.10.1880, in Brandenburg a.d. Havel. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>For the detailed Chi-Square tabulations see Table 5, Appendix I, p. 258.

Table 4.2 compares the age distribution of the German population

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Table 4.2

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in 1933 with that of the NSDAP,<sup>1</sup> the Nürnberg SA<sup>2</sup> and the SS. It shows that whereas 31.1% of the German population was under the age of 30 in the year Hitler assumed power, 42.7% of the membership of the Nazi party fell into that age group, as did 50% of the Nürnberg SA and 58.6% of the sampled Führerkorps of the SS. This shows that at the time of the Machtergreifung the SS had been able to attract by a considerable margin the younger element in German society. In the 30 to 39 age group the overrepresentation of the SS Führerkorps begins to diminish, and in the 40 to 49 age category the SS shows the smallest percentage when compared to the German population, the Nazi party and the Nürnberg SA. The underrepresentation becomes more marked in the 50 and above age categories.

The age distribution as shown in Table 4.1 raises two questions. The first is, who was it in German society that donned the black uniform of the new élite at an age when most men contemplate reitirement? In other words, who were the men that fell into the senior age category that made up the 4.3% of the sampled A/SS Führerkorps? The other question is, who in Germany went into the SS, especially the Verfügungstruppe at a very young age, and what happened to them after they committed themselves to serve in the SS? An attempt shall be made to answer these questions

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<sup>1</sup>The age distribution of the German population and the NSDAP are taken from Peter Merkl, Political Violence under the Swastika; 581 Early Nazis (Princeton 1975), pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup>The age distribution of the Nürnberg SA is from Eric Reiche, "Social Structure of the Nürnberg SA, 1922-1934." The paper presented at the Duquesne History Forum, 21 October 1977 is part of a forthcoming monograph.



Table 4.2 Age Distribution of German Population, the NSDAP, the Nurnberg SA, and the SS Officers in 1933

	German Population in 1933	NSDAP in 1933	Nurnberg SA in 1933	SS Führer in 1933
under 20 20-29	31.1%	42.7%	11.9% 38.1	11.3% 47.4
Subtotal	31.1	42.7	50.0	58.7
30-39	22.0	27.2	25.2	27.7
40-49	17.1	17.2	18.6	12.1
Subtotal	39.1	44.4	43.8	39.8
50-59	14.5	9.3	3.6	1.4
60 and over	15.3	3.6	2.6	.1
Subtotal	29.8	12.9	6.2	1.5

by the use of case histories.

The perusal of the personnel files has shown that the older SS joiners provide some of the more interesting personal histories, and represent a highly diverse group of men. It was in the summer of 1936 that Dr. Heinrich von Maur,<sup>1</sup> General der Artillerie a.D., joined the Third Reich's corps d'élite. This is an interesting case for two reasons. First, he was already a respected member of a much older German élite group, namely the officer corps of the German army. Second, he was only days from turning 73 years of age when he joined, a fact which gave him the dubious honour of being "... der älteste SS Mann überhaupt."<sup>2</sup>

While Maur's joining the SS was automatic because of his membership in the Council of the Kyffhäuserbund which was amalgamated with the SS in 1936, his enthusiasm for the Third Reich is more difficult to understand. Born into a traditional officer's family, Maur had a successful military career. An officer since 1881, he won the Pour le mérite in the First World War.<sup>3</sup> Like so many of his peers, he found the republican form of government in Germany after the war repugnant, and, therefore, sought refuge in the highly conservative veteran's organization, the Kyffhäuserbund. He remained a staunch conservative, and for that matter, did not join the Nazi Party until a year after he had become an SS officer.<sup>4</sup> Soon thereafter, his wife also joined the Party.<sup>5</sup> If Maur

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obergruppenführer Dr. Heinrich von Maur, SS #276,907, born 19.7.1863, in Ulm. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>In the recommendation for promotion to Obergruppenführer dated 20 June 1944. At the time Maur was 80 years of age. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>He was awarded the Pour le mérite on 22 May 1917. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>He joined the NSDAP in May 1937 and was given Party #5,890,310. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>His wife, Elsa Maur, was 63 years old when she joined the NSDAP with Party #6,101,897. Ibid.

was not convinced of the justice of the Nazi cause, he was certainly an open supporter of it. At the age of 80, in July 1943, he was still able to write to "Mein lieber und verehrter Kamerad und Reichsführer SS" a letter in which he compared Hitler to Jenghiz Khan: "Was Tschingis Khan für den Osten war und für ihn getan hat, erstrebt unser Führer, wenn auch mit allerdings anderen, humaneren Mitteln für Europa."<sup>1</sup> Whether opportunist or true believer, Maur showed great pride in his SS commission. He signed all his correspondence first with his SS title, then with his erstwhile army rank a.D.

The diverse backgrounds of the older SS applicants is further illustrated by the case history of Dr. h.c., Dr. Albrecht Schmidt.<sup>2</sup> Unlike Maur, Schmidt was not a former regular army officer. For that matter, his entire military career consisted of serving for one year in a Hessian regiment, and for three years during World War I in the German navy. Yet Schmidt was also part of the established élite during the Wilhelmine era. He was born into a well-situated professional Westphalian family at the time of the Bismarckian constitutional crisis and in the year that Prussia and Austria decided to wage war on Denmark over the Schleswig-Holstein issue. At the age of 23, he obtained his doctorate in chemistry. Until 1932 he worked either in a private research institute or in the blossoming German chemical industry. The contribution which brought him fame and numerous awards,<sup>3</sup> including the Dr. Ing. h.c., was the invention of artificial fog.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of Maur to Himmler, dated 22 July 1943. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Dr. h.c. Dr. Albrecht Schmidt, SS #327,474, born 3.7.1864, in Grevensbrück, Westfalen. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>He was named honorary citizen of Berlin and Frankfurt, and he was made an honorary professor at the University of Berlin. He also received several civilian and military decorations. Ibid.



With all the honours bestowed on him it is hard to understand why Schmidt, at the age of 74, decided to join the SS in the spring of 1939.<sup>1</sup> At the time of his enrolment he was the second oldest SS member on record. He was an active supporter of the Third Reich and his enthusiasm for the regime, long after the fortunes of war had turned against Hitler, remained high. He was an advisor to the Ministry of Education on the appointments of chemistry professors, and he was chemical advisor to the German Four-Year Plan. As late as July 1944, as an octogenarian, he promised his Reichsführer "... auch für die mir noch vergönnte Zeit weiter zu wirken wie im letzten Dezennium."<sup>2</sup>

One of the most unusual life histories among the 61,000 personnel files at the Berlin Document Centre, is that of Karl Hermann Drechsel,<sup>3</sup> a man who began a new career in the SS when most men think of retiring. While Drechsel's life story is the most unusual of the three presented here, his reasons for joining the corps d'élite of Hitler's Germany are most clearly stated in his extensive Lebenslauf. Drechsel was born in the small Lower Franconian town of Sommerhausen in the year prior to the founding of the Second Empire.

The son of a Lutheran pastor, he was raised in a strict and devoutly religious home environment. Because the mother came from a prominent military family (her father was a Generaloberarzt) the young Drechsel was entered at an early age in a Kadettenanstalt. At the age of 17, however, Drechsel decided that he did not want a full-time military

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<sup>1</sup>He joined the NSDAP in April 1933 with party #1,830,078. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of Schmidt to Himmler dated 11 July 1944. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Karl Drechsel, SS #276,749, born 12.11.1870, in Sommerhausen, Unterfranken. BDC.

career, and, therefore, left the cadet school. But he not only left the Kadettenanstalt, he also decided to leave Germany in order to start a new life in the United States. Prior to settling in the U.S., however, he spent two years as a cabin boy on an American freighter. By the time he was in his early twenties, he had become an American citizen and begun his studies at Franklin and Marshal College in Pennsylvania. He obtained his B.A. and M.A. in political science and philosophy. After that he proceeded to study law at the University of Georgia and passed bar exams in three states. He also married an American girl. She came from the established and well-known Tyler family in Ohio. From 1894-1901 he even served as an officer in the U.S. National Guard.

The outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1914 changed Drechsel's life. The event made him aware that he was born a German and, as he stated in his Lebenslauf, the war caused "... Abbruch aller persönlichen, wirtschaftlichen und politischen Beziehungen in und zu Amerika."<sup>1</sup> Thus after 28 years in the United States, Drechsel surrendered his American citizenship and returned to Germany in 1915. Because of his detailed knowledge of English and the American continent he served as an intelligence officer in the German army until 1918. It was after the war that the disillusionment set in. For a while Drechsel worked as a labourer in a "... Steinbruch im Tegernseer Tal." However long periods of unemployment followed. It was at this point, according to Drechsel, that he began to listen to the propaganda of National Socialism:

Die Bitterkeit über die Erfahrungen mit der ihm  
unverständlichen Indifferenz des Nachkriegsdeutschlands  
gegen ihn angesichts seiner ihm aufgetragenen Kriegstätigkeit  
und des Verlustes seines gesamten amerik. Vermögens, verliess

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<sup>1</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Karl Drechsel, undated. Ibid.



ihn automatisch mit dem Eintritt in die nationalsozialistische Partei und in die SA: ... obwohl seine wirtschaftliche Lage dadurch nicht geringstens verbessert wurde.<sup>1</sup>

Here is a prime example of a pauperized and resentful intellectual, who found in the fold of the Nazi Party his identity as well as a new purpose. His wife, who also severed all her U.S. connections in 1915, also joined the NSDAP before 1933. As a 66 year old, Drechsel eventually found employment as a full-time SS officer giving lectures in geo-politics at the Junkerschule Tölz.

The case histories quoted above have shown how some members of the older generation came to wear the black uniform. The retired general joined when the central council and local leaders of the Kyffhäuserbund joined the SS as a body.<sup>2</sup> Schmidt most likely accepted the SS commission as another honour bestowed upon him as the inventor of artificial fog. While Maur's and Schmidt's reasons for joining are understandable, their obvious enthusiasm for the Third Reich is harder to understand. Drechsel's reasons were clearly spelled out by him. Here was a man, 66 years of age, who had once taught political science on the college level, who had held commissions in both the American and German Armies, and who finally lost his entire fortune. He felt resentful and unappreciated, and National Socialism with its panaceas appeared to be the political movement that offered the embittered returnee a way out. Membership in the SS not only helped him to regain the respect and status of a former commissioned officer, but it offered him an opportunity

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Höhne described the disturbing effect which the influx of the old soldiers had on the alte Kämpfer in the SS. There was open resentment toward the acceptance of such well-known reactionary officers like General Reinhard. Höhne, The Order, p. 138.



to perform once more a task which challenged his intellect and restored his self-esteem.

While the incorporation of the older and more established element, referred to by Himmler as the "geräuschlose Revolution," was an attempt to make the new élite respectable, it was the young element that was responsible for the reputation which the SS gained over the years as a fighting force and the enforcer of the Nazi doctrines throughout Europe. Described by Reitlinger as "starry-eyed, youthful, and fanatical,"<sup>1</sup> and by Stein as "harsh, ruthless, and often arrogant,"<sup>2</sup> many of these men commanded divisions during the war while still in their thirties, and were often responsible for the fanatical resistance and the terror during the last months of the war.<sup>3</sup> Thus SS Brigadeführer Kurt Meyer became a divisional commander at the age of 33, when he was chosen to succeed the highly decorated 36-year-old Fritz Witt<sup>4</sup> as commanding officer of the "Hitlerjugend" Division. SS Oberführer Hugo Kraas,<sup>5</sup> was 32 years old when he took over the division after Kurt Meyer was reported missing in action in late 1944.<sup>6</sup> Kraas had earlier made the headlines when, in 1940, he was the first officer of his regiment to be awarded the Iron Cross First Class during the French campaign.<sup>7</sup> The highly

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<sup>1</sup>Reitlinger, The SS, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Stein, Waffen SS, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>SS Brigadeführer Fritz Witt was chosen in 1943, at the age of 35 to become the first commanding officer of the Hitlerjugend Division. Witt, one of the original 120 man Stabswache established in 1933, died during the Allied invasion in June 1944. Reitlinger, The SS, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberführer Hugo Kraas, SS #289,633, born 25.1.1911, in Witten/Ruhr. BDC.

<sup>6</sup>Weingartner, Hitler's Guard, p. 124.

<sup>7</sup>Stein, Waffen SS, p. 63; see also, Chapter V , p.

decorated SS Standartenführer Fritz Klingenberg<sup>1</sup> had just turned 32 when he was ordered to take command of the SS Panzergrenadier Division "Goetz von Berlichingen" in January 1945.<sup>2</sup>

Of these three youthful SS commanders Kurt Meyer was the only one to come from a working class background. His father was a factory worker,<sup>3</sup> and Meyer himself became a "kaufmännischer Lehrling" after completing elementary school. After trades training he worked for a short time as a miner, then became a policeman. Meyer was an early adherent to National Socialism. By 1925, at the age of 13, he had joined the Hitler Youth, and by late 1930 he had become a member of the NSDAP. In May 1931, when he was 18, he enrolled in the SS.<sup>4</sup> In 1934 Meyer transferred from the Allgemeine SS to the "Leibstandarte," and although he was not a graduate of a Junkerschule he was a Hauptsturmführer at the outbreak of hostilities in 1939. It was through his rather unorthodox leadership techniques<sup>5</sup> and his ruthlessness that he won rapid promotions<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Fritz Klingenberg, SS #51,487, born 17.12.1912, in Rövershagen/Mecklenburg. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Fritz Klingenberg. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Reitlinger claims that Meyer's father was a miner, but Meyer in his handwritten "Lebenslauf" stated that his father was a Fabrikarbeiter. Reitlinger, The SS, p. 86; see also, Personnel File: Kurt Meyer.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>An example of Meyer's rather unorthodox combat leadership is provided in his book Grenadiere. During the Greek campaign Meyer's unit became bogged down. Raked by heavy machinegun fire, pinned behind rocks, not a man moved. Thereupon, Meyer took a handgrenade, pulled its pin, threw it behind the last man. Meyer stated, "Never again did I witness such a concerted leap forward as at that second .... The spell was broken, the handgrenade had cured our lameness." Kurt Meyer (Pantermeyer), Grenadiere (München 1957), p. 64.

<sup>6</sup>Meyer was promoted Sturmabführer in September 1940; Obersturmbannführer in November 1942; Standartenführer in June 1943; Oberführer in August 1944; Brigadeführer in November 1944, at the age of 31. "Dienstlaufbahn." Personnel File: Kurt Meyer.



and was awarded the oakleaf with the swords as the 91st soldier in the German armed forces.<sup>1</sup>

Hugo Kraas was the son of an elementary school teacher. He attended the Gymnasium and obtained his Abitur shortly after Hitler came to power in 1933. After spending some time in the Labour Service, he became a reserve officer candidate in the German army. But he was more attracted to the newly-founded Verfügungstruppe, with its unconventional attitude and aggressive spirit. Kraas, therefore, left the reserve officer training course, and joined the SS Regiment "Germania" in 1936.<sup>2</sup> He was 25 years old at the time. After spending a year in the ranks, he was chosen to attend the 2nd course at the Junkerschule Braunschweig from which he was commissioned Untersturmführer in 1938. Three years later he commanded a battalion, and shortly thereafter was promoted Sturmbannführer.<sup>3</sup> By the time Kraas took over the "Hitlerjugend" Division he had won the swords to the oakleaf and been promoted Oberführer.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. After the war Kurt Meyer was the first German to be tried for war crimes by the Allies. Accused of having approved of the shooting of Canadian prisoners-of-war, Meyer was sentenced to death by a Canadian military court in December 1945. But, as was the case with so many other sentences passed on Waffen SS officers, Meyer's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He was released from prison in September 1954. Bruce MacDonald, The Trial of Kurt Meyer (Toronto 1954), p. 202; see also, Stein, Waffen SS, pp. 277-78. Upon his return to Germany in 1954, Meyer was celebrated as a hero, and became an active member in HIAG (Hilfsgemeinschaft auf Gegenseitigkeit), a rather innocent sounding title for the major post-war SS veterans organization. Tauber, Beyond Eagle and Swastika, vol. I, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Hugo Kraas, undated. Personnel File: Kraas.

<sup>3</sup>Das Schwarze Korps, 23 December 1943.

<sup>4</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hugo Kraas. Personnel File: Hugo Kraas.



Fritz Klingenberg was another youthful and highly capable field commander of the Waffen SS. Like Kraas, Klingenberg could have become an officer in the German army, but he chose the Verfügungstruppe instead. Klingenberg's youth was spent in financially secure surroundings. His father owned a dairy in northern Germany. After he obtained his Abitur in 1931, he proceeded to study chemistry and physics at the University of Rostock. "Aus persönlichem Interesse" he audited a course in Rassenhygiene. After four semesters he dropped out of university, ostensibly to help in the family business.<sup>1</sup> Klingenberg's interest in National Socialism, like Kurt Meyer's, began at an early age. He joined the NSDAP in 1931, when, as a "Prüfungszeugnis" he was barely 18 years old.<sup>2</sup> It was after the Verfügungstruppe was established in 1933, that Klingenberg transferred to full-time SS service. In 1934 he was chosen to attend the first course at the Junkerschule Tölz, from which he graduated 19th out of a class of 83.<sup>3</sup> His promotions in the expanding Verfügungstruppe were rapid, and despite his low rating in service writing he showed considerable talent in staff work. General Hausser, the founder of the Junkerschulen and later senior commander in the Waffen SS, used Klingenberg as a staff officer in his headquarters.<sup>4</sup> By the outbreak of the Second World War

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<sup>1</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Fritz Klingenberg, dated 17 May 1936. Personnel File: Fritz Klingenberg.

<sup>2</sup>Master file card. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The "Abschlusszeugnis" from the Junkerschule Tölz shows that Klingenberg obtained 7 out of a possible 9 marks in "Weltanschaulicher Unterricht," 6 out of 9 in "Exerzierdienst," "Reiten," and "Leibesübungen." His lowest mark, 4 out of 9, was in "Schreibwesen." "Zeugnis der SS "Führerschule Tölz." Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Hausser assessed Klingenberg in 1942 as "... äußerlich und innerlich der beste Typ des SS Führers." He concluded the report with the laudatory comment "Die Superlative dieser Beurteilung sind berechtigt." Hausser report on Klingenberg, dated 14 October 1942. Ibid.

Klingenberg was a Hauptsturmführer. He first made headlines in 1941, when with 10 men of the division "Das Reich" he brought about the surrender of Belgrade. For this action he was awarded the Knights Cross in 1941.<sup>1</sup> Three days after his 32nd birthday Klingenberg was promoted Standartenführer, and shortly thereafter was named commander of the 17th SS Panzergrenadier-division "Goetz von Berlichingen."<sup>2</sup>

The above illustrations have shown that the SS was able to attract men of diverse ages and background, absorbing members of the old elite as well as the young. The question to be answered at this point is, was there a relationship between the age of the applicant and period in which he joined the SS? In other words, was there a tendency for younger men to join during certain periods of the 14 year time span under investigation and for older men to join at others? Table 4.3 shows the

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Table 4.3

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age composition of each of the six time periods used in this study. This Table shows that the SS during Phase I was made up to a large extent of young men. Almost 75% of those who joined before December 1927, that is the group of men with SS numbers under 1000, were under

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<sup>1</sup>Bericht des deutschen Militärattaches, "So fiel Belgrad," Völkischer Beobachter (Berliner Ausgabe), 17 April 1941.

<sup>2</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Fritz Klingenberg. Personnel File: Klingenberg. But even as successful a commander as Klingenberg could run afoul with the stringent marriage laws of the SS. During the War Klingenberg became engaged to the daughter of SS Gruppenführer Walter Krüger. In the routine racial investigation it was discovered that the wife of SS Gruppenführer Krüger had a full Jewish ancestor as far back as 1711. Thereupon, Klingenberg was denied permission to marry his racially impure fiancée. Höhne, The Order, p. 143. According to his personnel file, Klingenberg never married.

Table 4.3 Distribution of Joining Ages of the Führer over the Six Time Periods

Age Ranges	Phase I 1/25-12/27 1/28-12/30		Phase II 1/31-1/33 2/33-6/34		Phase III 7/34-12/36 1/37-9/39	
under 20 20-29	11.5% 63.1	13.7% 52.7	11.9% 48.7	11.3% 47.3	13.9% 35.6	13.8% 26.2
Subtotal	74.6	66.4	60.6	58.6	49.5	40.0
30-39 40-49	18.0 6.6	24.9 7.3	30.2 7.7	27.7 12.1	29.5 14.5	30.3 21.5
Subtotal	24.6	32.2	37.9	39.8	44.0	51.8
50-59 over 59	.8 ---	1.3 ---	1.4 .1	1.4 .1	5.3 1.2	6.7 1.5
Subtotal	.8	1.3	1.5	1.5	6.5	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0



the age of 30 when they enrolled in the SS.<sup>1</sup> Two thirds of those who joined between January 1928 and December 1930 were under the age of 30. The Table also shows that the percentage of under 30 joiners declined steadily in each time period, until the 1937-1939 period, when only 40% of the applicants fell into that age range. If one takes a closer look at the two age categories which make up the under 30 sub-total, it can be seen that the decline in the under 30 group is due to a reduction in the percentage of joiners in the 20-29 age category. It is of interest to note that the percentage of under 20 applicants fluctuated very little during the 1925 to 1939 period. These results suggest that regardless of the political conditions in Germany a constant percentage of very young men was attracted to the SS.

The second sub-total, which includes the age groups 30-39 and 40-49, shows the reverse trend. Whereas only 24.6% of the very early joiners were between 30 and 49 51.8% of the men that joined between 1937 and 1939 were in that age bracket. A closer look at the more mature age range shows that the increase in the second sub-total is partly due to an increase in the 30-39-year-old joiners, but more importantly reflects the increase in applicants between the ages of 40-49. The percentage of SS applicants in the 40-49 age group increased from 6.6% for the 1925-1927 joiners to 21.5% for the group that came into the SS between 1937-1939. While the older age groups, those over 50 years of age, comprise only 3.3% of the total corps sample, they register most notable increases in the years following the Röhm crisis. One might

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<sup>1</sup>Orlov in his study of the Nazi Party and the age of its membership discovered that 66% of the NSDAP membership in 1925 was under 30. Orlov, The History of the Nazi Party, vol. I, 1919-1933, p. 56.

assume that the older applicants waited until the Röhm issue was settled before committing themselves to the new regime's élite formation. The older segment of the total corps sample will be looked at in greater detail in later chapters.

A Chi-Square test of independence between Phases and Age Ranges was significant beyond the .001 level substantiating the fact that different age groups joined at different times during the 1925 to 1939 period.<sup>1</sup>

In summary it can be said that the men who rose to commissioned rank in the Third Reich's élite force joined when they were young. The age distribution of the total corps sample showed that a majority of the officers were under 30 when they joined the SS. The different branches of the SS, however, tended to attract men of different ages. Thus the Allgemeine SS, which consisted of men who wore the black uniform during week-ends or on official occasions, attracted more of the older element than did the other branches. It also had the lowest percentage of under 20 applicants. The Totenkopfverbände showed an even distribution between the 20-29 and the 30-39 age groups. The majority of the sampled SD officers were between 20-29 when they joined, while the Verfügungstruppe could claim to have attracted the largest percentage of the under 20 age group. The study of the age distribution showed that the earlier periods had a higher percentage of young applicants, whereas the older applicants came to the SS during the later periods. This suggested that the older segment in Germany held back until National Socialism was firmly established before committing itself to the new regime and its élite formation.

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<sup>1</sup>For the Chi-Square tabulations see Table 6, Appendix I, p. 259.

## Chapter V

### THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE SS OFFICERS

In 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the War, Gregor Ziemer, President of the American Colony School in Berlin, asked Baldur von Schirach, the Reich Youth Leader: "When does the Nazi Party become interested in the German child?" The instantaneous reply was, "Before it is conceived."<sup>1</sup> If one adds to this reply the many pronouncements of the various Nazi leaders on the necessity of constantly educating and re-educating the young in the National Socialist ideology, it becomes clear that National Socialism was concerned with the entire life span of the German individual; that is, from pre-natal care, to the Reich Mother Service which also taught German mothers how to make the proper National Socialist toys, to the Kindergärten where youngsters were taught the Nazi salute and absolute obedience. Thus the entire pre-school years were carefully coordinated to produce a willing pupil ready to absorb more indoctrination on a higher level.

The purpose of education in Nazi Germany was clearly spelled out by Bernard Rust, the Reich Minister for Education, in 1936 when he wrote:

The chief purpose of the school is to train human beings in the doctrine that the state is more important than the individual, that individuals must be willing and ready to sacrifice themselves for nation and Führer.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Engelmann, German Education, p. 77. The incident was first described in Gregor Ziemer's book entitled, Education For Death (Oxford 1941).

<sup>2</sup>Engelmann, German Education, p. 79. The excerpt appeared in the preamble to a new teacher's manual Erziehung und Unterricht in der Höheren Schule (Berlin 1936).



All the school reforms undertaken during 1936, 1937, and 1938 were based on Hitler's command that

the völkisch State ... has to direct its entire education primarily not at pumping in more knowledge but at the breeding of absolutely healthy bodies. Of secondary importance is the training of mental abilities.<sup>1</sup>

Thus from pre-Kindergarten days where children were taught to play with National Socialist toys, to university where students were taught to differentiate between German science and "Jewish physics,"<sup>2</sup> the youth of Germany during its formative years was exposed to a constant ideological indoctrination.

Books like Dobers and Higelke Rassenpolitische Unterrichtspraxis, widely used as a guide for teachers, stressed the necessity for the "proper education" along National Socialist lines.<sup>3</sup> New prophets in education emerged. Professor Kriek, a one-time elementary school teacher of liberal origin, who eventually inherited Rickert's chair at Heidelberg, advanced the idea of creating the Adolf Hitler Schools and Napola, schools which were essentially anti-liberal "völkisch" and "nationalrevolutionär" orientated.<sup>4</sup> Professor Bäumler, who had gained considerable reknown editing Bachhofen and Nietzsche,<sup>5</sup> took over the

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<sup>1</sup>Engelmann, German Education, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Max Weinreich, Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes against the Jewish People (New York 1946), p. 12. The statement was made by the 1919 Nobel Prize winner in physics, Johannes Stark, in the inaugural address at the Lenard Institute, at the University of Heidelberg, 13 December 1935.

<sup>3</sup>Engelmann, German Education, p. 81. The importance of the proper National Socialist education for the young generation was also stressed in Gerhard Giese's Staat und Erziehung. Grundzüge einer politischen Pädagogik und Schulpolitik (Hamburg 1933).

<sup>4</sup>Bracher, Sauer, Schulz, Nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung, p. 308.

<sup>5</sup>Weinreich, Hitler's Professors, p. 23.

political education of students at the University of Berlin in 1933.

Bäumler's idea was "... dass mit der Schule die politische Ausrichtung und die Gewöhnung an das Führerprinzip zu beginnen habe."<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising that the results of this indoctrination had the most devastating effects on the development of attitudes of the younger generation. The fanaticism with which boys fought, some barely in their teens, at war's end, is a sad but well-known fact.<sup>2</sup> The question, however, that should be asked at this point is not, how could young boys who had been subjected all of their lives to an incessant barrage of propaganda sacrifice themselves for a lost cause in 1945, but rather, how could men, some well educated, who were raised in the pre-1933 period, become ardent and unquestioning executors of National Socialist policies?

Dr. Elie A. Cohen, a Dutch psychiatrist who spent several years as a prisoner in Auschwitz, attempted after the war "... with a complete

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<sup>1</sup>Bracher, Sauer, Schulz, Nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung, p. 309. For more information on the purpose of education in Nazi Germany see, Richard Grunberger, A Social History of the Third Reich (London 1971), chapter 19 "Education," pp. 362-385.

<sup>2</sup>An example of this youthful fanaticism is provided in the combat record of the 12th SS Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend." Formed in 1943 with boys born in the year 1926, that is 17-year olds, the division soon acquired a reputation for brutality, fanaticism, and doggedness in combat. Within the first ten days of the invasion in 1944, the youthful soldiers of the division shot 64 unarmed British and Canadian prisoners of war. A SHAEF board of inquiry after the war established that "it was understood throughout the division that a policy of denying quarter or executing prisoners after interrogation was openly approved." Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 277. During the heavy fighting at the Falaise Gap the "Hitlerjugend" division lost 80% of its combat troops, and 80% of its armour. At the beginning of 1945 the fighting strength of the SS division amounted to 600 youths and no tanks. Meyer, Grenadiere, p. 312. On the fanatical fighting of the 12th SS Panzer Division see also, MacDonald, The Trial of Kurt Meyer, chapter III "The Murder Division," pp. 15-36; see also, Koch, The Hitler Youth, pp. 244-45. Chester Wilmont recorded "... the troops of the 12th SS ... fought with a tenacity and ferocity seldom equalled and never excelled during the whole campaign." Chester Wilmont, Struggle for Europe (London 1952), p. 377.



avoidance of emotional bias ..."<sup>1</sup> to give an explanation how the atrocities committed during the Third Reich were possible. In the foreword to the book, Dr. Carl Binger, a New York psychiatrist, recalled the days that he spent as an exchange student at Heidelberg. He lived with Germans who "... were sentimental, good people and who made a great to-do about Christmas ...." The father was described as a sentimental man "... whose children trembled at his frown and rushed to bring him his slippers and smoking jacket ...." The wife was a "... domestic slave." She hurried to fulfill her husband's wishes "... and took great pains not to anger him." The wife also held the threat of father's punishment over the children which produced "... obedient and polite youngsters." But everyone, according to Dr. Binger, lived in terror of someone else. The children feared the father and the figure of authority in school, the teacher. The mother took pains not to anger her husband, and the head of the household lived in fear of his employer. Dr. Binger concluded his foreword by stating, "Out of this competitive bullying came the Nazi Schrecklichkeit."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cohen, Human Behaviour in the Concentration Camp, Introduction.

<sup>2</sup>Exerpts quoted are from Dr. Binger's foreword to Cohen, Human Behaviour, pp. ix-xi. The authoritarian role of the father in the traditional German family, and its effect on the children is dealt with extensively in E. Erickson, Kindheit und Gesellschaft (Stuttgart 1961). Wrote Erickson, "Wenn der Vater nach Hause kommt, scheinen sich selbst die Wände zusammenzunehmen," p. 311. Dahrendorf quotes from Horkheimer's study Autorität und Familie "... der deutsche Vater sei gewissermassen Richter und Staatsanwalt in einer Person." Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie, p. 165. Treitschke wrote during the Wilhelmine era "Schon in der Familie finden wir das staatliche Prinzip der Unterordnung. Der Vater ist das Oberhaupt er übt das Recht." Heinrich v. Treitschke, Politik, 4th ed., (Leipzig 1918), p. 16. Talcott Parsons points to "... a pattern of masculine superiority and a tendency to assume authority and prerogatives on the part of husbands and fathers .... German men tend to be dominating and authoritarian, and, conversely, to expect submissiveness and dependency on the part of their wives. This is perhaps particularly true of the middle classes." Talcott Parsons, "Democracy and Social Structure in Pre-Nazi Germany," first published in 1942, Essays on Social Theory, rev. ed. (Glencoe, Ill. 1954), p. 113.



It is the contention of Dr. Cohen that the molding of the personality begins with the family. The punitive role of the father, as well as that of teacher produces "... normal fear ... in every growing individual." This fear is perpetuated in the authoritarian school system. Thus it cannot be denied that the average German experienced an authoritarian way of life even before the advent of National Socialism in Germany. Perhaps Dr. Cohen slightly overdramatized his case when he asked, "Was not the dictatorial system of the Nazi era a worthy extension of it [pre-Nazi life]." <sup>1</sup> But Dr. Cohen is of the opinion that even members of German society who grew up during the pre-1933 days were, in essence, products of a highly authoritarian environment. <sup>2</sup> That is, they were shaped in a system that stressed obedience to authority more

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<sup>1</sup> Cohen, Human Behaviour, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> The numerous school reforms undertaken during the Weimar Republic were to introduce a less authoritarian environment in the class-room. But, as Dr. Engelmann pointed out, most teachers who taught during the republican days were themselves products of the pre-1918 system, and that their practises and attitudes could not be changed in a decade. The concept of the teacher being the drill-master was deeply engrained in many teachers. Engelmann, German Education, chapter I, "Class Education in the German Empire," pp. 11-40; see also, chapter II, "Educational Reforms in the German Republic," pp. 41-76. Engelmann writes about the pre-1918 schools, "They were strict and efficient in method of teacher-lecture and student-recitation and gave the necessary drill in patriotism, loyalty and obedience," p. 11. In a study of the role of authoritarianism in German life Dr. Schaffner, a psychiatrist, studied the German Empire, the Weimar Republic, and the Third Reich. Using the Freudian frame of reference of obsessive-compulsive neurosis, Schaffner found that the German child tended to fear authority, developed obsessive traits of orderliness and rigidity. If the child was a boy he learned to release suppressed aggression on inferiors, and aquired characteristics of "manliness" which meant the suppression of impulses of tenderness, pity or regret. Bertram Schaffner, Father Land: A Study of Authoritarianism in the German Family (New York 1948), p. 55.

than independent critical thinking.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the important role that the educational process plays in the formulation of a younger persons attitude, and in the development of his values, the topic of education in connection with the SS Führerkorps is discussed at greater length in this study. Table 5.1 shows the educational distribution of the total corps sample, the

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Table 5.1

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Allgemeine SS, the Totenkopfverbände, the Sicherheitsdienst, and the Verfügungstruppe. From the distribution it is seen that 28.9% of the sampled SS officers had no more than an elementary school education. A further 27.3% attended a secondary school, but did not obtain the coveted university entrance certificate, the Abitur. Because of the traditional Abitur requirement, or Kadettenanstalt graduation, as the

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<sup>1</sup>Post-1945 research has shown that the majority of German parents were of the opinion that the schools should not become involved in training "gute Staatsbürger." 48% of the questioned parents felt that schools should stress "menschliche Werte," and 45% were of the opinion that schools should place more emphasis on developing habits that would guarantee success in later life. The smallest percentage thought schools should indoctrinate children to become good Germans. Deutsches Institut für Bildung und Wissen, Schule und pluralistische Gesellschaft (Frankfurt 1961), p. 568. The role of the school as shaper of values and attitudes is discussed by Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft, pp. 167, 342, 344ff. Caution, however, should be used in stressing the influence of German authoritarian institutions on the ready acceptance of cruelty as demonstrated by the behaviour of many SS officers. It should be recalled that the 65% of Milgram's subjects who pushed the "danger to life" lever were "normal" middle class Americans who were not raised in an authoritarian German environment. The experiment was repeated in several countries, including Germany, and similar results were obtained everywhere.

Table 5.1 Education of SS Officers in Relation to the Branches in which they Served

Education	Corps Sample	A/SS	TV	SD	VT
Elementary School	28.9%	30.2%	43.4%	24.3%	17.7%
Secondary School	27.3	22.3	28.9	26.4	32.4
Total Non-Abitur	56.2	52.5	72.3	50.7	50.1
Abitur	8.9	5.9	3.3	6.6	34.6
Attended University	4.4	3.7	1.1	5.8	5.6
Graduated University	11.8	13.4	4.4	16.7	.4
Doctorates	18.3	24.5	18.9	20.2	1.7
Total University Graduates	30.1	37.9	23.3	36.9	2.1
NAPOLA	.4				7.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0



minimum education for acceptance in the German officer corps,<sup>1</sup> the non-Abitur officers of the SS will be examined separately from those who had the Abitur. Thus 56.2% of the sampled Führerkorps of the Third Reich's élite force did not possess the Abitur. These findings support Höhne's contention that the SS placed greater emphasis on political reliability of its Führerkorps than on educational prerequisites.<sup>2</sup> Table 5.1 also shows that 8.9% of the sampled Führer gave the Abitur as the highest educational achievement, while 30.1% of the officers claimed university graduation with either a Staatsexamen or the doctorate.

If a comparison is made between the educational distribution of the sampled SS Führerkorps with that of German society one must conclude that the educated stratum of society was heavily overrepresented in the officer corps of the Schutzstaffeln prior to 1939. According to an official survey conducted in 1962, 82% of the German population had only an elementary school education. A further 13% of German citizens claimed to have achieved the mittlere Reife, and only 5% could boast an Abitur.<sup>3</sup> When it comes to the university graduate category, the discrepancy between the percentage of graduates in the sampled SS

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<sup>1</sup>When a few officer cadets were admitted to the German army, who had no Abitur, Kultusminister v. Trott zu Solz complained in 1900 when he wanted "... vom Frühjahr 1900 ab die Einstellung als Fahnenjunker von jungen Leuten die das Zeugnis der Primareife nicht besitzen, beschränkt wissen." Ten years later the dispensation given to some officer applicants without the Abitur was highly criticized in the Military Cabinet. Karl Demeter, Das deutsche Offizierskorps in Gesellschaft und Staat, 1650-1945, 4th edition (Frankfurt 1965), p. 96ff.

<sup>2</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 446.

<sup>3</sup>Institut für Demoskopie, Jahrbuch 1958-1964 (Allensbach 1965), p. 4. Around the turn of the century 90% of the German population had only an elementary school education. Engelmann, German Education, p. 11.

officer corps and the percentage of university graduates found in German society is even more starkly revealed. Whereas 30.1% of the sampled Führerkorps were university graduates, only 2.5% of German society in 1962 had completed a course of studies at a recognized university.<sup>1</sup> In the light of these data one has to conclude that the SS during the pre-war years was able to attract a considerable percentage of the educated élite of Germany.

If the educational distribution of the total corps sample is compared to the educational distribution patterns of the other branches, considerable variations are found. The distribution pattern of the Allgemeine SS (A/SS) as shown in Table 5.1 shows that while the A/SS had fewer non-Abitur officers than the total corps sample, the part-time branch of the SS registered with 37.9% the highest percentage of university educated officers of any branch. This suggests that the A/SS provided for a large number of educated Germans the necessary political and élitist respectability with the least amount of demands. It soon became apparent to the educated segment in German society that the privilege of wearing the black uniform with at least Untersturmführer rank badges opened many career possibilities aside from providing social respectability in a society where anyone who wanted to be somebody had to have a uniform in the bed-room closet.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Institut für Demoskopie, Jahrbuch, p. 4. See also, Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup>The view portrayed by Zuckmayer in *Der Hauptmann von Köpenick*, "Aber der Mensch fängt erst beim Leutnant an," was still widely held in pre-1939 Germany. Neuss-Hunkel wrote about the Allgemeine SS that it served as a "Sammelbecken" for various people, one of the most important reasons "Beschaffung von Beziehungen und Ansehen, Geld und Auslesemöglichkeiten ...." Die SS, p. 15. Kater wrote, "... dass manch ein Vertreter des oberen Mittelstandes, der gegen Anfang der  
(continued ....)



The Totenkopf (TV) distribution shows that 43% of that branch's officers had only an elementary school education. The educational distribution pattern of the officers that administered the notorious concentration camps shows not only that almost 75% of the sampled TV officers were non-Abitur men, but also that this branch contained the highest percentage of elementary school educated officers. These findings support the previously made statements by Kautsky and Neusüss-Hunkel, statements not based on quantitative research. In her study of the SS Neusüss-Hunkel agreed with Kautsky's assessment of the concentration camp guards, when he wrote that he found "... den stumpfsten und faulsten Teil der Bevölkerung ..." <sup>1</sup> in that branch of the SS. While the percentage of non-Abitur officers was unusually high in the Totenkopfverbände compared to the other branches of the SS, the percentage of university graduates in that branch warrants some comment. At first sight it is surprising to find such high percentage (23.3%) of university graduates in the TV. However, a closer analysis of these cases revealed that the majority of graduates held the Dr.med. degree, with a few doctorates in the biological sciences and in anatomy and physiology. The other interesting fact revealed by the distribution pattern is the large difference between officers holding a doctorate (18.9%) and those graduates without doctorates (4.4%). Most of the officers without doctorates held a Staatsexamen or a Diplom in pharmacology or the

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dreissiger Jahre die politische Entwicklung mit Besorgnis verfolgte, dass man, um sich abzusichern, vielleicht nicht gerade Mitglied der egalitären NSDAP, weniger noch der SA, wohl aber der äusserlich attraktiven und gut organisierten SS werden sollte." Kater, "Zum gegenseitigen Verhältnis von SA und SS in der Sozialgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus von 1925-1939," Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, p. 357.

<sup>1</sup>Neusüss-Hunkel, Die SS, p. 55.



biological sciences. There were no jura graduates among the sampled TV officers with degrees. This suggests that the Totenkopfverbände held little attraction for university graduates on the whole, unless their education had provided them with skills which they could put to use performing the most macabre experiments on the captive human guinea pigs. A closer look at the Totenkopf officers who held doctorates will be taken below.

The educational distribution for the SD shows a low percentage of non-Abitur officers, and conversely, a high percentage of university graduates, both doctorate and non-doctorate. Compared to the other branches, the A/SS and the SD had the highest percentage of university graduates within their ranks. That the security service of the SS was a collecting point for intellectuals of all sorts has been recognized for some time. While Kogon in his study of the SS Staat accepted the fact that many "intellectuals" were attracted to the SD, he, nevertheless, expressed scepticism concerning the officers' real intellectual qualities: "... der Intellekt der Intellektuellsten unter ihnen blieb ganz und gar auf die wirksame Förderung des SS-Staats-Systems und auf die Ausführung zweckentsprechender Massnahmen beschränkt."<sup>1</sup> Höhne was of the opinion that the SD attracted a group of young NS intellectuals whose object was both "... professional advancement and the improvement of National Socialism." Thus the SD soon became "... the refuge for National Socialism's most intelligent men."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kogon, Der SS Staat, p. 351. If one accepts Lipset's definition of an intellectual, one cannot help but agree with Kogon. Said Lipset, "Ich habe als Intellektuelle alle diejenigen betrachtet, die Kultur, d.h. die symbolische Welt des Menschen, einschliesslich Kunst, Wissenschaft und Religion, schaffen, verteilen und anwenden." Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 211.

The military branch of the SS, the Verfügungstruppe, shows a different educational distribution pattern compared with the other branches of the SS. The major differences are, that the Führerkorps of the VT contained the lowest percentage of officers with only a Volksschulbildung. Only the fact that more officers had attended a secondary school brings the total of non-Abitur officers up to the level of the other branches. Other notable differences occur in the Abitur and the university graduate categories. With 34.6% of its officers claiming the Abitur as the highest educational achievement, the Verfügungstruppe contained by far the highest percentage of Abitur officers of any branch. With only 2.1% of the officers holding a university degree, the VT had the lowest percentage of university trained officers of any branch. Another educational category warrants some comment. With 7.6% of the officers having graduated from the recently created Napolas the Verfügungstruppe was the only branch of the SS that could claim to have these graduates in its Führerkorps.

The subject of the educational standards in the Verfügungstruppe was raised after the war by two former senior Waffen SS officers, SS Oberstgruppenführer Paul Hausser and SS Obergruppenführer Felix Steiner. According to these two high ranking Waffen SS officers, formal education was not an important criterium for selection to commissioned rank in that branch. Thus, whereas the regular armed forces were still advocating an Abitur education for their officer candidates,<sup>1</sup> the newly

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<sup>1</sup>Some senior army officers, like Generaloberst Ritter v. Leeb, complained about the "Verwässerung des Offizierskorps" because they felt that more importance was placed on political conviction in the selection of Wehrmacht officers, rather than on educational standards. Hans Adolf Jacobsen, 1939-1945: Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik und Dokumenten (Darmstadt 1961), p. 604.



created military branch of the SS waived this formal requirement, as long as the potential officer could demonstrate above average physical prowess<sup>1</sup> and was politically reliable.<sup>2</sup> The statement made by Himmler in November 1937 that over 40% of the pre-war Verfügungstruppe officers had not matriculated, is in essence borne out by this quantitative study.<sup>3</sup>

It is the author's contention, however, that, while the fact that 50% of the sampled VT officers had no Abitur was a significant deviation from accepted practices in the process of officer selection, an equally important fact which must not be overlooked is that over 1/3 of the VT officers who completed the rigorous officer training did have the Abitur. A closer look at the officers of the Verfügungstruppe will be taken below.

At this point the study intends to look at the educational levels

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<sup>1</sup>Steiner described how he created a force of military athletes, soldiers that could, for instance, march three kilometers in 20 minutes, a feat that even surprised Wehrmacht officers. Steiner, Die Armee der Geächteten, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>Paul Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch (Osnabrück 1966), p. 22. That the Verfügungstruppe had abandoned many of the traditional army ways was also emphasized by Steiner in a conversation with Heinz Höhne on 28 January 1966. Höhne, The Order, p. 446.

<sup>3</sup>Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 13. When Himmler stated in November 1937, that some 40% of the VT officers had no Abitur, he undoubtedly included in this all those officers without an Abitur but who may have attended a Gymnasium. Stein in his book interprets this statement as meaning "... 40% of the officer candidates accepted before 1938 had only an elementary school education." Höhne, on the other hand, states in his original German version of Der Orden unter den Totenkopf "... vor 1938 besaßen 40% der Junker kein Abitur," p. 412. This writer has accepted Höhne's interpretation and evaluated his quantitative findings accordingly.

The quantitative results of this study do not agree with Stein's statement that 40% of the VT officers had only an elementary school education. Table 5.1 shows that only 17.7% of the sampled VT officers had an elementary school education, while a further 32.4% attended a secondary school.



of the SS officers in relation to the time period in which they joined the SS. Table 5.2 shows that the non-Abitur officers predominated

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Table 5.2

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in the pre-1933 intakes. Although the percentage of non-Abitur officers gradually declines between 1925 and 1933, (from 91.8% for those officers with an SS number under 1000 to 71.7% for those officers who joined the SS between January 1931 and January 1933) the event that had the most noticeable effect on the educational quality of the Führerkorps was, without doubt, the Machtergreifung in January 1933. Its effect could not only be measured in terms of the percentage of non-Abitur officers joining the SS, but an equally dramatic change took place in the university graduate categories. Thus the percentage of non-Abitur officers joining the SS, according to this study's sample, dropped from 71.1% for the 1931 to 1933 period to 41.9% for the immediate post-Machtergreifung period, while in the university graduate categories the percentage increased from 18.2% to 44.1%. The distribution thus outlined in Table 5.2 suggests that the educated stratum of German society refrained from committing itself to National Socialism until after Hitler had achieved power.

The trend of thousands of Germans rushing to join the NSDAP after January 1933 is a well-known fact. The number of "Märzgefallene" was so great that a general Aufnahmesperre had to be imposed in May 1933.<sup>1</sup> The fact that National Socialism was so readily embraced by

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<sup>1</sup>Between 30 January 1933 and 1 May 1933 the NSDAP grew from 850,000 to approximately 1.6 million members. Martin Broszat, Der Staat Hitlers; Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner inneren Verfassung (Nördlingen 1969), p. 253.

Table 5.2 Educational Level of SS Officers in Relation to the Time Period in which they Joined

Educational Level	PHASE I		PHASE II		PHASE III	
	4/25-12/27	1/28-12/30	1/31-1/33	2/33-6/34	7/34-12/36	1/37-9/39
Elementary School	62.3%	49.1%	37.9%	17.4%	22.4%	22.5%
Secondary School	29.5	33.6	33.8	24.5	22.0	21.7
Total Non-Abitur	91.8	82.7	71.7	41.9	44.4	44.2
Abitur	4.1	2.4	5.8	9.2	15.8	14.4
Attended University	.8	2.6	4.3	4.8	5.1	4.7
Graduated University	3.3	7.0	9.2	16.4	13.9	10.4
Doctorates	---	5.3	9.0	27.7	20.2	24.2
Total University Graduates	3.3	12.3	18.2	44.1	34.1	34.6
NAPOLA	---	---	---	---	.6	2.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Germany's Akademiker has been commented on by Joachim Fest. In The Face of the Third Reich Fest expressed genuine amazement at the success that such a "... blatantly anti-intellectual movement"<sup>1</sup> as National Socialism enjoyed among German intellectuals. As far as the SS membership was concerned, it is no secret that Himmler had to stop recruitment for the SS, and that eventually 60,000 SS men were dismissed for various reasons.<sup>2</sup>

Table 5.2 shows that after January 1933 the percentage of non-Abitur officers remains constant around the 40% mark, while the percentage of officers with a university education rises to 44% during the 1933 to 1934 period, and then levels off at about 34% during Phase III, the years 1934 to 1939. Since 44% of the sampled officers that joined the SS during the first seventeen months of the Third Reich held a university degree, it should be of interest at this point to demonstrate through case histories who some of these men were.

It comes as no surprise to find among the joiners of the SS such alte Kämpfer as Dr. Ernst Boepple,<sup>3</sup> a member of the Party since 1920. Boepple, who came from an upper middle class home background, studied modern languages and history at the Universities of Tübingen,

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<sup>1</sup>Fest, The Face of the Third Reich, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 142; see also, John Steiner, Power Politics and Social Change in National Socialist Germany; A Process of Escalation into Mass Destruction (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 1976), p. 67. Said Himmler to the Nationalpolitischer Lehrgang der Wehrmacht in January 1937, "So hatte ich im April /1933/ die SS wieder so weit am Zügel, dass ich sagte: es wird niemand mehr aufgenommen, und wir haben dann von Ende 1933 bis Ende 1935 von den Neuaufgenommenen wieder alles das herausgesetzt, was nichts taugte. In diesen Jahren habe ich etwa 60,000 Männer herausgesetzt." IMT, vol. xxix, doc. 1992 (A)-PS, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberführer Dr. Ernst Boepple, SS #166,838, born 30.11.1887, in Reutlingen. BDC.



Paris, Oxford and London. The First War interrupted his studies, which he completed in 1919 in Munich. It was in 1919 that Boepple first came into contact with the DAP (Deutsche Arbeiterpartei). With the decision to join the party in November 1919, he became one of the "... ältesten Gefolgsleute des Führers."<sup>1</sup> Due to his long-standing party affiliation his rise in the civil service and in the SS after 1933 was rapid. Although he only joined the SS in February 1934, he was promoted to Oberführer in April 1935. In 1940 Boepple was made "... Staatssekretär beim Generalgouverneur in Polen," and his promotion to SS Brigadeführer seemed imminent.<sup>2</sup> But it appeared that the life of a senior administrator in Poland was too good for the 55-year-old alte Kämpfer. In 1942 the SS launched an investigation into the activities of Boepple, and found him dealing heavily in the local black market, especially in the sale of illegal gasoline. Although Himmler "... hält B. für die SS ungeeignet ..." <sup>3</sup> he was unwilling to launch an official enquiry against Boepple. The assessment of the SS-Richter beim Reichsführer-SS was, that this was "... eine ausgesprochene politische Entscheidung des Reichsführer-SS."<sup>4</sup> Although Himmler gave Gruppenführer Scherff instructions "den Fall Boepple im Auge zu behalten ..." <sup>5</sup> there are no further entries in the personnel file of Boepple which suggests that this matter was not pursued any further. At any rate, the tide of the

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<sup>1</sup>Official biography of "Staatssekretär Dr. Ernst Boepple." Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter to Chef des SS Personalhauptamtes, dated 8 October 1941. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Vermerk Betr.: SS-Oberführer Boepple," dated 21 July 1943. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Letter of SS-Richter to Chef des SS Personalhauptamtes, dated 23 July 1943. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

war had turned, and the approaching Russians would soon cancel forever his position as "Staatssekretär beim Generalgouverneur."

Another educated alte Kämpfer who found his way into the Führerkorps of the SS after Hitler's seizure of power, was Richard Kolb.<sup>1</sup> Kolb was also born into an upper middle class environment; his father was a successful and well-to-do businessman. Kolb attended the Gymnasium and obtained his Abitur in 1912. He chose, however, not to go to university, and instead entered the regular army as an officer cadet. He was commissioned Second Lieutenant in August 1914, just in time to experience the outbreak of the First War. It was only after the war, and after he had left the army, that Kolb undertook university studies. His political activity began in 1922 when he met Rosenberg, the hazy philosopher of National Socialism, and through his influence was induced to join the Party. On 9 November 1923 he walked in the front row of the Putschists<sup>2</sup> and was briefly imprisoned before charges against him were dropped.<sup>3</sup> In the late 1920's Kolb worked actively for the Nazi press and radio, describing his work "Mein Kampf galt besonders den

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Richard Kolb, SS #60,827, born 29.6.1891, in Bamberg. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Kolb wrote a highly dramatic version of the events on 9 November 1923 and his role therein. An example of his writing. "Vor der Postenkette lagen Tote und Verwundete, mitten unter ihnen mein Bruder .... Ich erkannte Bauriedl, der Diener Ludendorffs, und von Scheubner-Richter. Einer presste sich an den Randstein, wurde aber mehrmals getroffen, der Körper eines anderen zuckte bei jedem Treffer von neuem empor .... Auf der Strasse schwamm das Blut." "Lebenslauf" of Richard Kolb, Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Indictments were later dropped against Kolb and his brother. Harold Gordon, Jr., Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch (Princeton 1972), p. 475.



klerikalen Einflüssen am Rundfunk."<sup>1</sup> In 1932 Kolb was called to Berlin where he became "... kommissarischer Intendant der Berliner Funkstunde."<sup>2</sup> In 1934 "... schied ich aus dem Rundfunk infolge persönlicher Meinungsverschiedenheiten aus,"<sup>3</sup> and it was from then on that he began to devote himself to the study of military science. This soon paid rich dividends, for in 1936 when the Schiller Universität at Jena looked for someone to fill the chair of Military Science Kolb was found to be the most suitable candidate. In 1939 Kolb returned to the army with the rank of major, and in 1941 was awarded the Knights Cross.<sup>4</sup> Kolb had, therefore, the rare distinction of being one of the few alte Kämpfer to reach senior rank in the regular army and earn a decoration for bravery.

While it should not come as a surprise to find long committed National Socialists, with a sound educational background in the SS after January 1933, what is surprising is the number of educated men who came to the SS in 1933 and 1934 claiming quite openly not to have had any political interests or affiliations prior to their joining date. One of these men was Otto Calliebe.<sup>5</sup> Calliebe, who described his father's occupation as "Kaufmann," obtained his Abitur in 1912. He then proceeded to study foreign languages, archeology and religion at Marburg, Berlin and Greifswald. In the Great War he was a flier, and lost an arm when he was shot down in the Middle East. After his return

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<sup>1</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Richard Kolb. Personnel File: Richard Kolb.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Das Schwarze Korps, 1 June 1944, "Träger des Ritterkreuzes."

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberführer Otto Calliebe, SS #276,650, born 15.5.1893, in Züllchow, Krs. Randow. BDC.



from the war he completed his Staatsexamen and the Pädagogische Prüfung.<sup>1</sup> Calliebe entered the teaching profession during the Weimar Republic days and was a Studienrat by the time Hitler came to power. Calliebe gives no indication in his Lebenslauf how he came to be attracted to National Socialism, he merely stated "Im Juli 1933 wurde ich als Unterrichtslektor an die Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Köslin berufen."<sup>2</sup> His sole political statement was: "Vor 1933 habe ich keiner politischen Partei angehört."<sup>3</sup> Soon after 1933, however, Calliebe acquired quite a reputation as an ardent Nazi, and although he was released from the SS in 1934 "... weil C. einarmig ist,"<sup>4</sup> he re-applied and was re-admitted in 1936. By November 1944, when he was promoted to the rank of Oberführer Calliebe was "Vizeinspektor der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten."<sup>5</sup> Thus the man who claimed in 1933 not to have had any political affiliations had come a long way in the political hierarchy of the Third Reich.

Rudolf Böhmer<sup>6</sup> also stated in his Lebenslauf that he had belonged to no party prior to 1933. Born the son of a bookkeeper, he attended the Gymnasium and obtained the Abitur in 1930. He participated in no

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<sup>1</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Otto Calliebe. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Calliebe joined the NSDAP in May 1933, party #2,652,486. Master card personnel file: Calliebe.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from N. P. E. A. Schulpforta to SS Personalhauptamt, dated 22 April 1936. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Letter to Chef des SS Personalhauptamtes, dated 9 October 1944. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Dr. Rudolf Böhmer, SS #156,386, born 9.5.1910, in Frankenthal/Saarpfalz. BDC.

political activities during the final years of the Weimar Republic, nor did he belong to any political student organizations. The first indication of his willingness to accept National Socialism occurred in 1934 when he became a student of Karl Alexander von Müller, a professor of history at Munich and President of the Bavarian Academy of Science, a man described as "... a leading pro-Hitlerite historian long before Hitler attained power."<sup>1</sup> After completing his Dr.phil., Böhmer worked for a few years as a secondary school teacher, before becoming a full-time SS Führer in the SD.<sup>2</sup> In the SD Böhmer supervised the political teaching in the secondary schools, and was liaison officer with the "Chef des Amtes Erziehung im Erziehungsministerium."<sup>3</sup> By his superiors in the SD, the erstwhile politically disinterested Böhmer was considered "... weltanschaulich positiv gefestigt," and so successful in his work that he was recommended for promotion to Sturmbannführer at the age of 33.<sup>4</sup>

As a final example of an apolitical educated person who joined the SS after January 1933, the case of Dr. Erich Gritzbach<sup>5</sup> should be mentioned. Gritzbach who was raised in financially secure surroundings during the last decade of the Wilhelmine era, completed his Abitur a few months prior to the outbreak of the First World War. In the four years that he fought at the Western Front he was awarded the Iron Cross

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<sup>1</sup>Weinreich, Hitler's Professors, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Rudolf Böhmer. Personnel File: Rudolf Böhmer.

<sup>3</sup>"Beurteilung" of Böhmer, dated 27 March 1943. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberführer Dr. Erich Gritzbach, SS #88,174, born 12.7.1897, in Forst/Lausitz. BDC.



and was given a battle field commission. After spending a few weeks with the Grenzschutz in 1919, Gritzbach entered university and obtained his Dr.sc.pol. from the University of Tübingen in 1924.<sup>1</sup> From 1924 until 1932 he served as a senior civil servant (Regierungsrat). In his Lebenslauf, written in 1935, Gritzbach gave no indication when he first became interested in National Socialism. The first reference to the Third Reich is: "Am 24.3.1934 ernannte mich Ministerpräsident General Göring zu seinem persönlichen Referenten und Pressechef im Preussischen Staatsministerium."<sup>2</sup> Gritzbach remained on Göring's staff until the collapse of the Third Reich,<sup>3</sup> and in 1938 brought out "... das vielgelesene Buch Hermann Göring, Werk und Mensch,"<sup>4</sup> an unquestioning and flattering biography of his boss.<sup>5</sup> After the war Gritzbach found a job with the Internationale Montanunion at a monthly salary of 1,600DM. Since 1955, however, "... muss er /Gritzbach/ von einer 'mageren' Pension von 1,300DM monatlich leben."<sup>6</sup>

From the above histories it was seen that the educated men who joined the SS shortly after Hitler's seizure of power ranged from alte

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<sup>1</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Erich Gritzbach. Ibid. Gritzbach joined the NSDAP in April 1933, party #3,473,289. Master card of personnel file: Erich Gritzbach.

<sup>2</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Erich Gritzbach. Ibid. Leonard Mosley in his recent biography of Göring states, "For his own staff Göring chose Dr. Erich Gritzbach." Leonard Mosely, The Reich Marshal (New York 1974), p. 151.

<sup>3</sup>Berliner Zeitung, 14 September 1956. "Ohne Kommentar."

<sup>4</sup>Völkischer Beobachter (Berliner Ausgabe), 6 March 1938.

<sup>5</sup>Erich Gritzbach, Hermann Göring; Reden und Aufsätze (München 1938).

<sup>6</sup>Berliner Zeitung, 14 September 1956. When the Berlin courts tried to initiate proceedings against Gritzbach, he failed to appear in court. He announced through his lawyer that he had new evidence to prove his innocence (Entlastungsmaterial).



Kämpfer, whom one would expect to join, to men who had shown no previous political interests, or who could not claim membership in a political party. Yet it has also been shown that regardless of past political interests, if the men served their new masters well and faithfully, they received their due rewards.

#### The Einsatzgruppen Officers:

In the autumn of 1947 Brigadier General Telford Taylor, the US Chief Counsel for War Crimes, stated:

These defendants are not German peasants or artisans drafted into the Wehrmacht. They are not uneducated juveniles. They are lawyers, teachers, artists, and a former clergyman. They are, in short, men of education, who were in full possession of their faculties and who fully understood the grave and sinister significance of the program they embarked upon. They were part of the hard-core of the SS .... They were hand-picked fanatics, everyone of them an officer of the SS.<sup>1</sup>

General Taylor made this statement at the opening proceedings of the Einsatzgruppen trial at Nürnberg in which 23 former members of the SS were charged with the murder of 1 million persons. This high number averaged out to about 1,350 murders a day for the two year period during which the Einsatzgruppen of the SD raced across the eastern territories in constant search for new victims. The fact that the men who headed the Einsatzgruppen and Kommandos came "... in the majority from intellectual professions"<sup>2</sup> is no longer a secret. According to Höhne, "The Jew liquidators in fact were a curious collection of highly qualified academics, ministerial officials, lawyers, and even a

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<sup>1</sup> Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, pp. 93-94.

<sup>2</sup> Höhne, The Order, p. 357.

Protestant priest and an opera singer."<sup>1</sup>

The role that the educated SS officers played in the vast extermination process of politically and racially undesirables shall be looked at next. It is, indeed, a disturbing fact that 18 of the 23 defendants at the Einsatzgruppen trial in Nürnberg were graduates of universities. One of the defendants was the 38-year-old Dr. Werner Braune,<sup>2</sup> who prided himself that he had obtained his Dr.jur. at the early age of 24.<sup>3</sup> That was in the year of Hitler's take-over of power, and the year before he joined the SS. Braune was born into the comfortable surroundings of the late Wilhelmine educated middle class, and was raised strictly in the Lutheran faith. In July 1931, as a law student at the age of 22 he joined the Nazi party, and in 1934 he decided to join the SS. His rise in the SS, and later the SD, was rapid. By the time that he was 32 he already held the rank of Obersturmbannführer and was in command of an Einsatzkommando in the Simferopol area.<sup>4</sup> At his trial in 1947 Braune stated that at times he felt some "inner misgivings" about the Führer order which demanded the elimination of the racially inferior eastern residents, but that he could do nothing about it. Although he was on good terms with Otto Ohlendorf, his immediate superior officer, Braune never once requested to be relieved of his awful duties. To the question by the American prosecutor why he never requested a transfer, Braune replied "Herr

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Dr. Werner Braune, SS #107,364, born 11.4.1909, in Mehrstadt/Thüringen. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



Ohlendorf would have considered me a shirker."<sup>1</sup> Ohlendorf, however, testified at the same trial that in "... two and a half years I had sufficient occasion to see how many of my Gruppe did not agree to this order in their inner opinion. Thus, I forbade the participation in the executions on the part of these men and sent them back to Germany."<sup>2</sup>

In his opening statement to the tribunal the US Chief Prosecutor Ferenz spoke of the killing of 33,000 Jews in Kiev in two days. Ferenz called this act an amazing feat "... even among the ghastly records of the Einsatzgruppen."<sup>3</sup> This act of mass murder was carried out under the general direction of the commander of Einsatzgruppe 'C,' the former SS Brigadeführer Dr. Dr. Otto Rasch.<sup>4</sup> This senior SS officer who held a Dr.phil. in economics as well as a Dr.jur., was the one-time mayor of Wittenberg. Rasch was considered one of the most brutal executants of Hitler's extermination programme, who frequently appeared at the execution

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>2</sup>It has been demonstrated on several occasions that it was possible to avoid transfer to an Einsatzkommando. Professor Six, on trial at Nürnberg after the war, stated, that it was possible to request a transfer from an Einsatzkommando, "At least no one was ever shot for doing so." Robert Kempner, SS im Kreuzverhör, (München 1964), p. 284. According to Robert Weida, refusal to obey the order to shoot innocent people had no more serious consequences than demotion or transfer to the front. Robert Weida, "Nationalsozialistische Gewaltverbrechen in polizeilicher Sicht," Kriminalistik, vol. vii, 1966, pp. 329-335. On the subject of refusing to participate in mass executions, see also, Herbert Jäger, Verbrechen unter totalitärer Herrschaft: Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Gewaltkriminalität (Freiburg 1967), pp. 64-67, 68-71, 152-157. See also, Hans Welzel, "Gesetzmässige Judentötungen," Neue Juristische Wochenschrift, 19 March 1964, pp. 521-568; also, Konrad Redeker, "Bewältigung der Vergangenheit als Aufgabe der Justiz," Neue Juristische Wochenschrift, 11 June 1964. On 8 June 1951, Werner Braune was hanged at Landsberg prison. Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 264.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Dr. Dr. Otto Rasch, SS #107,100, born 7.12.1891, in Friedrichsruh. BDC.



sites to direct the operation in person. He was born and raised in a financially secure and stable environment. His father was the owner of a tile and brick factory. At the trial Rasch reminisced about his youth at great length, a fact which made him one of the more interesting defendants. He recounted how he was educated as a devout Christian and how his father taught him to love his country, to love and respect nature, and how to hunt properly.<sup>1</sup> Rasch stated that his father took particular care to point out to him that hunting was not just killing, and that one had to show "respect for the Creator and His creatures."<sup>2</sup> Judge Musmanno described how everyone in the courtroom, who heard Rasch's last statement, yet knew that he was charged with the murder of 75,000 people, asked himself, how could this man reconcile the teachings of his father, "to respect the Creator and His creatures" with the murderous acts committed in the east. Everyone waited for an answer. But no answer was forthcoming.<sup>3</sup> Since the war Rasch suffered from Parkinson's Disease, which by 1947 had virtually crippled the one-time Einsatzgruppen commander. He was too ill to give further evidence and it was decided to postpone trial proceedings against Rasch. He died

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<sup>1</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, pp. 243-44.

<sup>2</sup>Asked what he meant by the moral principles of hunting Rasch replied, "Hunting in the German sense demanded that the individual, even if he is completely unobserved in his area, realizes his obligations toward the creatures, and that he is to refrain from everything which violates these, for instance shooting during the time that it is prohibited - shooting of the mother when her young ones need her, and only shooting on careful deliberation - not to satisfy ones passion for it." Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>One item not brought out by the trial was, that Rasch during the war had brought home a Ukrainian servant girl who was to work at home for his wife. A short time later complaints arrived at the local Arbeitsamt to the effect that the Rasch's were severely mistreating the girl. The maltreatment of the girl reached such proportions that the Arbeitsamt had to intervene and take the girl away. Personnel File: Otto Rasch.

from the effects of the disease on 1 November 1948.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of their background or education, be it the architect SS Standartenführer Paul Blobel<sup>2</sup> who actually carried out 33,000 executions with his Komando,<sup>3</sup> or the SS Obersturmbannführer Ernst Biberstein,<sup>4</sup> who as a former minister supervised thousands of executions, and still insisted at Nürnberg that he "did not sin against the Commandments of Love,"<sup>5</sup> or the SS Sturmbannführer Waldemar Klingelhofer,<sup>6</sup> who had been a professional opera singer, and who in Russia ordered the immediate execution of 30 Jews simply because they had left the ghetto at Tatresch<sup>7</sup> and gone home to their families, they all showed a remarkable callousness concerning the acts which they were charged with. Judge Musmanno stated that he had no difficulties in

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<sup>1</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Paul Blobel, SS #29,100, born 13.8.1894, in Potsdam. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 156. Blobel was hanged at Landsberg prison on 8 June 1951. Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Ernst Biberstein, SS #272,692, born 15.2.1899, in Hildenbach Krs. Siegen. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 207. Although sentenced to death, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment by the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, McCloy. Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>6</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Waldemar Klingelhofer, SS #52,704, born 4.4.1900, in Moscow. BDC.

<sup>7</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 210. Klingelhofer's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment by the U.S. High Commissioner to Germany, McCloy. Ibid., p. 264. That so many death sentences were eventually reduced was due to the pressure put on Commissioner McCloy by Adenauer and other German pressure groups, such as church dignitaries, women's organizations, academics and politicians. T. Tetens, The New Germany and the Old Nazis (New York 1961), p. 208. The night before the death sentences were to be carried out, Adenauer's military advisers, the Generals Heusinger and Speidel came to see Mr. Charles Thayer, U.S. liaison diplomat. They asked Mr. Thayer to convey a message to Commissioner McCloy, "If the prisoners at Landsberg were hanged, Germany as an ally against the East was an illusion." Charles Thayer, The Unquiet Germans (New York 1957), pp. 233-34.



reaching a decision on the guilt or innocence of the accused, but "... what troubled me as a human being was the question as to how and why such well-schooled men should have strayed so far and so completely from the teachings of their childhood."<sup>1</sup> Not only did the good education which many defendants received, not prevent them from carrying out the murder of thousands; on the contrary, their education made them more capable of carrying out their tasks in a more efficient manner.

#### The Concentration Camp Doctors:

War man einmal in die Behandlungsmaschinerie der Reviere geraten, so konnte man jederzeit ein Opfer ehrgeiziger "Forschungs" vorhaben werden. Der Schlimmste in dieser Hinsicht war im Lager Buchenwald ohne Zweifel Dr. Eisele.<sup>2</sup>

While one shares Judge Musmanno's thoughts as to "how such well-schooled men could have strayed so far and so completely from the teachings of their childhood" the barbarity shown by some medical doctors in the concentration camps is perhaps the saddest chapter in the role which educated men played in the administration and execution of Hitler's laws. How a medical doctor like Dr. Josef Mengele<sup>3</sup> was able day after day to stand on the ramp of the train depot at K. L. Auschwitz and select those prisoners who were to be gassed immediately from those who

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<sup>1</sup>Musmanno, The Eichmann Kommandos, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Kogon, Der SS Staat, p. 146.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Josef Mengele, SS #317, 885, born 16.3.1911, in Gunzburg/Schwaben. BDC.



were to be worked to death, is, indeed, difficult to comprehend.<sup>1</sup> Mengele was born into financially stable surroundings; his father was an engineer and a "Fabrikbesitzer." After completing his Abitur Mengele studied at the Universities of Munich, Bonn and Vienna. He obtained his Dr.phil. from Munich in anthropology, zoology and physiology. In 1938 "... promovierte ich in Frankfurt/Main zum Dr.med."<sup>2</sup> After spending some time as an "Assistent" at the University Institute of Hereditary Biology and Race Research (Universitätsinstitut für Erbbiologie und Rassenhygiene) at Frankfurt, Mengele was posted as "Truppenarzt" to Kassel. Since May 1943 "... Mengele versieht seinen Dienst bei der Dienststelle SS-Standortarzt Auschwitz."<sup>3</sup> At Auschwitz Mengele was known to be particularly severe in his selections methods, frequently sending whole transports to the gas chambers.<sup>4</sup> Prisoners who worked at the unloading platform, and who were familiar with Mengele's racial-biological research interests, sometimes found time to whisper quick instructions to children that looked somewhat alike. When these would tell Mengele that they were twins, he would put them to one side.<sup>5</sup> It was one way of escaping the gas chambers. How many

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<sup>1</sup>It was his severity that earned Mengele the praise of his superiors. "Mit Umsicht, Ausdauer und Energie hat er alle ihm gestellten Aufgaben oft unter schwierigsten Voraussetzungen zur vollkommensten Zufriedenheit seiner Vorgesetzten erfüllt .... Auf Grund seiner besonderen Leistungen, wurde ihm das Kriegsverdienstkreuz II. Kl./Schwertern verliehen." "Beurteilung" of Mengele, dated 19 August 1944. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Josef Mengele. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Beurteilung" of Josef Mengele, dated 19 August 1944. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Weinreich, Hitler's Professors, p. 198.

<sup>5</sup>The Chief Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Poland. Concentration Camp Oswiecim-Brzezinka (Warsaw 1957), p. 88. On Mengele's role as a concentration camp doctor, see also, Dr. Filip Friedman, To Jest Óswiecim (Warsaw 1945), pp. 61-62.

real twins there were among Mengele's research subjects, of course, no one knows.

Dr. Hannes Eisele<sup>1</sup> whom Kogon described as "den Schlimmsten" of the SS doctors in Buchenwald, was raised as a devout Catholic.<sup>2</sup> After obtaining his Dr.med. in 1935 Eisele worked for a while in a hospital. His career as a concentration camp doctor began in the summer of 1940, when he was posted to Buchenwald.<sup>3</sup> Of Eisele at Buchenwald Kogon wrote: "Seine Taten von 1940 bis 1943 übertrafen wohl jede andere von SS-Ärzten begangene Gemeinheit."<sup>4</sup> Eisele conducted vivisections on humans, and then killed them. According to Kogon, Eisele performed amputations and other operations on prisoners for no reason at all, or if the sick bay was too full he would feed the prisoners tea with chloralhydrate. The result was "Die Herzschwachen starben sofort, den Rest 'spritze' er Eisele ab."<sup>5</sup>

Doctors like the former SS Obersturmführer Dr. Dr. (habil) Johann Kremer<sup>6</sup> contributed to the notoriety of the SS doctors at the camps. Kremer, who obtained his Dr.phil. in zoology in 1914, his

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Hanns Eisele, SS #237,421, born 13.3.1912, in Donauschingen. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>According to his personnel file there is no recorded Kirchnaustritt. This suggests that Eisele never officially severed his connection with the Catholic Church.

<sup>3</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hanns Eisele. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Kogon, Der SS Staat, p. 146.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Dr. Dr. (habil) Johann Kremer, SS #262,703, born 26.12.1883, in Stellberg b. Köln. BDC.



Dr.med. in 1919 and his Dr.habil in 1929, was a physician at camp Óswięcim from 1942 on. After the war this triple doctor, and a.o. Professor at the University of Münster since 1936, was charged with conducting 15 "Sonderaktionen"<sup>1</sup> meaning selections in Auschwitz jargon.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the "Sonderaktionen" Kremer was charged with conducting several "Ärztevorstellungen," which meant that he selected those of the sick patients who were to be given the fatal injection, or, in camp jargon, who were going to be "abgespritzt."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Polish War Crimes Commission found the diary which Kremer kept during his Auschwitz days. Excerpts from the diary may shed some light on what kind of a man he was.

- 2.9.1942. At 3 o'clock, was for the first time present at a special operation (Sonderaktion). Compared with it, Dante's hell seems almost a comedy. No wonder Óswięcim is called an extermination camp. (Umsonst wird Auschwitz nicht das Lager der Vernichtung genannt).
- 5.9.1942 Today, Sunday, an excellent dinner: Tomato soup, half chicken, with potatoes and red cabbage, ... and a lovely vanilla ice cream. At 8 p.m. was again present at a Sonderaktion.
- 8.11.1942 Another Sonderaktion this afternoon, the 14th which I have attended here. In the evening pleasant company in the Führerheim. Bulgarian red wine and Croatian slivovitz. The Chief Commission for Nazi War Crimes in Poland. Camp Óswięcim, pp. 83-84.

<sup>2</sup>In 1960 a West German court found it difficult to establish the exact number of people Kremer had sent to the gas chambers. The files at Auschwitz showed that in 9 Sonderaktionen Kremer selected 7,735 people for the gas chambers. No records were available for the remaining 6 Sonderaktionen. If the number of victims for each Sonderaktion was roughly the same, then Kremer could have selected an excess of 12,000 people. Since no exact figures were available, the court charged Kremer with the death of 5,000 people. Langbein, Im Namen des deutschen Volkes, pp. 45-46.

<sup>3</sup>According to witnesses Kremer selected between 20 to 60 sick prisoners to be killed. Since the exact number could not be ascertained, nor was it possible to establish the number of "Ärztevorstellungen," the court declared that Kremer be charged with conducting 3 Ärztevorstellungen killing 3 prisoners on each occasion. The court sentenced Kremer to 10 years penitentiary, 5 years loss of civil rights, and it revoked his Doctor and Professorial titles. Ibid., pp. 178-179.



Gerald Reitlinger in his history of The SS recounts how one day Himmler heard of a woman, who, married to a man 15 years her junior, and who herself had passed the age of 48, gave birth to three sons.<sup>1</sup> The Reichsführer-SS, constantly interested in improving the reproductive capabilities of men and women "of pure blood," sought out this wonder woman, and asked her husband, a Dr. Sigmund Rascher,<sup>2</sup> to join the SS.<sup>3</sup> This started the career of one of the most notorious SS doctors and experimenters on human beings. Rascher had a very uneventful youth. As the son of a medical doctor he enjoyed the comforts of an upper middle class home. According to his father, the home life was a stable one and financially secure. The family moved to Stuttgart at the end of World War I, and to Constance a few years later. Here Rascher completed his Abitur. The young Rascher then went to Freiburg, where he took his Vorphysicum.<sup>4</sup> It was at this time that

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<sup>1</sup>Reitlinger, The SS, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Sigmund Rascher, SS #347,142, born 12.2.1909, in München. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>The SS personnel file of Rascher does not support Reitlinger's story. It shows that Rascher married Nina Diehl neé Wiedemann, a widow, on 16 July 1941. At the time she was 39 years of age. She was, therefore, 6 years Rascher's senior. According to Rascher's Lebenslauf, written on 6 January 1944, there were three sons, which he claimed were the result of his relationship with Nina. The birth-dates of two sons were, November 1939 and April 1941. This would make Nina 37 and 39 when two of her sons were born. In her book, The Guest House; The Witnesses at Nuremberg, the Countess Kalnocky, who ran the quarters where the IMT witnesses were housed, recalled that one day an elderly gentleman registered, giving his name as Dr. Rascher. It turned out to be the Dachau doctor's father. The father told the following story. His son, Sigmund Rascher, had married a woman, 15 years his senior, who had at one time been Himmler's mistress. When Himmler objected to the marriage on the grounds that, because of the woman's age it could not produce any offspring, Frau Rascher pretended several pregnancies. The children were obtained illegally by "robbing" them from orphanages. Through these children she hoped to show Himmler how wrong he had been. Ilona Kalnocky, The Guest House; The Witnesses at Nuremberg (New York 1974), p. 222.

<sup>4</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Sigmund Rascher. Personnel File: Sigmund Rascher.

his parents separated and later obtained a divorce.<sup>1</sup> In 1936 Rascher was awarded the Dr.med. from Munich. His Lebenslauf omits the years between 1936 and 1939, at which time he claimed to have become a contributor to Ahnenerbe, a journal devoted to the racial study of the Germanic heritage.<sup>2</sup> He joined the SS shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

In 1941 this unknown doctor, a member of the Allgemeine SS and a serving member of the Luftwaffe began his high altitude and low temperature experiments at the concentration camp Dachau. In a letter to Field Marshal Milch in 1942 the experiments were called "... gerade für die Luftwaffe notwendig, ... die auf keinen Fall unterbleiben dürfen."<sup>3</sup> The experiments which have been described by Kogon,<sup>4</sup> Reitlinger,<sup>5</sup> and Lord Russell of Liverpool<sup>6</sup> at considerable length, were extremely costly in human lives<sup>7</sup> and were assessed after the war in the following terms:

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<sup>1</sup>Kalnocky, The Guest House, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Sigmund Rascher. Personnel File: Sigmund Rascher.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to Generalfeldmarschall Milch, dated 2 November 1942. Ibid. When asked about Rascher's experiments after the war, Milch denied any knowledge of them. He only heard that Rascher was conducting "standard physiological experiments on Luftwaffe volunteers." David Irving, The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe; The Life of Fieldmarshal Erhard Milch (Boston 1973), pp. 304-305. How Milch could deny knowledge of the true nature of the experiments is, indeed, hard to understand. The letter of 2 November 1942 stated clearly, that the experiments "können bei uns deswegen mit so besonderer Wirkung vorgenommen werden, weil der RFSS persönlich die Verantwortung übernommen hat, für diese Versuche todeswürdige Asoziale und Verbrecher aus den K. L. zur Verfügung zu stellen." Personnel File: Sigmund Rascher.

<sup>4</sup>Kogon, Der SS Staat, pp. 180-183.

<sup>5</sup>Reitlinger, The SS, pp. 260-261.

<sup>6</sup>Lord Russell of Liverpool, The Scourge of the Swastika; A Short History of Nazi War Crimes (New York 1954), pp. 175-177.

<sup>7</sup>Kogon, Der SS Staat, p. 183.



Zur Entscheidung über ärztliche Massnahmen die zur Lebensrettung in Seenot Erstarrender notwendig wurden, waren die ersten 57 Versuche Holzlhöners und Raschers ausreichend: Narkoseversuche an Freiwilligen. Auch bei diesen waren bereits 13 Tote zu Beklagen, sodass man es vorzog selbst diesen Teil der Luftwaffe vorzuenthalten.<sup>1</sup> Alle weiteren Versuche und Opfer waren gänzlich überflüssig.

But Rascher's experiments were terminated sooner than he had anticipated. He was arrested not by the Allied forces, but by the SS in 1944. It appears that Himmler discovered that Frau Rascher had not really given birth to her children, that she had faked the pregnancies, and obtained the children by illegal means from orphanages. Himmler charged Rascher with "4 Kinderunterschlagungen zwischen den Jahren 1939-1944," and "... degradiere Sie gemäss Nr. 2 und 3 der SS-D.B.O. zum SS-Mann und schliesse Sie aus der SS aus."<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Kalnocky wrote "... that part of the Rascher's life became a capital crime, while the doctor's heinous experiments earned him praise and honor."<sup>3</sup> According to Reitlinger and the senior Dr. Rascher's testimony after the war, young Rascher was killed shortly before the Allies liberated Dachau,<sup>4</sup> while Frau Rascher was last seen at the concentration camp Ravensbrück.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 182, note 4.

<sup>2</sup>"Disziplinar-Strafverfügung," dated 14 February 1944. Personnel File: Sigmund Rascher. Once Rascher was arrested on the orders of Himmler, the camp commandant of Dachau, and the senior medical officer at the camp, launched a series of complaints, calling Rascher a "dangerous" and "incredible person." Reitlinger, The SS, p. 261.

<sup>3</sup>Kalnocky, The Guest House, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup>Reitlinger, The SS, p. 261; Kalnocky, The Guest House, p. 222. Captain Payne-Best, the British intelligence officer captured at Venlo in 1939, was with Rascher in the political bunker at Dachau. Best described Rascher as "garrulous" boasting of the fact that he had invented the gas chamber. Captain S. Payne-Best, The Venlo Incident (London 1950), p. 227.

<sup>5</sup>Reitlinger, The SS, p. 261.



The Verfügungstruppen Officer:

After the war the former SS Oberstgruppenführer Paul Hausser<sup>1</sup> and SS Obergruppenführer Felix Steiner<sup>2</sup> stated that in the creation of the Führerkorps of the Verfügungstruppe "... they were abandoning the Wehrmacht's ways."<sup>3</sup> In the process one of the traditional selection criteria, the Abitur, was waived. No candidate who met the rigorous physical, racial, and political selection standards, but who lacked the Abitur, was turned away. While the educational requirements may not have been of primary importance, Table 5.1, nevertheless, shows that 34.6% of the sampled VT officers held at least the Abitur. Compared to the other branches of the SS, the VT had by far the highest percentage of officers who gave the Abitur as the final educational achievement. In terms of the total percentage of non-Abitur officers the Verfügungstruppe officer corps did not differ significantly from the other branches. This, however, is due primarily to the large percentage of officers who attended a secondary school without obtaining an Abitur.

Another interesting fact which is revealed by Table 5.1 is the relatively high percentage of VT officers who claimed to have been graduates of the Napolas. Since it was their stated aim to educate and train the future leaders of the Third Reich,<sup>4</sup> it may be said, that with 7.6% of the officers who joined the Verfügungstruppe between January 1937

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberstgruppenführer Paul Hausser, SS #239,795, born 7.10.1880, in Brandenburg/Havel. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Obergruppenführer Felix Steiner, SS #253,351, born 23.5.1896, in Stallupönen/Ostpreussen. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 446.

<sup>4</sup>Engelmann, German Education, p. 96; see also, Grunberger, A Social History of the Third Reich, pp. 376-77.

and September 1939 claiming to be graduates of these schools, that the National Socialist schools were beginning to fulfill their function.

With all the talk about ignoring education in favour of physical and political assets, a closer look at the case histories of some of the young Verfügungstruppe officers shows, that while educational requirements may not have been stressed as much as they were in the Wehrmacht, that the VT, nevertheless, paid considerable attention to the formal educational background of the officer cadets or Junker. This is revealed again and again in the assessments made by regimental commanders or in reports of the SS Junkerschulen.

The two factors that SS Sturmbannführer Hans Becker,<sup>1</sup> SS Obersturmführer Bruno Beeck,<sup>2</sup> SS Obersturmbannführer Herbert Kuhlmann<sup>3</sup> and SS Obersturmbannführer Hans Dorr<sup>4</sup> had in common was, that they belonged to the non-Abitur officer category in the VT officer sample, and second, that they become highly successful combat leaders of the Waffen SS during the War. Hans Becker, whose mother was a housekeeper, (he never mentioned his father) attended a secondary school until the mittlere Reife, before going to a Berufsschule to train as the Büroangestellter. He entered a law office after he completed his training in order to become a law clerk. He gave no political reasons for entering the

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Hans Becker, SS 247,838, born 5.11.1911, in Peenemünde. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Bruno Beeck, SS #288,024, born 25.8.1916, in Hamberge. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Herbert Kuhlmann, SS #118,826, born 7.4.1915, in Harburg/Württ. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Hans Dorr, SS #77,360, born 7.4.1912, in Sontheim/Algäu. BDC.

Verfügungstruppe, and merely stated: "Dortselbst /in the law office/ verblieb ich bis zum Eintritt in die Leibstandarte."<sup>1</sup> Becker joined the SS on 30 June 1934. He did not attend a Junkerschule, but advanced through the ranks until he was commissioned Untersturmführer a few weeks before the outbreak of the War. As an officer he was judged as having "... gute geistige Fähigkeiten ..., Bestimmtes auftreten, und ausgesprochene gute Lehrfähigkeit."<sup>2</sup> In 1942, when he was a young company commander with the Leibstandarte in Russia he was awarded the Knights Cross "... wegen höchster Bewährung bei der Einnahme von Charkow."<sup>3</sup>

Hans Dorr was born to parents whom he described as Erbhofbauers-eheleute.<sup>4</sup> After completing elementary school he learned the trade of a butcher. In 1932 he made his "Gesellenprüfung im Fleischereigewerbe," then went to work in the local meat packing plant. There he soon became a "Feinwurstspezialist."<sup>5</sup> In April 1933 he joined the Allgemeine SS and in January of the following year transferred to the Politische Bereitschaften. He advanced through the non-commissioned rank structure, until in 1937, a few months after he was promoted to Scharführer (sergeant) he was sent to the SS Junkerschule at Tölz.<sup>6</sup> The Junkerschule assessment stated "Oberjunker Dorr ist ein stiller bescheidener Mensch, ... sein Auftreten vor der Front ist bestimmt und sicher." It concluded:

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<sup>1</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Hans Becker, dated 2 April 1939. Personnel File: Hans Becker.

<sup>2</sup>"Beurteilung" of Hans Becker, dated 21 June 1944. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Völkischer Beobachter, 31 March 1942.

<sup>4</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Hans Dorr, dated 10 June 1937. Personnel File: Hans Dorr.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hans Dorr. Ibid.



"Ich habe den Eindruck, dass der Standartenoberjunker Dorr bei weiterer Schulbildung und Aneignung von Kenntnissen und Erfahrungen ein guter Zugführer wird, und stets bemüht sein wird die Zufriedenheit seiner Vorgesetzten zu erringen."<sup>1</sup> The graduating report of Dorr's stated: "Trotz Volksschulbildung und mittelmässiger geistiger Beweglichkeit schafft er durch seinen gesunden Ehrgeiz und eisernen Fleiss fast in allen Fächern ziemlich gute Leistungen."<sup>2</sup> Once war broke out the erstwhile Feinwurstspezialist had a most remarkable career in the SS. Although he had only a Volksschulbildung and "mittelmässige geistige Beweglichkeit" he advanced in six years from Untersturmführer to Obersturmbannführer. He was awarded the Knights Cross in September 1941, the Oak Leaves, as the 327th soldier, in November 1943, and the Swords to the Oak Leaves, as the 77th soldier, in July 1944. A final assessment of Dorr stressed his "... sicheres Auftreten ..." and described him as a "... ausgesprochene Führerpersönlichkeit."<sup>3</sup>

When Herbert Kuhlmann was at the SS Junkerschule Braunschweig he received the following assessment from his instructors. They were of the opinion that Kuhlmann was "geistig wenig differenziert ..." and "Es fehlt ihm an Sprach-wie überhaupt an geistiger Kultur." The report continues: "Er denkt ganz anschaulich lebensnahe, er ist unbelastet, sagt alles so, wie er es denkt, wobei er allerdings oft

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<sup>1</sup>"Beurteilung" of Hans Dorr by the SS Junkerschule Tölz. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Abgangszeugnis" of Hans Dorr, from the SS Junkerschule Tölz, dated 26 October 1938. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Beurteilung" of Hans Dorr, dated 1 July 1944. The report went on to say that Dorr had "Klare, schnelle Auffassungsgabe, ... schnelle Entschlusskraft ...." and concluded with the sentence "Er ist nach seiner ausgezeichneten Veranlagung und seinen hervorragenden Fähigkeiten der geborene Truppführer." Ibid.

die Gefahr läuft, da wenig selbstkritisch, unkritisch zu verfahren."

As far as his education was concerned, the instructors were of the opinion that Kuhlmann, who had attended a Mittelschule for 2 years, tried very hard "... seine fehlende Schulbildung durch Bereicherung des Wissens nachzuholen." In his practical work "... zeigt sich das Fehlen einer geistigen Ausrichtung, so dass er oft ziellos daraufarbeitet."<sup>1</sup>

While the board found Kuhlmann's intellectual qualities and his formal schooling deficient, the redeeming factors were that Kuhlmann possessed a deep "soldatisches Empfinden," and that he submitted readily to military discipline. Thus, although the psychiatrist assessed him as a "... robuster, geistig etwas kleiner Mensch," whose "... Bildung ist lückenhaft ...,"<sup>2</sup> Kuhlmann was allowed to graduate from the Junkerschule. By the outbreak of the war Kuhlmann was an Obersturmführer; by 1944 he was a Sturmbannführer and regimental commander. In the heavy fighting in Russia in early 1944, he was awarded the Knights Cross.<sup>3</sup>

Bruno Beeck, whose parents owned a "Bauernhof" in northern Germany, and who left the "Real-Gymnasium" after attending it for four years, went into a "kaufmännische Lehre."<sup>4</sup> The year was 1933. In the same year he joined the Hitler Youth where he soon found himself in the

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<sup>1</sup>"Gutachten des Prüfungsausschusses," Psychologische Prüfstelle vi. Personnel File: Herbert Kuhlmann.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Das Schwarze Korps, 1 March 1944.

<sup>4</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Bruno Beeck, dated 10 January 1937. Personnel File: Bruno Beeck.

senior rank of Jungbannführer.<sup>1</sup> He was so successful in the HJ that with the age of 18 he was asked to become a full-time HJ Führer. In 1935 he became an SS recruit in the SS Standarte "Germania". Beeck's joining date coincided with Hitler's decision to rearm Germany in March 1935. Once again the leadership qualities in Beeck were soon recognized, for in early 1937 he was sent to the SS Junkerschule Braunschweig. His graduation report from Braunschweig stated "Trotz seiner nicht abgeschlossenen Schulbildung hat der durch Fleiss und Energie sein Ziel erreicht."<sup>2</sup> The instructors commended his political reliability and found him "... weltanschaulich einwandfrei und für die SS Führerlaufbahn durchaus geeignet."<sup>3</sup> A few months before Beeck was killed in Russia at the age of 25, he was lauded as a "guter Nationalsozialist, dessen Weltanschauung sich in allen seinen Taten äussert."<sup>4</sup>

George Stein in his history of the Waffen SS wrote that one of the main problems which the pre-war Verfügungstruppe had to cope with was the lack of experienced officers and NCOs.<sup>5</sup> The few professional military men like Hausser and Steiner who joined the SS rose rapidly in the hierarchy. But not too many officers, who possessed the necessary military expertise, joined the Verfügungstruppe. It was,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. As far as education (non-Abitur) and social background (small peasant proprietor) is concerned Beeck was the typical representative of the pre-1936 Hitler Youth leader. It was after 1936 that the more educated leaders made the position of "... Hitler Youth leader more 'socially acceptable'." Koch, The Hitler Youth, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>"Abgangszeugnis" of the SS Junkerschule Braunschweig, dated 31 January 1938. Personnel File: Bruno Beeck.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Beurteilung" of Bruno Beeck, dated 14 November 1941. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 11.



therefore, decided to attract former regular army NCOs into the Führerkorps of the Verfügungstruppe. Two men who followed the call to join the SS were the former Feldwebel (sergeants) of the army Willi Braun<sup>1</sup> and Hugo Hoschke.<sup>2</sup>

Braun was orphaned at the age of 11 and raised by an aunt. After completing elementary school, he went into the "kaufmännische Lehre." At the age of 18, however, he joined the 100,000-man army allowed Germany under the Versailles Treaty. Although Braun was sent to attend the junior and senior NCO courses, it took him until 1930 before he received a "... vorzeitige Beförderung zum Gefreiten."<sup>3</sup> A year later he was promoted to corporal (Unteroffizier). He was an instructor on a jr. NCO course when he was called upon to apply his military expertise as "Kurs-und Prüfungsleiter in der SA Gruppe Südwest."<sup>4</sup> This was the first time that he worked with a National Socialist organization and he was impressed with their sense of comradeship. In June 1933 Braun was promoted to the rank of jr. sergeant (Unterfeldwebel); shortly thereafter he was appointed to train "... SS Männer vom Abschnitt XI und der Politischen Bereitschaft."<sup>5</sup> It was here that Braun, the 7-year veteran of the Reichswehr, came into contact with the SS. His leadership

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Willi Braun, SS #214,175, born 20.5.1908, in Metz. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Hugo Hoschke, SS #160,914, born 25.5.1902, in Schlossrippach/Thüringen. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Willi Braun, dated 7 May 1934. Personnel File: Willi Braun.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

and potential as a teacher was recognized by the army for, not only was he given another "... vorzeitige Beförderung zum Feldwebel" but he was also recommended for officer training. At this point Braun decided to transfer to the infant Verfügungstruppe of the SS. Braun made the poignant observation in his Lebenslauf that, even if he were commissioned in the regular army, he would always have been discriminated against because of the time that he spent as an NCO. He transferred to the Verfügungstruppe because he felt that his social origin and his years as another rank would not be held against him.<sup>1</sup> He transferred to the SS on 1 May 1934, and was commissioned Untersturmführer on 1 August 1934.<sup>2</sup> The army supported the transfer and stated in the Dienstleistungszeugnis "Braun ist eine Stelle als Leiter der SS-Führerschule Abschnitt XI angeboten worden, wo B. schon einen Kurs geleitet hat. Es handelt sich dabei um ein seinen Fähigkeiten und Leistungen entsprechendes sehr günstiges Angebot, dass eine Lebens, zum mindestens eine Dauerstellung in sich schliesst."<sup>3</sup> The report lauded "... seine Leistungen ... auf allen Gebieten ..." and assessed him as a "... strebsamer Mensch, der immer bemüht ist sich weiter zu bilden."<sup>4</sup>

By 1935 Braun was a company commander<sup>5</sup> and in 1938 he was described by his superiors as a "... geborener Soldat mit ausgezeichneten Führereigenschaften."<sup>6</sup> The fact that the report also stressed that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn," of Willi Braun. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Dienstleistungszeugnis über den Feldwebel Braun, 9/IR14," dated 11 April 1934. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Willi Braun. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>"Beurteilung" of Willi Braun by the 11. Standarte "Germania," dated 9 December 1938. Ibid.

Braun was an officer "... der immer bemüht ist sich weiterzubilden"<sup>1</sup> shows that the Verfügungstruppe placed some value on the fact that their officers furthered their education. After the Polish and French campaigns Braun was assessed: "Er genießt im ganzen Offizierskorps einen ausgezeichneten Ruf."<sup>2</sup> On 30 January 1945, while Braun was leading a regiment on the fast crumbling eastern front, the erstwhile Reichswehr NCO was promoted to Standartenführer.<sup>3</sup>

At this point it may be asked whether Braun was a convinced National Socialist, or merely a military man who possessed leadership qualities but who felt that he would never be able to exercise them to the fullest extent in the tradition-bound army. Although he joined the NSDAP in May 1933, no mention is made of his political attitude in his Lebenslauf, nor is his political reliability ever referred to in any of the Beurteilungen written on him. Most likely Braun was a man who saw obvious advantages in joining a young, aggressive, and traditionless military force which would permit him without social stigma to devote himself to the military trade.

The case of Willi Braun shows that former army NCOs could make a successful transition from NCO to senior officer. The small Verfügungstruppe in the pre-war era depended on such men to supply it with the much needed military leadership. The case of Hugo Hoschke, on the other hand, shows that not all men were successful in their new

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Beurteilung" of Willi Braun by the SS Regiment "Germania", dated 3 October 1940. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Willi Braun. Ibid.



roles as officers. Hoschke, who came from working class background, began his trades training as a tool and dye maker. The revolution of 1918, however, interfered with his training at the Rheinische Metall und Maschinenfabrik. He was laid off.<sup>1</sup> Hoschke never returned to complete the course, even after normal conditions had returned. He remained an unskilled labourer in a tile factory until he joined the Reichswehr as a private in 1921.<sup>2</sup> He was trained as a communications specialist in the army, and was promoted lance corporal (Gefreiter) in 1925. For the next 8 years Hoschke was a conscientious soldier and in 1933 he was released from the army after his 12-year enlistment period had expired, with the rank of sergeant.<sup>3</sup> While Hoschke did not display leadership as Braun had, he was not an idle soldier either. In the service Hoschke took up trades training once again and completed a course as "Maschinenbauer."<sup>4</sup> Civilian life, however, did not hold his interest for very long, for he soon joined the "SS Sonderkommando in Lichterfelde."<sup>5</sup> The political factor does not seem to have played an important role, for Hoschke did not join the NSDAP until two years after he joined the SS.<sup>6</sup> Four months after joining the SS Hoschke was commissioned Untersturmführer.<sup>7</sup> By 1938, however, it had become clear

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<sup>1</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Hugo Hoschke, dated 6 December 1934. Personnel File: Hugo Hoschke.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>The date Hoschke joined the NSDAP is uncertain. Although he received party #3,601,622 there is a question mark behind his joining date of 1 April 1935. Master card. Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hugo Hoschke. Ibid.

"... dass SS Hauptsturmführer Hoschke seine Ungeeignetheit als Führer wie als Arbeiter im Stabe des Sturmbannes bewiesen habe."<sup>1</sup> The report was written by the then Brigadeführer Hausser, the one-time lieutenant-general, who was then "Inspektor der Verfügungstruppe." Hausser was of the opinion that "... Hoschkes geistige Gaben reichen nicht aus; sie werden durch seine Erfahrungen als 12-jährig gedienter Soldat nicht ausgeglichen."<sup>2</sup> Hausser concluded that "Eine weitere Erprobung bei einem anderen Truppenteil der SS-VT scheint zwecklos" and therefore "... muss ihm wegen mangelnder Befähigung gekündigt werden."<sup>3</sup> Hoschke was released from the VT in December 1938, but the outbreak of the War prompted his recall. He was, however, given no combat command and only received one further promotion.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that so many young men with the Abitur flocked to the Verfügungstruppe was not without cause. One has to remember that all the young Abiturienten had been subjected to an incessant propaganda in their schools and in the Hitler Youth. There the virtues of National Socialism were extolled, and learning was aimed at fitting "... every student into the same pattern of easily calculable mass reaction."<sup>5</sup> The SS was seen as the élite, and especially the Verfügungstruppe had "... the advantage of small size and hand-picked manpower of the highest physical caliber."<sup>6</sup> The VT also had an advantage insofar that it was

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<sup>1</sup>To the Chef des SS Personalamtes, dated 23 July 1935. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hugo Hoschke. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Engelmann, German Education, p. 87.

<sup>6</sup>Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 13.

possible for the volunteers to obtain a level of training superior to that of the regular army.<sup>1</sup> In view of the prestige which the armed branch of the SS enjoyed it was easy for the to attract young secondary school graduates, frequently to the chagrin of the regular army which accused the SS of snatching the best applicants.<sup>2</sup>

The Verfügungstruppe recruited some of its ablest commanders from among the young Abiturienten prior to September 1939. Stein is of the opinion that these youngsters exemplified "... the real spirit of the Waffen SS" young men "... who had consecrated themselves to the blind obedience of all orders emanating from the Führer ... and whose highest aims were loyalty and toughness."<sup>3</sup>

One such young man was the former SS Oberführer Hugo Kraas,<sup>4</sup> the son of an elementary school teacher from the Ruhr. In 1933 Kraas completed his Abitur, and went straightaway to the Labour Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst). After completing his labour service he joined the Reichswehr as a Reserveoffizieranwärter. But ten months after joining the army he transferred to the SS regiment "Germania."<sup>5</sup> After spending his obligatory time as an other rank, Kraas was sent to the SS Junkerschule at Braunschweig from where he graduated as Untersturmführer

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<sup>1</sup>Stein stated that up to 1938 "... nearly all SS infantrymen were trained as assault troops similar to British Commandos and United States Army Rangers." Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 291-292.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberführer Hugo Kraas, SS #289,633, born 25.1.1911, in Witten/Ruhr. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>"Lebenslauf" of Hugo Kraas, undated. Ibid.



in 1938. The Junkerschule assessed him as a "... sensibler und stark geistiger Mensch."<sup>1</sup> During the French campaign the 29-year old Kraas "... wurde als erster Führer seines Regiments mit dem E.K.I. ausgezeichnet."<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1943 Kraas was decorated with the Knights Cross for his actions in the Kharkow sector.<sup>3</sup> In January 1944, Kraas, by now a regimental commander in the "Leibstandarte," was decorated as the 375th soldier with the Oak-Leaves for his "... hervorragende Führungs- und Tapferkeitsleistungen."<sup>4</sup> In the final major offensive of the war, the then 33-year-old Kraas commanded the 12th SS Panzerdivision "Hitler Jugend."<sup>5</sup>

August Dieckmann<sup>6</sup> was the son of a junior ranking railway official. In spite of his lower middle class background, and severe financial handicaps, he was determined to go to the Gymnasium from where he obtained his Abitur in 1932. Dieckmann stated in his Lebenslauf that he could only afford his secondary school fees because he tutored other students and found additional work after school. A grant gave

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<sup>1</sup>"Abgangszeugnis" of the SS Junkerschule Braunschweig, 20 August 1938. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Stein wrote that Kraas was the first officer in the French campaign to receive the E.K.I. The Waffen SS, p. 63. Höhne, who uses Stein as his source, makes the same statement. The Order, p. 460. Kraas' personnel file makes no such claim; it merely states that Kraas was the first officer of his regiment to win the Iron Cross in the French campaign.

<sup>3</sup>Das Schwarze Korps, 23 December 1943.

<sup>4</sup>"Pressemitteilung" Eichenlaub für Regimentskommandeur in der LSSAH. He was awarded the Oakleaves on 25 January 1944. Personnel File: Hugo Kraas; see also, Das Schwarze Korps, 29 January 1944.

<sup>5</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hugo Kraas. Personnel File: Hugo Kraas; see also, Weingartner, Hitler's Guard, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer August Dieckmann, SS #183,917, born 29.5.1912, in Cadenberge. BDC.

him a "Schulgeldermässigung."<sup>1</sup> Thus the years in secondary school were not easy ones for the young Dieckmann. He described this period in his life in the following terms: "Diese Lebensführung hatte durch die Ertragung von mancherlei Entbehrungen eine frühe Bekenntnis zu einer ernsten aufrichtigen Lebensauffassung und eine Festigung meines Charakters zur Folge."<sup>2</sup> Dieckmann's entry into the SS in 1933 could not have been due to any inner political convictions, for he stated in his Lebenslauf: "Zur politischen Tätigkeit fand ich als Schüler nur wenig Gelegenheit."<sup>3</sup> Since Dieckmann could not boast of any political involvement as a student, he justified his entrance with "... weil ich in ihr die grösste individuelle Möglichkeit sah mich meinem Vaterlande widmen zu können."<sup>4</sup> Dieckmann did not join the NSDAP until May 1937 by which time he had already graduated from the SS Junkerschule.<sup>5</sup>

The personal qualities which made Dieckmann the successful commander he became during the war, were demonstrated early in his life. The fact that he was forced to earn money to pay for his secondary school education, at a time when it was not customary for Gymnasisten to work, showed a high degree of tenacity and perseverance. At the Junkerschule the psychological assessment emphasized this trait in Dieckmann when it mentioned "durch praktische Lebenserfahrung gehärtete Willenskraft und Lebenseifer .... Er will auf alle Fälle vorwärts

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<sup>1</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of August Dieckmann, dated 8 February 1935. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of August Dieckmann. Ibid.



kommen."<sup>1</sup> Dieckmann did turn out to be a determined and tenacious SS officer. He reached the rank of Obersturmbannführer by June 1943. He earned the Knights Cross in 1942; he was awarded the Oakleaves as the second officer of the SS Division 'Wiking',<sup>2</sup> and the Swords to the Oakleaves posthumously.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that Kraas and Dieckmann had received their Abitur around 1933 is revealed in their biographical sketches. While Kraas made no political statements in his Lebenslauf, Dieckmann openly admitted that he had no time to become involved in politics while he was a struggling student. In the Lebenslauf of Heinrich Brand,<sup>4</sup> one finds evidence that he went not only through a school system that had been under the influence of National Socialism for some time, but that he had actually attended one of the Napolas. Although Brand attended school in Italy for a number of years, he could not deny the influence of his father who was "Landesgruppenleiter der NSDAP in Italien."<sup>5</sup> He also claimed that he came "... verhältnismässig früh mit der Bewegung in Berührung."<sup>6</sup> He expressed considerable pride in the fact that he was

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<sup>1</sup>"Gutachten des Prüfausschusses," dated 15 April 1935. The psychiatrist at the Junkerschule assessed Dieckmann in the following terms. "Ausreichende Intelligenz, ... zielbestrebter Willenseinsatz .... Seine Ziele verfolgt er mit fanatischer Zähigkeit," and concluded the report with the sentence: "Für eine Aufgabe kann er sich bis an die letzten Grenzen seiner Leistungsfähigkeit und ohne Rücksicht auf sein persönliches Wohl einsetzen." Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Das Schwarze Korps, 10 June 1943. "Ein Wikinger."

<sup>3</sup>"Verlustmeldung" of August Dieckmann, dated 22 October 1943. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Brand, SS #313,052, born 11.10.1916, in Spandau. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Heinrich Brand, dated 11 December 1938. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



told by the Reich Youth Leader in September 1934 "... ich könnte meine Schulbildung auf einer NPEA beenden."<sup>1</sup> He further described how in the summer of 1935 he travelled to "... Ostpommern an die polnische Grenze. Hier lernte ich in Deutschland den Volkstumskampf, an dem ich als ehemaliger Auslandsdeutscher Interesse hatte, kennen."<sup>2</sup> At the Junkerschule, which he attended in 1938, his "... gefestigte Weltanschauung" was commented upon, but unlike Kraas and Dieckmann who demonstrated definite leadership abilities at the SS academy, Brand was assessed as a Standartenjunker "... der wenig hervortritt."<sup>3</sup>

But not all the young men that were attracted to the Verfügungstruppe, and who passed through the rigorous training of the Junkerschulen portrayed the aggressive leadership qualities which Stein commented on,<sup>4</sup> nor were all the fanatical National Socialist type as exemplified by Kurt Meyer. Alfred Graf zu Dohna-Schlobitten<sup>5</sup> came from a well-known and established Prussian Junker family. As such he was brought up in surroundings unknown to most of the National Socialist leaders and SS officers. The young count had a private tutor until the age of 15, at which time he was sent to the "Realsymnasium des Landschulheimes Neubrunnen,"<sup>6</sup> where he obtained his Abitur in 1936. After fulfilling his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Abgangszeugnis der SS Junkerschule Tölz," dated 15 August 1939. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Alfred Graf zu Dohna-Schlobitten, SS #279,993, born 20.9.1917, in Danzig. BDC.

<sup>6</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Dohna-Schlobitten, dated 21 February 1938. Ibid.

obligatory Labour Service, and studying applied "Forstwirtschaft" he joined the Verfügungstruppe in April 1937. But from the beginning Dohna-Schlobitten had difficulties adjusting to the environment he encountered in the SS. The fact that he remained a member of the Protestant church after he was commissioned was a point of contention. As late as 1943 a "Beurteilung" of Dohna-Schlobitten stated: "Da D. noch kirchlich gebunden ist, kann von einer restlosen nat. soz. Festigung nicht gesprochen werden."<sup>2</sup> At the Junkerschule his instructors felt "Es fehlt die Härte und Bestimmtheit der Meinung,"<sup>3</sup> and the concluding assessment was that "... Dohna ist nach dem Ablauf des Lehrganges nur zum Führer geeignet, wenn er in keine verantwortungsvolle Stellung kommt."<sup>4</sup> From the above comments it is clear that the young Dohna, whose family produced a number of well-known military figures, was not the type required by the élite formation of the Third Reich.

This chapter has shown that there was a discernible relationship between (1) the education of the officer and the branch he chose to serve in, and (2) the education of the officer and the time period in which he decided to join the SS. It has also been shown that the educated segment was considerably overrepresented in the Führerkorps and that members of this group did not hesitate to apply their knowledge and skills in the execution of Hitler's racial policy once war began.

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<sup>1</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Dohna-Schlobitten. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Beurteilung" of Dohna-Schlobitten, dated 21 May 1943. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Beurteilung" of Dohna-Schlobitten, dated 14 December 1938. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Beurteilung" of Dohna-Schlobitten, dated 25 February 1939. Ibid.

## Chapter VI

### OCCUPATIONS OF THE SS OFFICERS AND THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC HOME BACKGROUNDS

As early as 1922 Hitler stated; "Aus den Reihen des Mittelstandes müssen die Kämpfer kommen."<sup>1</sup> Alfred Rosenberg, the hazy philosophical bard of National Socialism, praised the Mittelstand as the only social stratum "... der sich dem Weltbetrug widersetzt habe."<sup>2</sup> Fest, in his biography of Hitler, pointed out that the dictator with his emphasis on the German Mittelstand copied the techniques of Karl Lueger<sup>3</sup> who mobilized the "... vom Untergang bedrohten Mittelstand ... und hat sich auf diese Weise eine nur sehr schwer zu erschütternde Anhängerschaft von ebenso grosser Opferwilligkeit und zäher Kampfbereitschaft gesichert."<sup>4</sup>

More recent studies which have dealt with the social composition of the NSDAP have shown that the Nazi Party was in essence "... eine Partei des unteren Mittelstandes."<sup>5</sup> Broszat stated in 1970 that National Socialism's

neue Formeln, die sämtlich um den wagen Inbegriff der nationalen und sozialen Erneuerung kreisten, waren Widerspiegelung der Richtung und Motivierung der

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<sup>1</sup>Völkischer Beobachter, 30 August 1922.

<sup>2</sup>Fest, Hitler, p. 213.

<sup>3</sup>Karl Lueger was the well-known anti-semitic mayor of Vienna around the turn of the century. His politics have been described as "... the politics of reason transformed into politics of phantasy, built upon the social blight of anti-semitism." Allan Janick & Stephen Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York 1973), p. 50. Lueger's anti-semitic policy is further described in P. G. J. Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria (New York 1964). See esp. chapter 18, pp. 162-70.

<sup>4</sup>Fest, Hitler, p. 213.

<sup>5</sup>Kater, "Soziographie," p. 159.



sozialen Dynamik der Mittelschichten, die die soziale Massenbasis der NSDAP bildeten.<sup>1</sup>

Peter Strachura in his recent study of German Youth in the Weimar Republic wrote that

... it had been established beyond doubt in previous works on the rise of National Socialism that the NSDAP gathered a great proportion of its support from that section of German society that had been most devastatingly crippled by the economic dislocation and financial vicissitudes, namely the lower middle and middle middle class.<sup>2</sup>

David Schoenbaum in an earlier social history of Germany found that in 1933 workers, relative to the total population, were underrepresented in the NSDAP while "... white collar workers were overrepresented by roughly 65%."<sup>3</sup>

With the increased use of the quantitative method in historical research more precise estimates of the social composition of the NSDAP have become available. Thus, Kater could say in his "Soziographie der frühen NSDAP" that according to the pre-1923 party membership list "... der Prozentsatz der ungelernten Arbeiter verhältnismässig niedrig ist, der der Facharbeiter und Handwerker am höchsten."<sup>4</sup> Kater found that if one included in "... den unteren Mittelstand alle Facharbeiter, Handwerker, untere und mittlere Angestellte und Beamte, sowie Landwirte und Kaufleute so ergeben sich schon 62.6 von hundert."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Broszat, "Soziale Motivation und Führerbindung des Nationalsozialismus," Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, No. 4, October 1970, p. 396.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Strachura, Nazi Youth in the Weimar Republic (Santa Barbara & Oxford 1975), p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution, p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Kater, "Soziographie," p. 153.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

In 1972 Heinrich Winkler listed the nation-wide distribution of certain occupations and compared them with those found in the NSDAP.<sup>1</sup> He found, that although Arbeiter made up 45.9% of the German work force, they comprised only 28.1% of the NSDAP membership.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Winkler found that private Angestellte who made up 12% of the work force and Beamte who comprised 5.1% of Germany's labour force made up 25.6% and 8.3% respectively of the Nazi membership just prior to the Machtergreifung.<sup>3</sup>

Table 6.1 shows the occupational distribution of the total corps

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Table 6.1

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sample. The occupational breakdown of the total corps sample shows that the untere Mittelstand is overrepresented. When the occupations of the untere Mittelstand are added up one finds that 58.7% of the sampled Führerkorps belonged to that stratum of society.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly,

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<sup>1</sup>Heinrich Winkler, "Extremismus der Mitte? Sozialpolitische Aspekte der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung," Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, No. 2, April 1972, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup>Albrecht Tyrell is of the opinion that the high percentage of Arbeiter in the NSDAP (28.1%) was faked so that the NSDAP could call itself an Arbeiterpartei. Tyrell discovered that there were 34,000 Arbeiter in the party prior to September 1930. Only by averaging this total with 121,000 members, which was an "imaginäre Bezugzahl," instead of the 300,000 members which the party actually had, were the Nazis able to claim a 28.1% Arbeitermitgliedschaft. Tyrell, Führer befahl ..., p. 379.

<sup>3</sup>Winkler, "Extremismus der Mitte," p. 181.

<sup>4</sup>In the classification of the untere Mittelstand Kater's occupational categorization as found in his "Soziographie der frühen NSDAP" was closely adhered to. Therefore the following occupations were included in the untere Mittelstand: Facharbeiter (skilled workers); Handwerker (tradesmen); untere und mittlere Angestellte (lower and middle level employees); untere und mittlere Beamte (lower and middle level civil servants); Militär-Unteroffiziere und Mannschaften (military-NCO's and other ranks); Landwirte (peasant proprietors); Kaufleute (small businessmen); Volksschullehrer (elementary school teachers); in addition half of the entrepreneurs such as Schankwirte were included in the untere Mittelstand.

Table 6.1 The Occupational Distribution of the Total Corps Sample

Occupations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Percent of Total Sample	1.1	6.3	13.5	11.6	5.1	3.8	1.9	4.4	14.4	.7	.5	5.0	2.5	11.0	4.6	10.7	1.4	1.7

LEGEND

- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 - Unskilled Workers                  | 7 - Military (NCO's and other ranks | 13 - Senior Civil Servants                    |
| 2 - Skilled Workers                    | 8 - Peasant Proprietors             | 14 - Professionals (Akademiker)               |
| 3 - Tradesmen                          | 9 - small Businessmen (Kaufleute)   | 15 - Students                                 |
| 4 - Lower and Middle Private Employees | 10 - Artists                        | 16 - Jurists                                  |
| 5 - Lower and Middle Civil Servants    | 11 - Entrepreneur                   | 17 - Elementary School Teachers               |
| 6 - Military (Officers)                | 12 - Senior Private Employees       | 18 - Secondary School and University Teachers |



since the study deals exclusively with the officer corps of the SS, one finds the Arbeiterschicht highly underrepresented. Whereas Kater found that 9.5% of the pre-1923 Nazis were Arbeiter, the percentage of Arbeiter in the Führerkorps of the Schutzstaffel was a mere 1.1%.

If one compares the percentage of Arbeiter and members of the untere Mittelstand found in the officer corps with the generally accepted distribution in German society, the under and over-representation of the two social groups becomes all the more apparent. Regardless of the model used,<sup>1</sup> it is generally accepted that between 40-50% of the German labour force are Arbeiter, with approximately the same percentage falling into the untere Mittelstand. With only 1.1% of the sampled officers belonging to the Arbeiterschicht the under-representation of this stratum of society is clearly revealed. Similarly, with 59% of the sampled officers holding occupations which place them into the untere Mittelstand, the overrepresentation of this group is demonstrated.

Equally interesting results are found when one considers the obere Mittelstand. According to a number of sociological models, between 5-10% of Germany's work force has occupations that are categorized as the obere Mittelstand.<sup>2</sup> In the pre-war Führerkorps of the SS 33% of the officers belonged to that stratum of society.<sup>3</sup> Especially the

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<sup>1</sup>For the various sociological models used, see, Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The following occupations were placed in the obere Mittelstand: Militär-Offiziere (military-officers); Künstler (artists); höhere privat Angestellte (senior private employees); höhere Beamte (senior civil servants); Akademiker (professionals); Studenten (students); Juristen (jurists); Gymnasiallehrer und Professoren (Secondary school and university teachers).  
(continued)

Akademiker (Freiberufliche) - 11% of the sample - and jurists - 10.7% of the sample - are most noticeably overrepresented.

Table 6.2 illustrates the rates at which men from the various

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Table 6.2

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occupations joined the SS. Compared to the joining rate of the total corps sample, it is readily seen that the ungelernte Arbeiter were greatly overrepresented during Phase I. By the end of Phase I, December 1930, 35% of the ungelernte Arbeiter in this study had joined the SS. By the time of the Machtergreifung the percentage had risen to 70%. The overrepresentation of the untere Mittelstand is also seen during Phase I. It is during the period January 1931 to January 1933 that all occupations of the untere Mittelstand, with the exception of lower and middle level civil servants,<sup>1</sup> were overrepresented. Whereas 40% of the total corps sample was in the SS by January 1933, 60.8% of the skilled workers, 63.5% of the tradesmen, 48.9% of the lower and middle level private employees, 34.6% of the lower and middle level civil servants, 43.1% of the former NCO's and soldiers, 44.4% of the landed proprietors, 54.1% of small businessmen, and 40.8% of elementary school teachers had donned the black uniform.

Hitler's seizure of power on 30 January 1933 appears to have been a watershed in the joining pattern of the various occupational groups.

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Also half of the entrepreneurs were included in this category. Students were included because all of them had either obtained the Abitur and embarked on careers as full-time SS officers, or they were still attending university.

<sup>1</sup>The slow joining rate of the civil servants is most likely caused by the Prussian Government's edict which forbade civil servants to join either the NSDAP or KPD. Hans Mommsen, Beamtentum im Dritten Reich; Mit ausgewählten Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Beamtenpolitik, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte (Stuttgart 1966).



Table 6.2 Rates at which the Different Occupational Groups Joined the SS

Occupations 1-8

Time Periods	Percent of Total Sample	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4/25-12/27	2.3	1.1	6.3	13.5	11.4	5.1	3.8	1.9	4.4
1/28-12/30	10.4	8.9	2.7	6.6	2.6	4.1	---	1.0	3.5
Total Phase I	12.7	26.8	14.6	22.2	15.0	7.8	4.0	7.8	12.2
1/31-1/33	27.8	35.7	17.3	28.8	17.6	11.9	4.0	8.8	15.7
2/33-6/34	29.5	35.7	43.5	31.3	22.7	18.1	34.3	34.3	28.7
Total Phase II	57.3	5.4	20.4	13.6	27.6	23.4	22.1	31.4	25.7
7/34-12/36	12.6	41.1	63.9	48.3	58.9	46.1	40.2	65.7	54.4
1/37-9/39	17.4	7.1	9.1	9.2	9.4	11.9	23.6	14.7	17.0
Total Phase III	30.0	16.1	9.7	13.7	14.3	30.1	31.2	10.8	13.0
		23.2	18.8	22.9	23.7	42.0	54.8	25.5	30.0

LEGEND

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 - Unskilled Workers                  | 5 - Lower and Middle Civil Servants |
| 2 - Skilled Workers                    | 6 - Military (Officers)             |
| 3 - Tradesmen                          | 7 - Military (NCO's and men)        |
| 4 - Lower and Middle Private Employers | 8 - Peasant Proprietor              |



Table 6.2 Rates at which the Different Occupational Groups Joined the SS (cont.)

Occupations 9-18

Time Periods	Percent of Total Sample	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
4/25-12/27	2.3	14.4	.7	.5	5.0	2.5	11.0	4.6	10.7	1.4	1.7
1/28-12/30	10.4	2.2	2.3	4.0	---	---	---	---	.4	---	---
Total Phase I	12.7	11.1	8.8	8.0	9.2	4.7	5.0	1.7	2.1	6.6	2.2
1/31-1/33	27.8	13.3	11.1	12.0	9.2	4.7	5.0	1.7	2.5	6.6	2.2
2/33-6/34	29.5	40.8	25.0	48.0	25.2	12.4	20.8	12.4	10.7	34.2	17.6
Total Phase II	57.3	28.1	27.8	28.0	38.5	25.6	46.9	32.8	42.6	35.5	44.0
7/34-12/36	12.6	68.9	52.8	76.0	63.7	38.0	67.7	45.2	53.3	69.7	61.6
1/37-9/39	17.4	8.9	19.4	8.0	13.4	18.6	11.9	23.3	16.8	9.2	15.4
Total Phase III	30.0	9.2	16.7	4.0	13.7	38.8	15.4	29.9	27.5	14.5	20.9
		17.8	36.1	12.0	27.1	54.4	27.3	53.1	44.3	23.7	36.3

LEGEND

- 9 - Businessmen (Kaufleute)
- 10 - Artists
- 11 - Entrepreneur
- 12 - Senior Private Employees
- 13 - Senior Civil Servants

- 14 - Professional (Akademiker)
- 15 - Students
- 16 - Jurists
- 17 - Elementary School Teachers
- 18 - Secondary School and University Teachers

Officers of the Arbeiterschicht drop off most dramatically in the post-Machtergreifung era. The occupations of the untere Mittelstand, with the exception of former non-commissioned military personnel and elementary school teachers fall below the sampled corps joining rate. On the other hand, professions of the obere Mittelstand are, for the first time, overrepresented. While the joining rate for the total corps sample between February 1933 and June 1934 was 29.5%, 38.5% of the senior private employees entered the SS during this time, as did 46.9% of the Akademiker and 42.6% of the jurists. Forty-four percent of the secondary school and university teachers entered the SS during the first 17 months of the Hitler regime.<sup>1</sup>

In the chapter dealing with the education of the officers, it was shown that the percentage of officers with doctorates rose from 9.0% for the 1931 to 1933 period to 27.7% for the 1933 to 1934 period.<sup>2</sup> These findings are substantiated in the occupational analysis of the corps, which demonstrates that 44% of the sampled secondary school teachers and university professors joined between February 1933 and June 1934. Hitler was well aware of the sudden "conversion" of the intellectuals to National Socialism, and issued a stern warning against all those who "suddenly change their flag and move into the new state as though nothing had happened in order once again to have a main say in the realm of art and cultural policy."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A Chi-Square test of independence between the social class of the officers and the period in which they joined the SS substantiates the generalization drawn from Table 6.2. That is, there was a statistically significant relationship beyond the .001 level between social class and period in which the officer joined. For the detailed Chi-Square tabulation see Table 7, Appendix I, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup>See Table 5.2, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup>Fest, Face of the Third Reich, p. 382.



Aside from the senior civil servants who, at this point were still reluctant to come into the SS, the only other occupational group of the obere Mittelstand which held back was that of former officers. Only 22% of them had joined the SS between 1925 and 1933, and only a further 22% joined between February 1933 and June 1934. Why did so many officers join after June 1934? There are several events which account for the high joining rate after this date. First, it was after June 1934 that Himmler absorbed several veteran organizations such as the Kyffhäuserbund. This move brought in a number of officers on a pure transfer basis. Second, it was also after 1934 that Himmler absorbed the German police forces. Since a number of officers acquired senior positions in the police after their release from the army, it was only natural that these officers should find their way into the SS. But the third and perhaps most important reason for members of the former military establishment to join the SS after June 1934 was the fact that Hitler demonstrated to the regular army that it was still the 'sole bearer of arms' in the new state. The event which convinced the German military establishment of this was Hitler's handling of Röhm. Between January 1933 and June 1934 developments took place which made the regular army uneasy. Röhm, Hitler's closest friend and leader of an almost 3 million strong SA, advocated that the SA should become the nucleus of a new German army and that a new Ministry of Defence should be established which would control all para-military and regular military forces. Röhm, of course, was to head the new ministry.<sup>1</sup> The regular army was totally opposed to this idea. When Röhm was finally

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<sup>1</sup>Reitlinger, The SS, p. 55; see also, John W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power; The German Army in Politics, 1918-1945 (London 1954), p. 308.



eliminated by Hitler in June 1934, the army breathed a sigh of relief and was henceforth more prepared to cooperate with the Nazi regime.<sup>1</sup> The general easing of tension between the regular military establishment in Germany and the new Government most likely made itself felt in the retired officer corps. It, therefore, became quite appropriate to join one of the para-military formations of the new regime. The most obvious choice was the SS, the most disciplined and most prestigious formation of the Third Reich. The result was that 23.6% of the former officers joined between July 1934 and December 1936, with an additional 31.2% joining between January 1937 and the outbreak of the war.<sup>2</sup>

The unusually slow joining rate of the senior civil servants also warrants some comment. Table 6.2 shows that only 17% of the sampled senior civil servants had come into the SS by the time Hitler had assumed power. With an additional 25.6% that joined in the period immediately following the Machtergreifung, it can be seen that by June 1934, only 42.6% of the sampled civil servants had donned the black uniform. While it is true that the höhere Beamtentum in Germany was a caste unto itself, which on the whole "... did not admit outsiders ... and cared little for political values,"<sup>3</sup> it must be pointed out that the joining rate of this professional group is somewhat distorted. The

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

<sup>2</sup>The fact that more career opportunities for officers became available in the Verfügungstruppe after June 1934, contributed only marginally to the high joining rate of this study's sample during Phase III. This is because most officers were satisfied with joining the Allgemeine SS with only a fraction seeking new careers in the military branch of the SS.

<sup>3</sup>Franz Neumann, Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944 (New York 1963), first published 1942, p. 373.

distortion is unintentional and occurs because the jurists have not been included in the höhere Beamten category. Since a large number of the sampled jurists were civil servants, and since 42.6% of the jurists rushed to the SS during the 17 months period following Hitler's Machtergreifung, the joining rate for the senior civil servant category would undoubtedly have been higher had the jurists been included here. A closer look at the jurists will now be taken.

### The jurists:

In his book Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland Dahrendorf wrote about the German jurists:

Jedensfalls sind die Juristen innerhalb der deutschen politischen Klasse die grösste einzelne, durch ein wahrscheinlich bedeutendes gemeinsames Merkmal herausgehobene Gruppe. Eine Wanderung über einige Gipfel der Macht in der deutschen Gesellschaft kann uns zudem zeigen, dass Juristen in allen Bereichen, wenn schon in unterschiedlicher Konzentration, an der Spitze stehen.<sup>1</sup>

The question that arises at this point is, why does the Führerkorps of the SS contain such an inordinately high percentage of jurists? Once again Dahrendorf supplies a suitable answer. In his discussion of the German legal profession he states that many young men study law, as opposed to a more specialized discipline, because of a "... konsequenten Wunsch nach einer Eliteausbildung."<sup>2</sup> It is the general training which a law student receives which qualifies him "Experte des Allgemeinen zu werden."<sup>3</sup> If, therefore, a young man expressed the "Wunsch nach

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<sup>1</sup>Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>3</sup>Dahrendorf explains that those students who gave up their law studies for more specialized studies also gave up expectations for a career in a Führungsposition. Ibid.



einer Eliteausbildung" is it so illogical for him to desire to join the élite formation of the current regime?

Johe in his book Die gleichgeschaltete Justiz stated that before January 1933 "... bekannten sich nur wenige Richter und Staatsanwälte offen zur NSDAP."<sup>1</sup> This trend is also noticeable in the joining pattern of the jurists. Table 6.2 shows that only 13.2% of the jurists joined the SS prior to the Machtergreifung. Hitler's seizure of power, however, caused many jurists to abandon their aloofness toward National Socialism. How many of the jurists that flocked to the Nazi Party in early 1933 were sincere and how many were pure opportunists is hard to say. Johe questions the fact that many of the "Märzgefallene" jurists were convinced Nazis. He is of the opinion that they were more conservative, and nationalistic, and from their university days more völkisch orientated and basically anti-semitic.<sup>2</sup> One cannot deny that these political views would make many at least partially sympathetic to National Socialism. The fact that 42.6% of the sampled jurists entered the SS between January 1933 and June 1934 demands a closer examination of this occupational group.

A perusal of the "Lebensläufe" of the jurists shows a wide range of reasons for their entry into the SS.<sup>3</sup> Untersturmführer Dr. Arnold Bacmeister<sup>4</sup> was one of the oldest National Socialist jurists in

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<sup>1</sup>Johe, Die gleichgeschaltete Justiz, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>3</sup>Only lesser-known jurists are examined in this study. Such well-known jurists as Dr. Werner Best have been dealt with in considerable detail in other studies. Aronson, Reinhard Heydrich, pp. 142-152.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Untersturmführer Dr. Arnold Bacmeister, SS #277,480, born 13.11.1907, in Heilbronn a.N. BDC.



the sample. The son of an Oberstaatsanwalt, Bacmeister studied law at the Universities of Tübingen and Berlin. He obtained his law degree from Berlin in 1931. His affiliation with the NSDAP went back to 1926 when he joined the party a few months after his Abitur.<sup>1</sup> Upon graduation from university, Bacmeister became editor of the Stuttgarter NS Kurier. After Hitler assumed power he was called to Berlin by Goebbels who made him "... stellv. Leiter der Filmprüfstelle."<sup>2</sup> It was then that Bacmeister decided to join the Schutzstaffel. His life in the National Socialist system seemed secure, when in a routine racial check "... habe ich den Ahnen meiner Mutter in der 8.Generation ... festgestellt, der im Jahre 1725 vom Judentum zum Christentum übertrat."<sup>3</sup> Bacmeister was shattered by this revelation, and it must have been an extremely difficult task for him to write to Himmler: "Als alter Nationalsozialist ... und als SS Führer der mit Stolz den schwarzen Rock trägt, fällt es mir schwer, Ihnen, mein Reichsführer, auf Grund der dargelegten Feststellung, die Bitte vortragen zu müssen mich in Ehren aus der Schutzstaffel zu entlassen."<sup>4</sup> Bacmeister was released three weeks later.<sup>5</sup> His spotty racial background, however, did not affect his career in the Propaganda Ministry, where he continued to function as a film censor.

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<sup>1</sup>Master Card. He obtained party #38,455. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Arnold Bacmeister, dated 22 February 1937. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Letter of Arnold Bacmeister to "Reichsführer-SS Himmler," dated 2 December 1937. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Bacmeister concluded the letter with the sentence, "Wie Ihre Entscheidung auch ausfallen mag, mein Reichsführer, nie werde ich aufhören mich dem Geist der SS verbunden zu fühlen, ihre Ideale hoch zu stellen und ihre Tugenden nachzueifern." Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

Obersturmbannführer Dr. Justus Beyer<sup>1</sup> was not only the son of a Lutheran pastor, but he was also raised as a devout Lutheran. In his early teens the family moved from his native Pomerania to Thuringia where his father took over a larger parish. In 1928 Beyer passed his Abitur and began his law studies at Marburg. Two years later he transferred to Munich, and a year after that to Jena where he obtained his law degree in 1933.<sup>2</sup> His interest in National Socialism began in Munich where he was active in the NSDStB. After graduation he remained at the university as a "wissenschaftlicher Hilfsarbeiter," but it appears that his main function was to head a "nationalsozialistische juristische Arbeitsgemeinschaft."<sup>3</sup> In June 1934 he was editor of the NS journals "Jugend und Recht" and "Deutsches Recht."<sup>4</sup> It was in May 1934 that Beyer joined the SD, and remained with the intelligence branch until the collapse of the Third Reich. In 1944, while he was "Verbindungsführer des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes zur Parteikanzlei," he was described by his superiors "... als ein alter, bewährter Nationalsozialist, der sich bereits lange Jahre vor der Machtübernahme innerhalb der Studentenschaft für die Bewegung eingesetzt hat."<sup>5</sup> He was promoted Obersturmbannführer on 21 June 1944.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Dr. Justus Beyer, SS #107,138, born 16.4.1910, in Schurons, Krs. Stolp, Pommern. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Justus Beyer, undated. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Beurteilung des SS Sturmbannführers Dr. Justus Beyer," dated 7 May 1944. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Justus Beyer. Ibid.



In 1971 Simon Wiesenthal, the renowned Nazi hunter and director of the Dokumentationszentrum in Vienna, wrote to the then Chancellor of the Federal German Republic, Willy Brandt, a letter in which he drew the German chancellor's attention to the case of the former Standartenführer Dr. Ludwig Hahn.<sup>1</sup> It appears that the case of the one-time "Chef der Sipo und SD in Warshau" between 1941 and 1944, had been under 'investigation' for the past twelve years by the "Staatsanwaltschaft in Hamburg."<sup>2</sup> Hahn was charged with causing the death of numerous prisoners in the notorious Pawiak prison in Warsaw, in addition to having been responsible for the transport of 5000 Polish prisoners to Auschwitz and other concentration camps.<sup>3</sup> It was only with great reluctance that the state attorney in Hamburg proceeded with the case against Hahn, a case that was propelled into prominence by the German press at Wiesenthal's urgings.<sup>4</sup> Who was this erstwhile Standartenführer who was the cause of all the furor in the German press? In his meticulously

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Dr. Ludwig Hahn, SS #65,823, born 23.1.1908, in Eitzen, Krs. Uelzen, Lüneburger Heide. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of Simon Wiesenthal to Chancellor Willy Brandt, dated 10 January 1971. Wiesenthal Archive.

<sup>3</sup>"Zwölf Jahre Ermittlungen für NS-Prozess," Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2 May 1972.

<sup>4</sup>The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 5 June 1972 wrote: "Der Fall 'Hahn' war schon vor Prozessbeginn der Fall 'Hamburger Justiz' geworden .... Erst als der Leiter des jüdischen Dokumentationszentrums in Wien in einem Brief an Bundeskanzler Brandt fragete, weshalb sich zahlreiche Hamburger Ermittlungsverfahren wegen schwerwiegender NS-Gewaltverbrechen mittlerweile ins zweite Jahrzehnt schleppten, kam die Justizmaschine der Hansestadt in Gang." Vorwärts of 15 June 1972 found the progress made in the Hahn case "unbegreiflich." More left-wing publications such as the Democratic German Report of 27 December 1972 labelled the Hahn proceedings as "public scandal." Konkret of 10 June 1972 openly asked whether the fact that the SS officer Hahn was the brother-in-law of the Nato general Johannes Steinhoff had anything to do with the slow progress of justice? The post-war chief of the German air force appeared as a character witness for Hahn during the trial.



handwritten "Lebenslauf" Hahn described his father as a "Landwirt" who "... bewirtschaftete bis 1927 einen Bauernhof von 150 ha, von denen 75 ha landwirtschaftlich und 75 ha forstwirtschaftlich genutzt wurden."<sup>1</sup> In a precise and somewhat stilted German, which betrayed the SS officer's legal training, Hahn described how he grew up on the family farm, how he attended "Vorschule" and then nine years "Gymnasium und Realgymnasium zu Lüneburg." In 1927 he passed his Abitur and proceeded to study law at Jena. He remained at Jena until he had passed his doctoral exams in 1932 "... mit dem Prädikat ... cum laude."<sup>2</sup> From 1930 to 1931 Hahn was a member of the SA, but as he explained: "Als preussischer Refendar musste ich den SA-Dienst leider aufgeben, weil man mich sonst aus dem Ausbildungsdienst entfernt hätte."<sup>3</sup> He joined the SS in March 1933, and the SD in early 1934. His promotions in the SD came in rapid succession. In 1938 he was promoted Obersturmführer on 30 January, Hauptsturmführer on 1 August, and Sturmbannführer on 26 September.<sup>4</sup> After holding several appointments in the Reichssicherheitshauptamt he was named "Kommandeur der Sipo und SD in Warschau" in 1941.<sup>5</sup> During the period that he served as senior Sipo and SD officer he committed the crimes with which he was charged in

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<sup>1</sup> Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Ludwig Hahn, dated 20 April 1934. Personnel File: Ludwig Hahn.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Dienstlaufbahn" of Ludwig Hahn. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

1972.<sup>1</sup>

The one factor which Bacmeister, Beyer, and Hahn had in common was that each had been an active National Socialist prior to January 1933. Of the following case studies not one could claim membership in the Nazi Party or in any affiliated organization prior to the Machtergreifung. Obersturmbannführer Dr. Herbert Zimmermann<sup>2</sup> had been a politically disinterested law student at the University of Marburg. Shortly after graduating with a law degree in 1933 he joined the NSDAP. He joined the SS at the same time, and then took a six months' trip to North America. Upon his return he continued to train as a "Gerichtesreferendar." Until he joined the Gestapo in 1937, he worked as an "Assessor bei der Provinzialverwaltung in Marburg."<sup>3</sup> As a full-time officer in the Gestapo Zimmermann was employed first as "Leiter des Sachgebietes für Ausbürgerungen, Pass-und Heimatsachen .... 1939 wurde er zur Stapostelle Münster versetzt."<sup>4</sup> In 1943, by then Sturmbannführer, Zimmermann was transferred as "Kommandeur der Sipo und des SD" to Bialystock.<sup>5</sup> While he was in Bialystock Zimmermann ordered several mass executions to be carried out. In July 1954 Zimmermann was cleared by a German court on the charge of having ordered executions in Freiburg im Breisgau. In

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<sup>1</sup>During the trial Hahn was asked by the German judge whether he feared that German courts might initiate legal action against him after the war, to which the jurist Hahn replied, "Natürlich. Aber ich dachte mir, es wird ein Jahr vergehen, dann beruhigt sich das, und dann kann man wieder als normaler Mensch leben." After 1949 Hahn openly lived under his own name in West Germany, for he stated, "Vor deutschen Gerichten hatte ich keine Angst." Vorwärts, 10 June 1972.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Dr. Herbert Zimmermann, SS #118,240, born 22.8.1907, in Eisleben. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Herbert Zimmermann, dated 16 October 1938. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Herbert Zimmermann. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

November 1959 he was tried by a court in Bielefeld on the charge of having ordered several mass executions in Bialystock.<sup>1</sup> He was cleared in both instances, in the second because Zimmermann could no longer remember having given the orders for the executions.<sup>2</sup>

Hermann Langbein, the general secretary of the International Auschwitz Committee, wrote that in twenty-three Einsatzgruppen trials conducted by West German courts, in which a total of 87 SS officers were charged, only on three occasions was the most severe time penalty (die höchste Zeitstrafe) handed down.<sup>3</sup> One of the officers to receive such a sentence was the former Sturmbannführer Hans-Joachim Böhme.<sup>4</sup> Böhme, the son of a "Mittelschullehrer," studied law at the Universities of Halle and Rostock. In 1936 "... bestand ich die grosse juristische Staatsprüfung."<sup>5</sup> A year later the jurist entered the service of the Gestapo. A closer look at Böhme's past political activities shows that his decision and willingness to serve in the state police force of the Third Reich was not a sudden move. As early as 1923, at the age of 14, Böhme belonged to the right-wing Bismarck Jugend "die im Osten des

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<sup>1</sup>Langbein, Im Namen des deutschen Volkes, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>Langbein commented: "Das Gericht konnte sich nicht letzte Gewissheit darüber verschaffen ... dass der Angeklagte, der sich nicht mehr erinnern will, tatsächlich diese Befehle gegeben hatte .... In der Urteilsbegründung wird dazu gesagt: Das Gericht ist davon überzeugt, dass der Angeklagte in mehreren Punkten sicher die Unwahrheit gesagt hat .... Die Folgerung, er hätte nicht die Unwahrheit zu sagen brauchen, wenn er nicht etwar zu verbergen hätte liegt zwar nahe, ist aber nicht zwingend." Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Hans-Joachim Böhme, SS #151,121, born 1.10.1909, in Magdeburg. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Hans-Joachim Böhme, dated 14 January 1940. Ibid.



Reiches einen ausgeprägten militaristischen Charakter trug."<sup>1</sup> Through this youth group he became affiliated to the 9th Infantry Regiment in 1925, for the purpose of "Sonderausbildung." In his student days he belonged to a right-wing student association, and in May 1933 he joined the NSDAP. Until 1938, when he joined the Gestapo, Böhme was a member of the Allgemeine SS and "Rechtsberater des Bezirkes 42 der Stammabteilung Ost."<sup>2</sup> In 1958 Böhme was charged by a West German court for assisting in (wegen Beihilfe) the murder of 3907 persons while he was senior officer of the Gestapo in Tilsit.<sup>3</sup> The court which established "dass er /Böhme/ mit geradezu eiserner Konsequenz Juden ausgerottet hat," sentenced him to 15 years in a penitentiary and 10 years "Ehrverlust."<sup>4</sup>

A German jurist and member of the SD, who proudly reported to Himmler on 24 May 1943 "Der sechzigtausendste Jude wurde zum Arbeitseinsatz nach Osten abgeschoben,"<sup>5</sup> was Gruppenführer Dr. Wilhelm Harster.<sup>6</sup> Harster, the son of a Bezirksamtsassessor, began his law studies in 1922 at the University of Munich. In 1926 he passed his "Referendar exam ... und promovierte in 1927 zum Doktor der Rechte an der Universität Erlangen."<sup>7</sup> In 1929 Harster joined the police

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Langbein, Im Namen des deutschen Volkes, pp, 150-51.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>5</sup>Undated Stern article found in the Harster personnel file at the BDC.

<sup>6</sup>Personnel File: SS Gruppenführer Dr. Wilhelm Harster, SS #225,932, born 21.7.1904, in Kehlheim, Niederbayern. BDC.

<sup>7</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Wilhelm Harster, undated. Ibid.

(Kriminalpolizei) and in 1931 he was assigned to the Bavarian Political Police. At that time Harster had the reputation of being a "deutschnationaler." In 1920, at the age of 16, he belonged to the Freikorps "Oberland," then joined a number of other right-wing para-military organizations and ended up in 1926 as a member of the "Bund Oberland." From 1921 to 1929 Harster was "Jugendführer im bayr. Wehrkraftsverein."<sup>1</sup> With this political background it is not surprising that Harster joined the NSDAP shortly after Hitler came to power. In the spring of 1933 he also joined the SS. The step from the political police of Bavaria to the Sicherheitsdienst of the Third Reich did not appear to be a difficult one for Harster. In 1935 he became a member of the SD.<sup>2</sup> His rise in the hierarchy of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt was rapid. It took him eight years to rise to "Befehlshaber der Sipo" in the occupied Netherlands, and to reach the rank of Brigadeführer.<sup>3</sup>

Another German jurist whose war-time activities pursued him into the post-war era is the former Oberführer Horst Bender.<sup>4</sup> After Bender

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> "Dienstlaufbahn" of Wilhelm Harster. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. After the war Harster was tried "... von einem milden holländischen Gericht" and sentenced to twelve years. But already in 1955 he was returned to Germany where he found immediate employment as an Oberregierungsrat in the Bavarian government. It was only after the former SS Hauptsturmführer Rajakovic was arrested in Vienna in 1963, who revealed more facts about Harster's activities in the Netherlands, that Harster asked to be retired from government service. Even then it took the German courts three years to gather further evidence against him. Stern article "Zwanzig Jahre Galgenfrist," enclosed in the personnel file of Harster. Information on the Harster case was also obtained from the Wiesenthal Archive.

<sup>4</sup> Personnel File: SS Oberführer Horst Bender, SS #122,746, born 24.2.1905, in Lyck, Ostpreussen. BDC.



completed his Assessorenexam in 1930, he settled down as a lawyer in his birthplace in East Prussia.<sup>1</sup> Although he became a member of the NSDAP in late 1932, he did not join the SS until April 1933.<sup>2</sup> In 1936, by this time a Hauptsturmführer, Bender was taken into the full-time SS and posted to the "Hauptamt SS-Gericht."<sup>3</sup> From 1936 until the collapse of the Third Reich, first as "Leiter der Abteilung III (Gerichtswesen)," then as "vortragender Richter beim Reichsführer-SS," Bender was actively involved in the judicial apparatus of the Schutzstaffel. After the war Bender once more took up the practise of law, and was a practicing lawyer in Stuttgart when he was charged "wegen Beihilfe zum Mord" by Simon Wiesenthal and Robert Kempner, the former prosecutor at the major trials in Nuremberg who is now a lawyer in Frankfurt.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Biographical information taken from "Anzeigesache gegen den ehemaligen SS Oberführer, jetzigen Rechtsanwalt Horst Bender," Staatsanwaltschaft bei dem Landgericht Stuttgart, dated 2 April 1976. Wiesenthal Archive.

<sup>2</sup>Master Card. Personnel File: Horst Bender.

<sup>3</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Horst Bender. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Anzeigesache gegen Horst Bender." The charge against Bender stated that "... als 'Justitiar' oder 'Justizminister' des Reichsführer-SS ... dessen Tötungsverbrechen mit Rat und Tat unterstützte." Specifically he was charged with having advised Himmler on 26 April 1942, that "Bei Judenerschüssen ohne Befehl und Befugnis erfolgt bei rein politischen Motiven keine Bestrafung, wohl aber bei eigensüchtigen oder sadistischen bzw. sexuellen Motiven." The original document along with Bender's handwritten "Zum Vortrag RFSS" is found in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, NS7/247; also Nürnberg Dokument No. 1744, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg. After examining the documents presented the Landesgericht Stuttgart decided to label Bender "... lediglich Befehlsübermittler." The court ruled, furthermore, that Document 1744 was known to the Allies while Bender was still in their custody, and that he was "entnazifiziert." The court, therefore, concluded "Es werde ihm lediglich anbelastet, dass er Einblick in die Terrormethoden Himmler's hatte, ihm aber zugute gehalten, dass er auf seinem Posten mildernd einwirkte .... Das Verfahren war deshalb insgesamt gem. para. 170 Abs. 2 StPO aus tatsächlichen Gründen einzustellen." Wiesenthal Archive.



These case histories might lead the reader to believe that all German jurists who joined the SS in 1933 and 1934 were in some way involved with the heinous crimes committed by the Black Order. But nothing would be further from the truth. The following case history bears out this statement. In May 1939 the SS-Personalkanzlei wrote to the Oberabschnitt Northwest requesting information about a certain Obersturmführer Dr. Albrecht Dieckhoff.<sup>1</sup> The Oberabschnitt explained: "Wie vom SD-Hauptamt nach hier mitgeteilt wird, bestehen gegen die unbedingte Zuverlässigkeit des Obersturmführers Dieckhoff gewisse Bedenken."<sup>2</sup> Who was Albrecht Dieckhoff about whom such reservations were voiced? Dieckhoff, the son of a "Professor des Schiffbaues und Reeder zu Hamburg," was born into the comfortable surroundings of the obere Mittelstand of the Wilhelmine period. After completing his Abitur in 1915 he volunteered for military service. By 1917 he was made "Leutnant d. Reserve." In the immediate post-war era Dieckhoff claimed to have been "Halbzugführer im Freikorps Jena," and he actively participated in the Kapp Putsch of 1920. He also claimed some vague connection with the "Hitler-Ludendorff Putsch" through an "Organization Löbbarth." Dieckhoff, however, is not very precise in his description of his involvement with the latter putsch. In 1919 he began his law studies at Kiel, although how much he was able to study in view of his political activities, he does not say. He did not stay at Kiel very long, before he moved on to Heidelberg, Greifswald and Hamburg. After

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Dr. Albrecht Dieckhoff, SS #194,318, born 25.12.1896, in Hamburg. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Letter marked "Eilt" from the "SS Personalkanzlei" to "SS Oberabschnitt Northwest," dated 4 May 1939. Ibid.

completing his Dr. jr. he studied law at Oxford and London, and claimed in his "Lebenslauf" to have been "ein englischer Volljurist" with the privilege of practicing law in England as well as South Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The international connections which Dieckhoff enjoyed caused the Reichssicherheitshauptamt to question his political reliability. The fact that he joined the Rotary Club three months after entering the SS, was looked upon with considerable suspicion by the security branch. His continued membership in the "All Peoples Association" did not help to alleviate a certain amount of uneasiness about his outside connections. The most damaging accusation which Berlin could make was "D. ist ein vielfach in manchen Dingen eigenartig interesierter Mann." The letter went on to point out that Dieckhoff was interested in the histories "... der alten Hamburgischen Grosskaufmannsfamilien," and concluded with the statement "Dabei haben alle seine Neigungen einen Einschlag ins Feudale."<sup>2</sup>

Dieckhoff's case is indeed open to discussion. Was he a smooth and crass opportunist, "... der geschickt weiss nach allen Seiten zu lavieren,"<sup>3</sup> or was the spiessbürgerliche mentality of the SS Führung unable to comprehend a man with cosmopolitan interests, who spoke three languages fluently, and who was described as "... ein gesellschaftlich äusserst gewandter Mann ... der Zutritt zu allen möglichen Kreisen schon immer hatte und auch noch heute hat." How was

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<sup>1</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Albrecht Dieckhoff, dated 20 December 1936. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of SS Personalkanzlei to Oberabschnitt Nordwest. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from "Führer des SS-Oberabschnittes Nordwest" to the "Chef der SS-Personalkanzlei," dated 13 May 1939. Ibid.

the SS Führung going to understand a man "... Inhaber einer der angesehensten Hamburgischen Anwaltsfirmen ... und der einzige deutsche Rechtsanwalt, der bei den englischen Gerichten in London zugelassen ist."<sup>1</sup> The SD had to admit that it had only a certain amount of suspicion "... ohne dass jedoch besonderes Tatsachenmaterial vorliegt."<sup>2</sup> In the end the SD had to admit defeat. Dieckhoff remained in the SS; he was even promoted to Hauptsturmführer in 1941.<sup>3</sup> There is no record of his war-time activities, there was only an address for 1941, and it read "Wehrwirtschaftsinspektion Ukraine." It appears that Dieckhoff had managed to keep well back of the combat zone.

While Dieckhoff's behaviour left certain questions unanswered, the case of Obersturmbannführer Johannes Hossfeld<sup>4</sup> left little doubt of his political orientation. Hossfeld was the typical product of the Bismarckian era, and his mannerisms remained those "... eines typisch deutschnationalen Herrenmenschen ... der einen gewissen Standesdünkel zur Schau trägt."<sup>5</sup> Hossfeld's father, an independently employed Berlin architect, provided his family with the necessary financial security and social status so vital for the 'good life' of the obere Mittelstand during the Second Reich. Hossfeld entered the "... köngl. Luisengymnasium

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from "Chef des Reichssicherheitsamtes" to "SS Hauptamt," dated 2 May 1939. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Albrecht Dieckhoff. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Johannes Hossfeld, SS #227,632, born 24.7.1879, in Berlin. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>"Politische Beurteilung des Landesfinanzamtpräsidenten von Schlesien Johannes Hossfeld." Ibid.



in Berlin," and then proceeded to study law. In 1903 he passed his "Referendarprüfung" and in 1909 sat for his "Gerichtsassessorenexam." Prior to the war Hossfeld was awarded a naval commission, and in 1914 he went into the Imperial Navy as a lieutenant commander.<sup>1</sup> Hossfeld belonged to the traditional höhere Beamtentum, and politically represented the "... überwiegend national und konservativ eingestellte Beamtenschaft" whose unpolitical tradition of Staatsdienertum goes back to the days of Bismarck.<sup>2</sup> It was this traditional non-political, rather than his anti-national socialist, attitude which discredited Hossfeld after 1933. A detailed seven page "Politische Beurteilung" stated that "... Hossfeld hat von jeher eine klare nationalsozialistische Linie vermissen lassen." He steadfastly refused to attend "... angesetzte Schulungsabende" and resisted pressure to fill civil service positions in his ministry with party men. He also did not fire non-national socialist civil servants "... mit der Begründung, dass es ungerecht sei, Beamte die nicht Parteigenossen geworden seien, aus diesen Stellen herauszunehmen, da sie ebenso Gutes leisten wie Parteigenossen." The "Politische Beurteilung" lists thirteen misdemeanors which Hossfeld had committed since 1933. These offences included the use of non-party members in a "Gedenkfeier für die Gefallenen der Bewegung," and the refusal to give civil servants under him the day off when Hermann Göring arrived in Breslau. Hossfeld's Standesdünkel clearly showed itself when he informed a high party official in response to a complaint that senior Beamte in his department gave less to the party than junior Beamte,

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<sup>1</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf of Johannes Hossfeld, dated 1 June 1934, Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Mommsen, Beamtentum in Dritten Reich, p. 21.

"... dass Beamte des höheren Dienstes auf Grund der unvermeidlichen höheren Aufwendungen nicht soviel geben können, wie andere Beamte, die ihre Kinder nicht studieren zu lassen brauchen. Der höhere Beamte aber müsse seine Kinder studieren lassen, weil er, der höhere Beamte ja auch selbst studiert hat." The report concluded with the poignant statement that the admission of Hossfeld into the SS "... hat die gesamte Beamtenschaft eigenartig berührt."<sup>1</sup> One might wonder why Hossfeld was taken into the SS. Himmler was asked this question, and in a letter to the Reichsleitung der NSDAP, Hauptamt für Beamte he gave his reasons: Hossfeld "... wurde in die SS aufgenommen, da er einer der wenigen war, die damals in Schlesien den Mut hatten sich nicht restlos der Herrschaft Heines-Brückner zu beugen."<sup>2</sup> In the process of standing up to SA Obergruppenführer Heines and Gauleiter Brückner Hossfeld had inadvertently protected some members of the "... restlos verfolgte SS in Schlesien."<sup>3</sup> Himmler saw in the complaints against Hossfeld an attack against the SS by the Brückner followers, "... die noch heute nicht verwinden können, dass Herr Brückner von seinem Amt entfernt und sogar den Gerichten überstellt wurde." On the other hand Himmler saw that Hossfeld was not the type of man whom he wanted in the SS, yet with some unexplained sense of loyalty he stated, "Ich käme mir schlecht vor, wenn ich Herrn Hossfeld jetzt in guten Zeiten aus der SS entlassen würde."<sup>4</sup> Himmler never severed his

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<sup>1</sup>The comments on Hossfeld's non-national socialist behaviour are taken from the "Politische Beurteilung." In his entire six-page "Lebenslauf" Hossfeld does not make a single political reference either pro or against National Socialism. Personnel File: Johannes Hossfeld.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Himmler to "Reichsleitung der NSDAP, Hauptamt für Beamte," dated 16 March 1936. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

connection with the cantankerous Oberfinanzpräsident; on the contrary, he promoted him in time to the rank of Obersturmbannführer.<sup>1</sup>

In his book Die gleichgeschaltete Justiz Johe wrote: "... innerhalb der Partei herrschten offenbar Zweifel darüber ob die sofort nach der Machtergreifung eingetretenen Justizangehörigen als Nationalsozialisten gelten konnten, die bereit waren, die Ziele der Staatsführung zu verwirklichen."<sup>2</sup> In the opinion of this writer the NS Führung need not have worried. While there were jurists like Hossfeld, and perhaps Dieckhoff, who should be grouped in with the doubtful adherents, the majority of the sampled jurists in this study showed little reluctance to accept the new dictum "Deutsches Recht muss das sein, das bestrebt ist, das deutsche Volk in seiner Eigenart zu erhalten und seine Volkwerdung zu begünstigen."<sup>3</sup> The assessment of Dr. Falk Ruttke,<sup>4</sup> a prominent member of the law faculty at Berlin, could perhaps be applied to a number of German jurists in the SS "... es ist sicher dass er sich in jeder Lage rückhaltlos für die Partei und ihre Ziele einsetzt."<sup>5</sup>

#### The professional officers:

A second very important old élite, the former military officer,

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<sup>1</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Johannes Hossfeld. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Johe, Die gleichgeschaltete Justiz, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Dr. Falk Ruttke, SS #156,315, born 11.11.1894, in Halle. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>"Dienstleistungszeugnis" of Falk Ruttke, dated 11 November 1936. Ibid.



will be looked at next. Karl Demeter in his study of the German officer corps in 1933 wrote that at the time of the Machtergreifung there were three discernible groups among the "... besonders intelligenten und nicht mehr ganz jungen Offizieren."<sup>1</sup> The first group reacted favourably toward the new regime, the second, considerably smaller, rejected National Socialism, "... die meisten aber reagierten wohlwollend oder indifferent."<sup>2</sup> Demeter concluded his discussion with the statement: "Auch bei der älteren Generation haben viele, bald rascher, bald langsamer, den Weg zur neuen Bewegung gefunden."<sup>3</sup> This attitude of the German officer toward National Socialism is substantiated by F. L. Carsten in his study of the Reichswehr when he wrote "The nationalism so loudly proclaimed by Hitler induced the officers to believe that his nationalism was closely akin to their own - that as Hammerstein put it - 'apart from the speed' Hitler really had the same aims as the Reichswehr."<sup>4</sup> It is particularly with the older generation of officers that this study is concerned, since no serving member of the German armed forces could have been a member of the Schutzstaffel.

No quantitative study of former officers and their reactions toward National Socialism has been done to date. This quantitative study included all men who joined the SS prior to 1939 and listed their former occupation as "aktiver Offizier." Table 6.1 showed that only 3.8% of the sampled SS officers had been professional officers

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<sup>1</sup>Demeter, Das Deutsche Offizierkorps, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>F. L. Carsten, The Reichswehr and Politics, 1918-1933 (Oxford 1966), p. 404.

prior to coming into the SS. This suggests that the SS as the paramilitary corps d'élite of the new regime did not appeal to too many officers. The unusually slow joining rate of the officers as a professional group has been commented on above. This joining pattern seems to support the assertions made by Demeter and Carsten, that the officers came gradually around to look more favourably upon the regime. Yet it would take them some time before the members of the erstwhile "first Estate"<sup>1</sup> would realize that they had indeed joined "... a gang of robbers."<sup>2</sup>

Some of the former officers, for example Paul Hausser, Felix Steiner and the retired Colonel von Einem,<sup>3</sup> applied their military expertise in various positions in the Verfügungstruppe. Von Einem, the son of the Wilhelmine Minister of War and vocal advocate of the Pan-German League prior to 1914, was recalled to the Verfügungstruppe in 1935 and taught tactics at the Junkerschule Braunschweig. With his retirement from active service at the Junkerschule in 1938, entries in his personnel file stopped until January 1945. It appears that with the Allies about to launch their last offensive, von Einem, by then 75 years old, wrote to Himmler requesting "... eine Ehrenprüfung." The reason for his indignation was Himmler's remark "... dass ich für den Typ eines Generalstabsoffizieres gehalten werde, der der deutschen

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 397.

<sup>2</sup>A note made by the former Abwehrgeneral Hans Oster found in his diary in 1944. Harold Deutsch, Hitler and His Generals: The Hidden Crisis, January-June 1938 (Minneapolis 1974), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Oberführer Kurt von Einem, SS #256,050, born 31.12.1880, in Northheim. BDC.

Armee schädlich und daher grundsätzlich abzulehnen ist."<sup>1</sup> Himmler had made the remark in response to von Einem's request to be posted as a regimental commander to the front during those dying hours of the Third Reich. Himmler's curt reply to the insulted officer reflects the stressful situation at the time. The Reichsführer-SS wrote to von Einem: "Ich unterscheide bei den Generalstabsoffizieren den truppenfremden Offizier ... und die andere Art des Offiziers, welche für die Armee nützlich sind ... Zu welcher Art ich den einzelnen mir untergebenen Offizier und SS-Führer qualifiziere, muss mir überlassen werden."<sup>2</sup> Von Einem neither got his "Ehrenprüfung" nor his regiment.

The former Lieutenant-General Hilmar Moser<sup>3</sup> joined the Allgemeine SS in 1938 after he retired from an active 34-year military career. Until 1942 Moser served as "Inspekteur der Ordensburgen der NSDAP," "... eine Tätigkeit die Generalleutnant Moser bisher zur vollsten Zufriedenheit des Reichsorganisationsleiters ausübt."<sup>4</sup> In 1942, the then 61-year-old Moser was posted as "Kommandant des Oberfeldkommandos" to Lublin.<sup>5</sup> As the result of the overall retreat of the German army, Lublin soon fell into the combat zone. The aging general soon saw the hopelessness of defending the city and surrendered to the Russians

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of Oberführer von Einem to "Kommandierenden General des XIII SS A. K. Gruppenführer Simon," dated 10 January 1945. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of "Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler" to Oberführer von Einem, dated 12 January 1945. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Gruppenführer Hilmar Moser, SS #309,713, born 5.11.1880, in Langenorla, Krs. Roda. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Letter of "Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP" to the "Leiter des SS-Personalamtes," dated 3 September 1938. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hilmar Moser. Ibid.



"... und hat sich nicht erschossen."<sup>1</sup> Moser's military and SS career might have ended there, and he would probably have been soon forgotten, had other information not reached Himmler's Feldquartier. It appears that Moser had been one of those officers who realized that he had joined "a gang of robbers." Lublin had been for years the location of one of the major extermination camps in the eastern territories, and Moser had been shocked by what he saw. The camp was also one of the first camps to be taken over by the Russians, and when Moser was taken prisoner he immediately volunteered information about the camp. This information was quickly publicized by the Russians both in leaflet form and in the communist paper Freies Deutschland. In one of its issues Moser stated: "Ich halte es für meine unbedingte Pflicht, als General und Soldat von 42 Dienstjahren, Teilnehmer an zwei Weltkriegen ... und letzter Oberfeldkommandant von Lublin mitzuhelfen um die unerhörten Verbrechen, die im K.Z. begangen worden sind, restlos aufzudecken." The retired general and Gruppenführer in the corps d'élite, completed his message with "Ich ersuche alle Soldaten der Wehrmacht, die in der Stadt Lublin unter meinem Befehl standen, ihre Aussagen zu machen über alle Untaten im Vernichtungslager."<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter II this writer made the statement that Himmler's attempt to absorb members of older élites did not meet with an unqualified success. The above case illustrated this point, although it took Moser until 1944 to recognize the horrors of the Nazi regime

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of "Reichsführer-SS Himmler" to the "Chef des SS-Personalhauptamtes," dated 12 October 1944. Ibid. As the result of this action Moser was expelled from the SS.

<sup>2</sup>Freies Deutschland, 2. Jahrgang, No. 37, 10 September 1944.

and, more importantly to do something about it.

The case of Hermann von Festenburg-Pakisch<sup>1</sup> shows that loyalty to a fellow officer was stronger than loyalty to the Black Order when he held the rank of Obersturmbannführer. Festenburg-Pakisch was the son of a senior officer, and was himself commissioned in 1899 after graduation from a Kadettenanstalt. By 1914 he was a captain in one of Germany's élite infantry regiments - 3. Garde Regiment zu Fuss. In 1919 he did not request to remain in the army, and became a successful "selbständiger Kaufmann." Although Festenburg-Pakisch was one of the few officers to join the NSDAP at an early stage,<sup>2</sup> he did not join the SS until July 1935.<sup>3</sup> It was in 1938 that the then Sturmbannführer encountered a situation which was to test his loyalties. In that year, an acquaintance of Festenburg's named Hirschwald applied for membership in the NS Rechtswahrer-Bund. His application was denied on the grounds that he (Hirschwald) was a half-Jew. Hirschwald seemed undeterred. He stated that he could not understand his rejection by the Rechtswahrer-Bund because he was a half-Jew, when he was already a "... förderndes Mitglied der SS." He was of the opinion that he had earned the privilege of joining the national socialist lawyer's organization as he had been "... getauft, war Husarenoffizier und Kriegsteilnehmer, habe auch das Eisern Kreuz II. Klasse und das Frontkämpferkreuz erhalten."<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmbannführer Hermann von Festenberg-Pakisch, SS #273,742, born 8.1.1880, in Flensburg. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>He joined the NSDAP in December 1930 with party #410,354. His wife joined the party at the same time. Master Card. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Hermann von Festenberg-Pakisch, undated. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Letter of Hirschwald to the "SS-Personalhauptamt," dated 28 November 1938. Ibid.



most embarrassing item in the letter was that Hirschwald claimed to be in possession of "... ein angebliches Schreiben des Reichsführer-SS vom 19.8.1938, wonach anlässlich des bei ihm vorliegenden Ausnahmefalles keine Bedenken bestehen, dass er weiter förderndes Mitglied der SS bleibe."<sup>1</sup> The SS Führung was in an obvious dilemma. How could the SS tolerate a half-Jew as a "förderndes Mitglied"; on the other hand, how could one get rid of a member who had a letter from the Reichsführer-SS which gave him permission to remain a member of the SS? The Reichssicherheitshauptamt was called in to investigate Hirschwald's claims, and reported to Himmler that indeed Hirschwald was in possession of the letter. A team of the Gestapo went to Hirschwald's apartment and "... in höflicher aber bestimmter Form" he was asked to surrender the letter. It was at that point that Hirschwald remembered his fellow officer acquaintance, Festenberg-Pakisch. The Sturmbannführer advised Hirschwald not only not to surrender the letter, but also to make several copies of it and hide them in secure places.<sup>2</sup> This was indeed strange advice coming from an SS officer. But he could not protect Hirschwald forever. Soon pressure from the Gestapo became so great that he gave up Himmler's letter. Festenberg-Pakisch received a severe reprimand for his advice, but remained in the SS.<sup>3</sup>

Thus Himmler would at times act against the advice of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt in the quest for socially prominent persons. The former Lieutenant-Colonel v. Kretschmann was admitted into the SS

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the investigation on Hirschwald, dated 1 December 1938. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of Gruppenführer Heydrich to "Reichsführer-SS Himmler," dated 8 May 1939. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



even though the security branch considered him politically unreliable.<sup>1</sup> The former major, Dr. Oscar Lossen<sup>2</sup> was also taken into the Führerkorps of the SS against the advice of Heydrich. Lossen, the son of the well-known historian and secretary of the Akademie der Wissenschaft, Professor Max Lossen, received a regular army commission in 1907. He was an artillery officer until 1919, when, after some time with the Freikrops Bamberg, he entered the "bayerische Landespolizei" as a major. He was also able to complete his doctorate in 1925. Although he received his colonelcy under the Nazi regime, he was very slow in committing himself, at least outwardly, to the regime. By 1937 he was only a Parteianwärter, and his personnel file does not show that he ever became a party member.<sup>3</sup> Even though Lossen joined the SS in July 1938, his "Politische Beurteilung" marked "streng vertraulich" described Lossen as follows:

... ist ausser Zweifel national eingestellter Mann und kann als ausgesprochener 'Soldat' bezeichnet werden ... ist jedoch im Gegensatz zur heutigen Zeit noch zu sehr mit Standesdünkel behaftet .... Er wurzelt noch zu sehr in alten Anschauungen des unpolitischen Offizierskorps und hat demzufolge die Notwendigkeit der Volksgemeinschaft noch nicht voll erfasst.<sup>4</sup>

The report concluded with the statement: "Als Nationalsozialist kann er nicht angesehen werden."<sup>5</sup> Below this rather unfavourable assessment appeared Himmler's comment made with the traditional green pencil "ist

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter II, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Dr. Oskar Lossen, SS #309,503, born 17.6.1887, in München. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Oskar Lossen, dated 25 June 1938. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Politische Beurteilung des Oberstleutnants der Gendarmerie Dr. Oskar Lossen" written by the Gauleitung München-Oberbayern, dated 13 July 1937. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

zu befördern. HH"<sup>1</sup> Lossen was enrolled in the SS as a Standartenführer.

The officer who resigned his commission in the Reichswehr in 1924, and shortly thereafter became Ortsgruppenleiter in the town of Blückeberg, appears to have been an early adherent to National Socialism. Colonel Friedemann Goetze<sup>2</sup> was raised in an obere Mittelstand milieu; his father was Stadtsyndicus, and later Landrat. He was commissioned Second Lieutenant in 1890, and remained in the army for the next 34 years. Goetze gave no reason for his early commitment to National Socialism other than "... eine grenzenlose Verehrung General Ludendorffs."<sup>3</sup> He gave no reason for leaving the party in 1926. Goetze joined the Tannenbergbund of Ludendorff, became Landesführer, then Gauführer, and remained active in the Bund until it was dissolved by the Nazis in the autumn of 1933. In early 1935 Goetze volunteered for service in the Verfügungstruppe and was employed as a teacher at the Junkerschule Braunschweig. Although Goetze became Obersturmbannführer in February 1935 and commandant of the Junkerschule in January 1937, he did not join the NSDAP until the summer of 1937.<sup>4</sup> It was while he was teaching tactics at Braunschweig that Goetze's 'doubtful' political past was revealed. In April 1935 Standartenführer Hausser, then "Führer der SS-Führerschule" wrote a letter to Himmler in which he discussed Goetze. It seems that a Sturmbannführer Dr. Koster,<sup>5</sup> remembered Goetze and the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Friedemann Goetze, SS #261,405, born 26.7.1871, in Stade. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Friedemann Goetze, undated. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Friedemann Goetze. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Dr. Paul Koster, SS #3,700, born 20.4.1905, in Kellberg, Eifel. BDC. Koster was one of the few early joiners of the SS who was a university graduate. He was a veterinary surgeon until he became a full-time SS officer in 1934.



"... erheblichen Saalschlachten mit dem Tannenbergbund ... und das bei einer der Saalschlachten der jetzige Obersturmbannführer Goetze an der Weiterführung seiner Tannenbergbund-Versammlung durch uns mit Gewalt verhindert wurde." The same SS officer stated to Hausser "dass es einem ganz eigenartig berührt, einen Mann als höheren SS-Führer zu sehen, der sich früher in gehässigster Weise über unseren Führer als hergelaufenen Ausländer und Konjunkturredner geäußert hat."<sup>1</sup>

Hausser's method of dealing with the case is of interest, for it shows his, as well as the Verfügungstruppe's, independence from the central SS Führung. It also shows Hausser's continued adherence to the code of the non-political officer. First Hausser lauded Goetze's military expertise, and commended him on the effective job he did as a tactics teacher at the school. He concluded the report with: "Ich habe Dr. Koster darauf hingewiesen, dass alle Führer der Schule jetzt - unabhängig von ihrem Werdegang - gemeinsam und kameradschaftlich zusammenarbeiten müssen. Ich betrachte es als meine besondere und persönliche Pflicht, für die Durchführung dieses Grundsatzes zu sorgen."<sup>2</sup> Himmler apparently agreed with Hausser, Goetze was not reprimanded, for that matter he was named commandant of the school in 1937.

Only in one instance was his political past held against him, but this outside the jurisdiction of the SS. In 1938 Goetze applied for a lower NSDAP membership number, in view of his earlier services to

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of Standartenführer Hausser to "Reichsführer-SS Himmler; Betr. SS Sturmbannführer Dr. Koster über SS Obersturmbannführer Goetze," dated 8 April 1938. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



the party. Gauleiter Rust turned down the request "... da er den Oberführer Goetze am Liebsten nicht in der Partei haben möchte."<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Jeckeln, then Führer des Oberabschnittes Mitte, agreed with the Gauleiter: "... ich weiss dass Goetze vor der Machtübernahme Tannenbergbündler war und sich keineswegs für die Bewegung betätigte. Er war vielmehr einer jener jungen Tannenbergbündler, die die NSDAP als unerwünschte Konkurrenz ansahen und die stur die Ludendorffsche Richtung vertraten."<sup>2</sup> Goetze did not receive a lower party number.<sup>3</sup> It is surprising though, that in view of his pre-1933 political activities, Goetze remained commandant of a Führerschule whose sole purpose was to train a future generation of specially selected leaders.

Six months after Friedemann Goetze had received his commission, the then 25-year-old second lieutenant married. Some 22 months later a son, Hans Goetze<sup>4</sup> was born. The son too became a regular army officer and after resigning his commission entered the Verfügungstruppe. The case histories of Friedemann and Hans Goetze are of particular interest, as they allow one to study the careers and attitudes of two generations of officers. After the First World War Hans Goetze joined a Freikorps, then fought with the Eiserne Division in Lithuania. Later he joined the Freiwilligen Regiment 210 to fight in the "Grenzschutzabschnitt Bromberg." He also participated in the Ruhr fighting before he

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of Gauleiter Rust to "SS-Personalhauptamt," dated 1 February 1938. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of the "Führer des Oberabschnittes Mitte" to "Chef der SS-Personalkanzlei," dated 8 February 1938. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>His party # was 5,226,122. Master Card. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Hans Goetze, SS #281,771, born 3.11.1897, in Rendsburg. BDC.

joined the 100,000-man Reichswehr of the Weimar Republic. He retired as a captain from the army on 31 January 1933.<sup>1</sup>

The day after he left the army Goetze joined the SA, of which he remained a member until he went into the SS in May 1937. Between 1933 and 1937 Goetze worked with the Bahnschutz, and in 1936 he received the post of "militärischer Leiter der Bahnschutzschule München-Freimann."<sup>2</sup> In the Verfügungstruppe Goetze was given the rank of Sturmbannführer and because of his teaching background with the Bahnschutzschule he was immediately posted to the Junkerschule Tölz.

While he was a teacher at the Junkerschule the younger Goetze was investigated by the security branch for having made remarks unbecoming to an SS officer. It appears that at a Junkerschule social function which he attended in the company of "... Frau von Blomberg, geb. von Hammerstein, Ehefrau des Hauptmanns von Blomberg, und Frä. von Hammerstein"<sup>3</sup> Goetze said "Die Ausstattung der Schule mit Bildern ist noch nicht so, dass man Gästen dabei viel bieten kann. Es hängen immer wieder die beiden Bilder, wie unser SS Heini und Adolf I."<sup>4</sup> Goetze was also supposed to have referred to Himmler as "Heinrich der Sanftmütige."<sup>5</sup> For making these remarks Goetze was called to Hausser,

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<sup>1</sup>Biographical data from the "Lebenslauf" of Hans Goetze, undated. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Vernehmungsniederschrift" of testimony given by SS Oberführer Voss, dated 27 July 1938. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Vernehmungsniederschrift" of testimony given by SS Hauptsturmführer Lemke, dated 23 July 1938. Ibid.

the Inspekteur der Verfügungstruppen. Goetze explained to his superior that he meant no offence when he made those remarks, and that he only repeated remarks "... die ich selbst öfters in der Schnutzstaffel gehört habe."<sup>1</sup> Hausser accepted the explanation, and seemed to understand the spirit in which the offending remarks were made. While remarks like these were frequently sufficient reason to arrest and imprison the ordinary man in the street, officers of the corps d'élite were not even reprimanded for such offenses. Goetze was promoted Obersturmbannführer a short time later, and made Standartenführer before he fell during the French campaign of 1940.<sup>2</sup>

With the annexation of Austria to the Reich in March 1938, a number of prominent Austrian officers came into the SS. Among them was the former Colonel Karl Ritter von Kurz,<sup>3</sup> who had been an active national socialist since 1933. Ritter von Kurz had been a "Nachrichtendienst der SA Brigade Leoben" until his imprisonment in July 1934. He was also an active member of the Steirischer Heimatschutz and the NS Reichskriegerbund.<sup>4</sup> Von Kurz was one of those officers who took his commitment to National Socialism very seriously. In July 1943, the then 73-year-old Oberführer asked Himmler for a posting to the Waffen SS. He completed his request with the plea: "Mein Reichsführer, erfüllen Sie die innige Bitte eines alten Soldaten und Kämpfers der

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<sup>1</sup>"Vernehmung des SS Sturmbannführers Goetze," undated. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hans Goetze. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Karl Ritter zu Kurz, SS #323,046, born. 24.12.1873, in Wien. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Ritter von Kurz, dated 14 February 1940. Ibid.



Bewegung, am Freiheitskampf des deutschen Volkes auch in seinen alten Tagen noch aktiv teilnehmen zu können."<sup>1</sup> Himmler thanked the septogenarian for his offer and told him that he could best serve the cause as speaker in his native Austria.<sup>2</sup>

Another active member of the Reichskriegerbund but a less active national socialist was the former major-general in the Austrian general staff, Anton Edler Kless von Drauwörth.<sup>3</sup> Von Drauwörth, the son of a Bezirksrichter was commissioned in 1902 and served in a Hungarian infantry regiment. Twenty-eight years later he left the army as a major-general. There is no indication in his "Lebenslauf" that the old general was politically active between his retirement from the army and the annexation of Austria in 1938. He became a member of the NSDAP in 1938 and joined the SS in the same year.<sup>4</sup>

When in November 1939 von Drauwörth was recommended by General Reinhard, the Reichskriegerführer, to be named "Gaukriegerführer in der Ostmark"<sup>5</sup> a question was raised concerning Drauwörth's continued adherence to the Catholic Church. The Führer des SS Oberabschnittes Donau was going to use the next opportunity "... den Oberführer Kless

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of Oberführer Ritter von Kurz to "Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler," dated 19 July 1943. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of Himmler to "SS-Oberführer Karl Ritter von Kurz," dated 23 August 1943. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Anton Edler Kless von Drauwörth, SS #310,301, born 8.9.1882, in Gurk, Kärnten. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Biographical data from the handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Kless von Drauwörth, undated. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Letter of General Reinhard to the "SS-Personalhauptamt," dated 13 November 1939. Ibid.

über die Folgen seiner Zugehörigkeit zum Katholizismus aufzuklären."<sup>1</sup>

It appears that the attempts to change the old soldier's religion fell on deaf ears. Von Drauwörth remained a Catholic, he was named Gaukriegerführer and was promoted to Brigadeführer in 1943.<sup>2</sup>

These case histories show that Himmler in his attempt to gather members of professional or social élites had to accept a certain amount of individual diversity among his officers. The cases showed that Himmler tolerated such diversity, perhaps to a greater extent than had hitherto been believed possible in an organization that stressed absolute obedience to orders from above.

#### The Socio-Economic Background of the SS Führer:

In his analysis of post-1945 German social conditions, Dahrendorf stated that German society was "... nach wie vor eine halbierte Gesellschaft, zerschnitten in ein Oben, das wenig vom Unten, und ein Unten das wenig vom Oben weiss."<sup>3</sup> The lack of general social mobility was an accepted fact and to many Germans "... liegt es in der Ordnung der Welt und wird nicht zum Gegenstand fragenden Zweifels."<sup>4</sup> Several studies done by German sociologists on the socio-economic background of the pre-1918 obere Mittelstand "... zeigen indes auch für die breiten Oberschichtgruppen die ausgeprägte Tendenz zur

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of "Führer des SS-Oberabschnittes Donau" to the "SS-Personalhauptamt," dated 8 April 1940. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Kless von Drauwörth. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie, pp. 119-20.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Selbstrekrutierung."<sup>1</sup> The social rigidity, which Dahrendorf described in the terms "Wer einmal oben steht findet in der Regel Mittel und Wege, seiner Familie den eigenen Status zumindest zuerhalten"<sup>2</sup> was particularly prevalent in German society because of the class orientation of the educational system.<sup>3</sup>

Studies of the socio-economic background of the Nazi Party élite have shown that the men who rose to power as the result of the Machtergreifung were primarily "... aus den unteren Mittelschichten der Gesellschaft."<sup>4</sup> In other words "Mit dem Sieg der NSDAP begann der Aufstieg der Plebejer," who had only a "... mässige Schulbildung."<sup>5</sup> Lerner wrote of the Nazi élite "... that those persons who rose to the highest positions in the Nazi Party ... had less education ... and status than the rest."<sup>6</sup>

Table 5.1 which showed the educational distribution of the sampled SS Führer, suggests that a different type of man rose to a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>Engelmann, German Education, p. 11ff; Dahrendorf's views on German education are expressed in Gesellschaft und Demokratie, pp. 341-358; see also, Dahrendorf, Arbeiterkinder an deutschen Universitäten (Tübingen 1965). Dahrendorf's views can be summed up with the following statement "Die Unterschicht kommt als Rekrutierungsfeld der akademischen Führungsgruppen in Deutschland nicht in Frage." Gesellschaft und Demokratie, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup>Wolfgang Zapf, Wandlungen der deutschen Elite; Ein Zirkulationsmodell Deutscher Führungsgruppen, 1919-1960 (München 1966), p. 51.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Lerner, The Nazi Elite, p. 106. Lerner emphasized "Education is here an index of social status."



position of leadership in the SS. This was especially the case after January 1933. In spite of the uneducated party leaders Lerner encountered in his study, the Table shows that 30% of the Führerkorps of the Schutzstaffeln had completed university.<sup>1</sup> Compared to the German population where less than 5% have a university degree, one has to conclude that the educated segment of society was overrepresented in the officer corps. Table 6.1 substantiates the findings of Table 5.1 by showing that almost 31% of the sampled Führerkorps had professions which presuppose a university education.<sup>2</sup> In view of these results one cannot speak of the SS as an organization "... where the uneducated were leading the educated."<sup>3</sup>

One might ask then, from what socio-economic strata of society did the SS Führer come? Table 6.3 shows the social class of the sampled

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Table 6.3

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SS officers and their home background. The Table shows that only 1% of the sampled officer corps were Arbeiter, and that only 4% of the officers came from an Arbeiter home background. Compared to the percentage of Arbeiter in the German population it is apparent that the Arbeiter was highly underrepresented in the Führerkorps of the SS. These findings, however, should not come as a surprise. First, the Arbeiter, as was shown earlier, was also underrepresented in the general membership of the NSDAP, and, second, one cannot expect a high representation of this

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<sup>1</sup>See Table 5.1, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup>See Table 6.1, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup>Lerner, The Nazi Elite, p. 107.

Table 6.3

Social Stratum of SS Officers in Relation to Their Home Background

HOME BACKGROUND \ SOCIAL STRATUM OF OFFICERS	ARBEITER- SCHICHT	UNTERE MITTELSTAND	OBERE MITTELSTAND	TOTAL
ARBEITERSCHICHT	.4%	3.2%	.4%	4%
UNTERE MITTELSTAND	.6	52.2	24.2	77%
OBERE MITTELSTAND	.0	3.8	15.2	19%
TOTAL	1%	59.2%	39.8%	100%

stratum of society when one deals exclusively with members of an officer corps. The Table shows furthermore, that 59.2% of the sampled Führer belonged to the untere Mittelstand, while 77% came from untere Mittelstand homes. It is the obere Mittelstand that is most noticeably overrepresented. According to the various sociological models mentioned by Dahrendorf<sup>1</sup> between 5-10% of German society belongs to this upper social stratum. Of the sampled officers 39.8% had professions which placed them into this social stratum, while 19% came from obere Mittelstand background.

Table 6.3 reveals two interesting, seemingly contradictory, trends. On the one hand the table shows a high degree of "Selbstrekrutierung" of the social strata, on the other it shows considerable social mobility. While admittedly the percentage of Arbeiter or officers from an Arbeiter milieu is small, the social mobility of this small segment of the Führerkorps is remarkable. Of the 4% of officers who came from Arbeiter homes, only .4% remained in the same social stratum, whereas 3.2% were able to advance to the untere Mittelstand. Most surprisingly the same percentage as remained in the Arbeiterschicht - .4% - was able to overcome the numerous social barriers and advance to the obere Mittelstand.<sup>2</sup> While there was considerable upward social mobility

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<sup>1</sup>Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Dahrendorf states that in his climb to the upper stratum of society, the striver soon discovers "... dass die deutsche Gesellschaft in ihrer Schichtstruktur drei Barrieren kennt. Zwei davon sind von mittlerer Grösse .... Barrieren wie jede moderne Gesellschaft sie kennt. Das ist einmal die Grenze zwischen den Eliten und den angrenzenden Bereichen der Dienstklasse und des Mittelstandes .... Es gibt noch eine dritte Barriere und diese ist sehr viel weniger leicht überschrittbar. Sie trennt ein Oben von einem Unten, nämlich etwa das obere Drittel des Schichtgebäudes von dem unteren zwei Drittel." Ibid., p. 119.



for the officers that came from Arbeiter homes, the distribution of the Arbeiter in the officer corps reflects a different pattern. Of the 1% of Arbeiter in the sample only .4% came from the same social milieu, whereas, .6% had come from the untere Mittelstand. Thus while over half of the Arbeiter sample also experienced social mobility, it was a downward social mobility. It was precisely this loss of status, this being dragged down to the Arbeiterschicht, which was dreaded so much by the untere Mittelstand. From the examples of Arbeiter in the Führerkorps cited in chapter II it is not surprising that these men sank to the Arbeiterschicht. These men were the flotsam of society who even within the narrow confines of the Arbeiterschicht encountered difficulties in eking out a meager existence.

Whereas the limited sample of Arbeiter showed some social mobility, either upward or downward, the most pronounced characteristic of the untere Mittelstand is the "Selbstrekrutierung" factor. Of the 77% from untere Mittelstand homes, 52.2% remained in the same social stratum. The upward social mobility factor should also not be overlooked, since 24.2% of the officers were able to advance to the obere Mittelstand. The downward social mobility of this group is negligible with .6%. If one takes a look at the officers, however, who had occupations which placed them into the untere Mittelstand the "Selbstrekrutierung" factor is most pronounced. Of the 59.2% of officers in the untere Mittelstand 52.2% came from the same social stratum. Only 3.2% were able to work themselves up from the Arbeiterschicht, while 3.8% experienced the loss of middle class

status.

The "Selbstrekrutierung" factor for the officers from obere Mittelstand homes is also very high. Of the 19% of officers who came from this social stratum, 15.2% remained in the same social stratum. On the other hand, greater social mobility could be detected in the group of officers who had professions which placed them into the obere Mittelstand. Of the 38.9% of Führer who belonged to the obere Mittelstand 15.2% had come from obere Mittelstand homes, while 24.2% had made the difficult climb from the untere Mittelstand.<sup>1</sup>

In summary it can be said that if one looks at the 4% of officers who came from an Arbeiter milieu and the 77% of officers who came from the untere Mittelstand, considerable upward social mobility is noticeable. If one looks at the 19% of officers who came from the obere Mittelstand considerable "Selbstrekrutierung" is apparent. Conversely, if one looks at the social classes to which the officers belonged by virtue of their occupations, one finds among the 1% of Arbeiter that a considerable fraction of them had experienced a loss of middle class status, while among the 59.2% of officers of the untere Mittelstand the "Selbstrekrutierung" factor is most apparent. Among 39.2% of the officers of the obere Mittelstand the upward social mobility factor is most pronounced.

Since the obere Mittelstand is so noticeably overrepresented, it is the officer who belonged to this stratum of society that warrants a

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<sup>1</sup>A Chi-Square test of independence between the social class of the officers and their specific home background shows that there is a statistically significant relationship beyond the .001 level between the two variables. Although the value of the Chi-Square is significant, an index of strength of relationship (Cramér's Phi) is very close to 0 indicating that although a relationship between the variables exist, it is not a very strong relationship. For Chi-Square and Cramér's Phi calculations, see Table 8, Appendix A, p. 261.

brief comment. To find the degree of upward social mobility into the obere Mittelstand as found in this study, suggests that the pre-1939 SS officer who belonged to this stratum was a particular kind of person. He was the kind of man who, in a society in which upward social mobility was the exception rather than the rule, had demonstrated a drive, perseverance, and ambition which helped him to overcome the confines of his own social stratum. This person then was a parvenu in the obere Mittelstand. That this person who had finally achieved professional status, and it should be recalled that most Führer in the sample had obtained their degrees prior to 1933, would want to secure his hard-earned position after Hitler came to power, is quite understandable. What better way to do this than to join the most prestigious organization of the new regime, the SS.



## Chapter VII

### FAMILY LIFE AND MORALITY

At the time when the SS numbered a mere 15,000 men<sup>1</sup> and the Führerkorps of the formation numbered no more than 350 officers,<sup>2</sup> Himmler already had visions of what the black corps d'élite was to achieve. Since an integral part of the selection of men of "pure blood" was the selection of their spouses, Himmler as early as 31 December 1931 issued the well-known Heiratsbefehl.<sup>3</sup> This order outlined in ten short paragraphs the criteria that would henceforth be applied to the selection of the mates of the SS members. Any member of the Schutzstaffel who violated the strict marriage regulations could be dismissed from the SS.<sup>4</sup> Since very little has been written about the application of the official marriage code, this chapter will show - through the use of case histories - how the code was applied. The official attitude toward women, divorce, and homosexuality will also be dealt with in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1937, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>"Zahlenmäßige Entwicklung des SS Führerkorps," SS-Personalhauptamt/13.

<sup>3</sup>The text of the "Heiratsbefehl" is reproduced in IMT, vol. xxx, doc. 2284-PS, pp. 134-35.

<sup>4</sup>An SS-Hauptamt ruling of 23 June 1937 laid down that any SS member who disregarded the Heiratsbefehl would be expelled. This strict order was modified by a subsequent order of 23 June 1938 which stated that the SS member who ignored the marriage law need not be expelled provided he and his wife satisfied SS racial regulations. Knoebel, Racial Illusion and Military Necessity, p. 22.

### The Selection of SS Wives:

What type of woman was the specially selected SS man permitted to marry in order to produce a future generation of "pure blood"? The importance Himmler placed on the selection of racially pure candidates and their wives can be seen by the fact that in 1931 he had established the Rasse und Siedlungsamt (RuSA) which shortly thereafter developed into a major Amt of the SS.<sup>1</sup> RuSA's primary duties were to deal with (1) racial questions; (2) farm worker and settlement questions; (3) geneological supervision; and (4) education.<sup>2</sup>

When a SS member, regardless of rank, decided to get married he had to apply to RuSA (later RuSHA), for permission. His wife had to undergo thorough medical, mental, and political examinations. Furthermore, her racial record had to be as clear of Jewish or Slavic blood as that of her husband. Both partners had to submit three pictures of themselves - one frontal, one side, and one full body pose - which were examined by the appropriate investigation team. In the case of officers, Himmler himself looked at the pictures of all the prospective brides and decided on the basis of the visual examination alone, whether the girl met SS racial standards.<sup>3</sup> This method of screening led to many problems as will be illustrated by a few case histories.

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<sup>1</sup>Effective 1 January 1935 the Rasse-und Siedlungsamt became a Hauptamt. Buchheim et. al. Anatomie, p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>3</sup>On a number of occasions this researcher encountered several marriage applications in one RuSHA file. The explanation for this was that Himmler might reject the officer's first choice, thus the officer, if he abided by Himmler's decision, was forced to look elsewhere for a suitable bride, and re-apply.

In the spring of 1941, the then 41-year-old Dr.med. Ernst Bauer,<sup>1</sup> on active service with the army, applied to marry Fr1. Anna Mika. An investigation into the background of the prospective bride was launched and the resultant report questioned Anna Mika's suitability to be an SS officer's wife. Apparently Anna Mika did not look aryan enough. The report stated: "Die Braut des Antragstellers, Dr Ernst Bauer ... erscheint nach den dem VH-Gesuch beigelegten Bildern zur Aufnahme in die Sippen-gesellschaft der SS nicht tragbar."<sup>2</sup> Since it was admitted that the pictures were of very poor quality, it was requested that Mika submit pictures of her seven brothers and sisters, her parents and her grandparents.<sup>3</sup> A second report of the investigation team was submitted in July 1941. This team judged Anna Mika to be a "... nordisch-östlicher Mischling, der in rassischer Hinsicht einen Grenzfall darstellt, jedoch noch zur positiven Seite hin entschieden werden könnte."<sup>4</sup> While the racial question seemed settled, the commission expressed other reasons why Anna Mika "... als zukünftige Frau eines SS-Mannes nicht geeignet und für die Sippen-schaft der SS nicht tragbar ist."<sup>5</sup> It appears that Fr1. Mika received the investigating officers in her apartment displaying red painted fingernails and red-dyed hair. The officers also felt: "Den Gedankengängen der Schutzstaffel

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Ernst Bauer, SS #75,664, born 24.7.1902, in Nürnberg. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from "Ergänzungsstelle Nordwest" to "Chef des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes," dated 27 May 1941. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Report to the "Sippenamt, Berlin," dated 3 July 1941. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



dürfte sie kein Verständnis entgegenbringen .... Im Bücherschrank ihrer Wohnung stehen heute noch neben einigen Klassikern Bücher von Arnold Zweig, Emil Ludwig (Cohen), Maxim Gorki und Hermann Mann."<sup>1</sup>

Upon the receipt of the negative decision of RuSHA, Bauer appealed to Berlin. It seems he was not given the reasons for his bride's rejection, and he questioned why "Fr1. Mika nicht den Anforderungen entspreche, die an eine Offiziersfrau zu stellen sind?"<sup>2</sup> Thereupon Himmler wrote: "Ich habe zwar Ihre Verlobung mit Fr1. Mika auf Ihre eigene Verantwortung freigegeben, bin jedoch nicht in der Lage Ihr Gesuch an den Führer heranzutragen."<sup>3</sup> Thus Bauer was given permission to marry, but without the official blessing of Himmler. He married in March 1943, and remained a member of the Allgemeine SS.<sup>4</sup>

An early joiner of the SS, Hauptsturmführer Paul Bettingen<sup>5</sup> also ran afoul of the strict marriage regulations when he submitted his bride's pictures for examination to RuSHA. A report of the Rasseamt III/I to the Sippenamt stated: "Fr1. Klasen wurde beurteilt ... östische Rassenanteile überwiegen westische und nordische Beimischung. Mongolenfalte ist angedeutet. Fr1. Klasen ist als unausgeglichener Mischtyp in der geschilderten Rassenzusammensetzung als Frau eines

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid. The SS report stated Hermann Mann. Since the two writers with the name Mann, which the Nazi regime had banned, were Thomas and Heinrich, one must assume that the investigating SS officers were not well versed in German literature.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Dr. Ernst Bauer to "Reichsführer-SS Himmler," dated 3 July 1941. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from "Reichsführer-SS Himmler" to Dr. Ernst Bauer, dated 11 December 1941. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Paul Bettingen, SS #3,373, born 11.11.1906, in Kolberg. BDC.

SS-Angehörigen nicht geeignet." The report concluded with the statement: "Der Antragsteller selbst ist bei geringer östischer Beimischung überwiegend fälisch, und damit erheblich wertvoller als seine Partnerin."<sup>1</sup>

A second report of the Rasseamt which shows the haphazardness of the selection technique stated: "Frl. Klasen ist in ergänzender Beurteilung durch die eingereichten Bilder als unausgeglichener Mischtyp zu bezeichnen."<sup>2</sup> In spite of these adverse reports the alte Kämpfer, who was "50% Parteiverletzt" due to injuries received during the Kampfzeit, was determined to marry the woman of his choice. After challenging the decision of the Rasseamt he also received Himmler's grudging permission to marry Frl. Klasen "auf eigene Verantwortung."<sup>3</sup>

The most persistent struggle to gain permission to marry his fiancée was conducted by the mechanic and SS Obersturmführer Hermann Müller.<sup>4</sup> The story warrants retelling for it shows how a determined SS member could challenge the orders of the Reichsführer and still remain in the organization. Müller, who joined the SS in 1928 and the NSDAP in 1929, in October 1936 applied for permission to marry Frl. Babette Leupold. According to the official report the documents and pictures of the bride "... wurden dem Reichsführer-SS zur persönlichen Entscheidung vorgelegt."<sup>5</sup> After his perusal of the documents Himmler decided not to

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<sup>1</sup>Report of "Rasseamt III/I" to "Heiratsamt im Hause," dated 12 February 1942. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Report of "Rasseamt III/I" to "Sippenamt im Hause," dated 12 February 1942. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Hermann Müller, SS #1,670, born 3.1.1909, in Hof/Saale. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>Letter from "Chef des Rasse-und Siedlungs-Hauptamtes," to "SS-Personalkanzlei," dated 3 July 1937. Ibid.

grant the requested permission - no reasons were given - and Müller was told that if he persisted in his desire to marry the girl he would have to resign from the SS. Himmler must have sensed that he was on weak ground in denying permission for he asked a medical doctor to back his decision. Müller, however, refused to accept the verdict and he also refused to resign. At the end of March 1937 "... bat der Antragsteller um eine nochmalige Überprüfung seines Gesuches."<sup>1</sup> He was informed by RuSHA that the reasons for denying him permission to marry Babette Leupold, which were essentially medical, remained and that, therefore, permission was once more denied. Then Müller hit on the not too ingenious idea of claiming that his fiancée was pregnant. When asked to produce a medical certificate to substantiate the claim, he replied that his fiancée had had a miscarriage. On 9 July 1937 he was informed "Auf Befehl des Reichsführer-SS wurden Sie durch das RuSHA aufgefordert, falls Sie die beabsichtigte Eheschliessung nicht aufgeben, Ihre Entlassung aus der Schutzstaffel zu beantragen."<sup>2</sup>

The subsequent actions of Müller seem all the more remarkable since he refused to bow to the requests and commands of the SS Führung. He received a more direct order: "Die SS-Personalkanzlei sieht Ihrer Nachricht bis zum 15.8.1937 entgegen und sollten Sie sich bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht entsprechend geäußert haben, werden Sie von hier aus entlassen."<sup>3</sup> The issue was clear-cut. He was to give up the girl by a certain date or he would be expelled. But Müller took no heed of this

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from "Chef der SS-Personalkanzlei" to SS Obersturmführer Müller, dated 9 July 1937. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



communique. He wrote to Himmler on 10 August requesting a re-examination of his application "... und /ich/ daher die von mir verlangte Erklärung betr. meines Austritts aus der Schutzstaffel erst nach Bearbeitung und Rückgabe meines vorgenannten Gesuches abgeben kann." He explained his refusal to give up Babette Leupold with the words, "Es wäre eines alten SS-Mannes unwürdig und feig, sich hier zurückzuziehen, wo klar und deutlich erkennbar ist, dass eine Fehlentscheidung getroffen wurde."<sup>1</sup>

It is, indeed, a remarkable letter if one considers that the letter writer was a junior officer in an organization that stressed unquestioning obedience to orders from superiors. A more amazing development in this case is that RuSHA relented and informed Müller: "Nach nochmaliger Vorlage des Verlobungs- und Heiratsgesuches des Obersturmführers Müller beim Reichsführer-SS am 16.8.1937 hat der Reichsführer-SS entschieden die Eheschliessung mit Frä. Leupold auf eigene Verantwortung ... freizugeben."<sup>2</sup> Müller married Babette Leupold on 12 February 1938<sup>3</sup> and remained a member of the SS.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the exchanges between individuals and RuSHA showed that humor was not completely absent from the situation. For instance, the old-time SS member Georg Rupert<sup>5</sup> got very impatient with RuSHA when his

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Obersturmführer Müller to "Reichsführer-SS," dated 10 August 1937. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from "Chef des Rasse-und Siedlungs-Hauptamtes, to "SS-Personalkanzlei," dated 27 August 1937. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>During the war Müller served as a corporal in the Waffen-SS. "Dienstlaufbahn" of Hermann Müller. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer George Rupert, SS #752, born 30.10.1908, in Bechtheim. BDC.

request for marriage was not answered immediately. In an awkward scribble, which obviously required some effort, the Bahnarbeiter and Obersturmführer wrote to Berlin that it was about time that he received an answer to his marriage request. "Soweit ich es beurteilen kann," wrote Rupert, "müsste die Sache doch mindestens fertig und zustellungsreif sein. Oder muss man jedes Mädel zuerst schwanger machen damit die Beurteilung gleich rascher und schneller genehmigt wird."<sup>1</sup> What Rupert did not know was that the examining SS doctor had declared under the heading of "Erbgesundheit" "... wenn auch nicht zu erklären ist, ob bei der Braut nur gewisse landläufige Dummheit vorliegt oder ein Schwachsinn leichtesten Grades."<sup>2</sup> This remark launched an investigation into the intelligence of Rupert's future wife. Finally it was decided: "Auf Grund der Akten lässt sich darüber schwer etwas sagen. Bei den Akten befindliche Bilder lassen die Braut nicht als schwachsinnig erscheinen."<sup>3</sup> Shortly thereafter Rupert received permission to marry Helene Scherer.<sup>4</sup>

The above case histories have shown how some SS officers, if they insisted on the right to marry the girls of their choice, were able to bring about reversals in RuSHA decisions. At times the struggles took months, yet in the end Himmler grudgingly gave approval. The selection process could, of course, be used for other purposes too.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of Obersturmführer Rupert to "Chef des Rasse-und Siedlungs-Hauptamtes," dated 12 February 1937. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Verlobungs-und Heiratsgesuch," Sippenamt, dated 14 October 1936. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from SS Hauptsturmführer Dr.med. Geyer to "Chef des Rasse-und Siedlungs-Hauptamtes," dated 5 February 1937. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

That is, an officer could blame RuSHA for not being able to marry the girl, when RuSHA had actually given him permission to marry. In July 1942 Sturmbannführer Karl Betzwieser<sup>1</sup> received permission to marry Frä. Paula Gander.<sup>2</sup> By August 1943 Paula Gander had still not been informed by her fiancé that permission for their marriage had been obtained. She, therefore, wrote a letter to Himmler pleading "... die Angelegenheit nochmals überprüfen zu lassen und die Genehmigung zur Eheschliessung mit meinem Bräutigam Karl Betzwieser erteilen zu wollen." She concluded the letter with the plea "Verhelfen Sie mir doch zu meinem Lebensglück, da mein Leben sonst nicht lebenswert wäre."<sup>3</sup> In the meantime Betzwieser had contacted RuSHA and told the Amt that he did not care to marry Frä. Gander. Still, the prospective bride was unaware of the change of heart of her "Lebensglück." Only after the girl sent another letter to Himmler was Betzwieser advised that it was high time "... dass Sie Frä. Gander von Ihrem Entschluss Kenntnis geben und sich nicht dahinter verschanzen, dass der Reichsführer-SS Ihr Gesuch abgelehnt habe."<sup>4</sup> Betzwieser was still too cowardly to confront his fiancée with the truth, and in July 1944 the SS-Führung reminded him once more "... schliesslich selbst zu wissen, wie Sie sich entscheiden."<sup>5</sup> It is not known whether Paula Gander was ever informed of Betzwieser's decision not to marry her,

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Karl Betzwieser, SS #244,088, born 3.7.1912, in Mingolsheim, Bez. Amt Bruchsal. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>"Vermerk," dated July 1942. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from Paula Gander to "Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler," dated 30 August 1943. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from "Feldkommandostelle" to Sturmbannführer Betzwieser, dated 17 January 1944. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Letter from "Feldkommandostelle" to Sturmbannführer Betzwieser, dated 16 July 1944. Ibid.



for in the autumn of 1944 Betzwieser was declared missing at the eastern front.<sup>1</sup>

### The SS Family:

Once an officer had obtained permission to marry, it was his obligation to produce as many offspring of "pure blood" as he possibly could. Himmler, at one point had advocated that the ideal SS family should consist of four children.<sup>2</sup> While the above-cited case histories showed that some SS Führer resented Himmler's interference with their marriage plans, the wives did not comply with the Reichsführer's legislation on the size of their families. The result was, that Himmler's much trumpeted four-children per family remained largely a dream. Statistics of 31 December 1939 showed that the 115,650 married SS men had on the average 1.1 children, while the officer's had an average of 1.4 children.<sup>3</sup> The Statistische Jahrbuch der SS for 1937 showed that the number of children per SS family was 1.2,<sup>4</sup> while the Jahrbuch for 1938 stated that 94,457 married SS men had 105,459 children.<sup>5</sup> This gives the average SS family in 1938 1.1 children. The SS statistics reveal further that of the over 94,000 married SS men, 37,376 had no children at all. In the light of such evidence the SS statistical compilers had to admit: "Hinsichtlich des Anteiles an Verheirateten und Kindern lag die SS in den vergangenen Jahren

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<sup>1</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Karl Betzwieser. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1937, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup>Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1938, p. 90.

erheblich unter dem Reichsdurchschnitt." Not even the SS Führung could ignore the fact that in 1936 the SS was 32% below the national average, while in 1938 the corps d'élite was still 14% below the national average.<sup>1</sup>

The quantitative data on the number of children fathered by the sampled SS Führer substantiate the failure of the officers to meet their chief's criterion for family size.<sup>2</sup> Table 7.1 shows that 87.9%

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Table 7.1

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of the sampled officers had three or fewer children. Only 7.4% of the married officers attained the desired four-children mark. If one takes a look at the size of the officers' families in relation to their joining date, the trend toward smaller rather than larger families becomes apparent. Thus, whereas 75.4% of the officers with SS numbers under 1000 had three or fewer children, the percentage of officers with this size family rises to 84.7% for those who joined between 1928 and 1930. Of those men who came to the SS during the last two years of the Weimar Republic, 1931 to 1933, 85.3% had three or fewer children. For the post-Machtergreifung joiners, the percentage with three or fewer children rose to the 90 mark and remained remarkably constant. This trend suggests that Himmler's urging his officers to have at least four children went largely unheeded.

#### Party Membership of SS Wives:

In his study on the social composition of the early NSDAP, Kater

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>It should be recalled that the children data are taken from the entire officers' careers.

Table 7.1 Number of Children in Officers' Families

Number of Children	Percentage of Children for Total Sample	PHASE I		PHASE II		PHASE III	
		4/25-12/12	1/28-12/30	1/31-1/33	2/33-6/34	7/34-12/36	1/37-9/39
0	25.0	14.8	19.4	20.9	26.2	27.4	32.2
1	25.1	21.3	25.6	23.5	27.0	23.9	25.7
2	23.3	22.1	23.6	24.2	25.3	22.5	19.7
3	14.5	17.2	16.1	16.7	11.9	15.5	12.8
Three children or fewer	87.9	75.4	84.7	85.3	90.4	89.3	90.4
4	7.4	13.9	9.3	8.8	5.6	6.7	6.4
5	2.6	5.7	2.9	3.3	2.1	1.7	2.3
6	1.4	4.1	1.8	1.6	1.1	1.8	.4
7	.4	---	.4	.7	.5	.3	---
8	.2	---	.4	.3	.2	.2	.2
9	.2	.9	.4	.1	---	.2	.1
Between four and nine children	12.2	24.6	15.2	14.8	9.5	10.9	9.4



discovered that only 4.4% of the pre-1923 Nazi Party members were women.<sup>1</sup> In January 1933 barely 6% of the membership of the NSDAP was female.<sup>2</sup> The low percentage of female party members was no accident as the National Socialist Movement was from the beginning an organization that had no place for women.<sup>3</sup> An official commentator after 1933 stated that "the NS Frauenschaften are determined to lead the women under their direction out of the depth of the day-to-day political struggle and back to the particular feminine tasks ...."<sup>4</sup> National Socialism's claim that it could solve the question of woman's emancipation rested in the old belief that woman's undefined position in German society was due primarily to the mistaken notion of equality of the sexes. As Fest stated, "In the light of such ideas the woman's rights movement of the nineteenth century appeared as a 'symptom of decay,' like democracy, liberalism and parliamentarianism."<sup>5</sup>

The quantitative data on the membership of the sampled officers' wives in the NSDAP show that 22% of the early SS officers' wives were

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Table 7.2

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party members, and that this figure dropped to 10% for those who joined the SS just after the Machtergreifung. It was during Phase III - July

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<sup>1</sup>Kater, "Soziographie," p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>At the first general meeting of the NSDAP, the members passed a resolution which prohibited a woman from holding any position of leadership in the party. Fest, The Face of the Third Reich, p. 397.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 402.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 402-03.

Table 7.2 Party Membership of the SS Officers' Wives

	PHASE I		PHASE II		PHASE III	
	4/25-12/12	1/28-12/30	1/31-1/33	2/33-6/34	7/34-12/36	1/37-9/39
Wives Party Members	22.1	18.7	16.2	10.3	12.3	14.5
Wives Non-Party Members	77.9	81.3	83.8	89.7	87.7	85.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1934 to September 1939 - that the percentage of wives who were party members rose again. This increase in party membership could partly be attributed to the fact, that the younger officers who joined during Phase III had married women, who, if they consented to marry an officer of the corps d'élite, had themselves gone through the BDM and after they had been subjected to the barrage of propaganda, had taken the logical step of joining the party. It should also be kept in mind that after the initial rush to join the NSDAP in 1933, the Party imposed an Aufnahmesperre which was gradually lifted around 1937.

#### Divorce in the SS:

Due to the haphazard recording of divorces in the personnel files, it was impossible to ascertain the divorce rate among the sampled SS Führer. It is indeed surprising that such an important personal event was not more carefully recorded in the personnel files. The Statistische Jahrbuch of the SS for 1938 lists 113 divorces for the total membership of the SS for that year.<sup>1</sup> The Statistische Jahrbuch for 1937 separates the divorce rate of non-commissioned SS men from that for officers. The statistical survey for 1937 shows that 64 divorces were granted to men and 22 to officers.<sup>2</sup> Since there were some 200,000 serving SS men at the time<sup>3</sup> as opposed to some 9,000 officers,<sup>4</sup> it is clearly seen that the divorce rate among the officers

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<sup>1</sup>Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1938, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup>Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1937, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>"Zahlenmässige Entwicklung des SS Führerkorps," SS-Personalhauptamt/13.



was considerably higher than among the men.

Since heredity played such an important role in SS philosophy, it should come as no surprise that a number of officers used heredity as a reason to obtain quick divorces. Standartenführer Friedrich Knolle,<sup>1</sup> a bookdealer before he became a full-time officer in the SD, applied for divorce in 1942. It appears that Knolle applied for divorce after he met the widow of a former SS officer who worked with him in the SD in the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> A child had been born to the couple in 1941.<sup>3</sup> In order to obtain a speedy divorce from his wife, Knolle recalled that when he had married his wife in 1933, she had suffered from a hip ailment. He admitted that for some time he had wondered whether the hip ailment was due to heredity. Knolle cleverly pointed out that had the marriage code been enforced as vigorously in 1933 as it was in later years he would surely not have been given permission to marry his wife. He also presented his case to Heydrich, and "Heydrich hat damals entschieden, dass unter diesen Umständen einer Ehescheidung dienstlich nichts im Wege stände."<sup>4</sup> A divorce was granted to Knolle on these shaky grounds in February 1943, and he remarried in September of that year.

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Friedrich Knolle, SS #59,601, born 12.3.1903, in Amsterdam. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Obersturmbannführer Knolle to "Inspekteur der Sipo und des SD," dated 19.4.1943. Knolle wrote the letter to his superior officer "... um kurz die tatsächlichen Gründe darzulegen, die mich veranlassten, meine Ehe scheiden zulassen." Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Master Card entry under number of children. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Obersturmbannführer Knolle to "Inspekteur der Sipo und des SD." Ibid.

Sturmbannführer Otto Jacobs,<sup>1</sup> a Dekorateur before he became a full-time officer, discovered the devastating truth a few months after he had married that "... der Vater der Frau Jacobs nicht arischer Abstammung ist. Auf Grund dieses Umstandes hat Jacobs dann auch beantragt, seine Ehe für nichtig erklären zu lassen."<sup>2</sup> How a woman, whose father was not of pure aryan background could have obtained permission to marry an SS officer in the first place is not explained in the correspondence. Jacobs could not have taken the loss of his non-aryan wife too seriously, for less than a year later he remarried.<sup>3</sup>

Obersturmführer Hans Gmöhling<sup>4</sup> also stated that he found out after his marriage that his wife suffered from a heart and nerve ailment, which he was certain was inherited. He stated that his wife's sister had suffered from a heart ailment since birth, and that an uncle of his wife had died from heart disease. Gmöhling wrote: "Ich habe von dem Gesundheitszustand der Familie erst im Laufe meiner Ehe erfahren."<sup>5</sup> Gmöhling, like this writer, was curious as to whether these factors had gone unnoticed in the original health examination of his wife. RuSHA replied that no information concerning the medical

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<sup>1</sup>Personnel File: SS Sturmbannführer Otto Jacobs, SS #102,446, born 23.7.1907, in Wardenburg, Oldenburg. BDC.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from "SS-Gericht III" to "Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler," dated 11 April 1938. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel File: SS Obersturmführer Hans Gmöhling, SS #87,360, born 10.9.1908, in Zumberg, Mittelfranken. BDC.

<sup>5</sup>Letter from Obersturmführer Gmöhling to "Chef des Rasse-und Siedlungs-Hauptamtes," dated 18 October 1940. Ibid.

examination could be released since "... die gemachten Angaben unterliegen der ärztlichen Schweigepflicht."<sup>1</sup> What seems even more surprising is the fact that there is no evidence which would suggest that his wife was subjected to another physical examination in order to corroborate her husband's story. A divorce was granted in July 1941.<sup>2</sup>

Friedrich Jeckeln,<sup>3</sup> the future Gruppenführer and Höhere SS und Polizeiführer 'Ostland,' joined the SS in 1929. He had initially married in 1918, and obtained a divorce in 1927. The SS became involved in Jeckeln's private life when he failed to meet his financial obligations to his first wife and the children. The wife wrote to Hitler in 1932 requesting his assistance "... drei deutschen Kindern zu ihrem Recht zu verhelfen."<sup>4</sup> As a result of this letter, Jeckeln was forced to explain his case to Himmler. What is interesting in this incident is the fact that Jeckeln tried to blame the break-up of his first marriage on his father-in-law, whom he believed to be a Jew. He explained that during the difficult time in his first marriage "... fiel mir ein Buch in die Hände, Die Sünde wider das Blut. Dieses Buch machte mir erst die Rassenfrage klar .... Wenn schon mal früher mir Zweifel an der arischen Abstammung des Herrn Hirsch [the father-in-law] gekommen waren" wrote Jeckeln, "so hat mir das gelesene Buch mit der Schilderung

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from "Chef des Sippenamtes," to Obersturmführer Gmöhling, dated 5 May 1941. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Gruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln, SS #4,367, born 2.2.1895, in Hornberg, Schwarzwald. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Frau Charlotte Jeckeln to Adolf Hitler, dated 5 February 1932. Ibid.



des Charakters des Juden die unumstössliche Gewissheit gebracht, dass Herr Hirsch ein Jude ist. Es war mir klar, dass über dieses Wissen meine Ehe in die Brüche gehen muss."<sup>1</sup> No other reasons were given, no further proof was presented. To Jeckeln his father-in-law was a Jew. While he could not use this as a reason for divorce in 1928 under the laws of the Weimar Republic, he used this argument effectively in order to avoid financial responsibility for an essentially non-aryan family.

The divorce case of Hauptsturmführer Karl Bäuerle<sup>2</sup> is most interesting for it demonstrates the attitude of a National Socialist court toward marriage, the role and the rights of a wife, and what it considered to be sexually perverse. Bäuerle and his wife were educated people. He was a Studienrat at a Napola, she had her Staatsexmen.<sup>3</sup> In 1941 Bäuerle applied for a divorce. Although it is never mentioned in the documents, he must have become interested in someone else for a month after the divorce became final he remarried.<sup>4</sup> Bäuerle charged his wife with refusing to share with him a National Socialist marriage, for holding on to bourgeois religious beliefs, with failing in her marital duties by an unwillingness to have another child, and with sexual perversion.

It is interesting to see how the court dealt with the charges. With regard to the first charge, where the man "... ist ganz von seinem

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Standartenführer Jeckeln to "Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler," dated 28 February 1932. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Karl Bäuerle, SS #47,415, born 9.2.1907, in Langebrand, Krs. Neuenbürg. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>Handwritten "Lebenslauf" of Karl Bäuerle, dated 2 March 1940. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

beruflichen und politischen in der grösseren Gemeinschaft des Volkes erfüllt .... Zu diesem Ziele ordnet er alles, insbesondere das Familienleben unter.," and the wife wanted "... nur ein gemütliches und harmonisches Leben mit ihrem Mann und Kindern," the court ruled that the marriage was "... endgültig zerrüttet." To substantiate the charge that the wife hung on to bourgeois religious beliefs, the husband mentioned the incident where "... die Beklagte mit den Kindern für den Klagenden gebetet haben, er möge aus dem Kriege wieder gut heimkommen." The court ruled that this act was "... keine verräterische Betätigung christlicher Weltanschauung," even for an SS man's wife. Towards the charge that the wife refused to have sexual relations with her husband out of fear of pregnancy, the court showed a remarkable liberal and progressive view. It ruled "Er /Bäuerle/ beobachtet nicht, dass es in einer ordentlich geführten Ehe der Hausfrau wohl zukommt, ihre Auffassungen, Hoffnungen und Wünsche auf den verschiedenen Gebieten z.B. auch den beruflichen kundzutun und eine verständige Würdigung derselben durch ihren Ehemann zu erwarten .... Das gilt insbesondere in der Frage der Nachkommenschaft." The court even accepted the statement of an SS officer's wife: "Es ist und bleibt Privatsache, das lasse ich mir nicht befehlen, von keinem Heissmeyer und von keinem Reichsführer Himmler .... Die Frau ist nicht nur da zum Arbeiten und Kinder kriegen und der Mann fährt in der Welt herum."<sup>1</sup>

In view of the above ruling, the court's attitude toward the sexual perversion charge is most surprising. In this instance the court

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<sup>1</sup>The above statements were taken from the court ruling of the Oberlandesgericht, Stuttgart, dated 18 July 1941. Ibid.

adopted an almost medieval attitude. Bäuerle had charged his wife with the continued practice of masturbation. The court ruled, "Dieses Treiben der Beklagten, dem der Kläger offenbar ständig Widerspruch entgegengesetzt hat, war eine schwere Eheverfehlung, welche ihrer Natur nach auch geeignet war, die Parteien zu entfremden und die Ehe zu zerrütten. Der Beklagten muss der Vorwurf gemacht werden, dass sie es an genügender Bekämpfung dieses Triebes hat fehlen lassen."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the court allowed the wife freedom in determining a number of aspects in her life, even in the professional and child bearing realms, but ruled that masturbation was a severe failure on her part in the marriage relationship, and equated the habit to a compulsion.<sup>2</sup> The divorce was granted.

#### Homosexuality in the SS:

In 1933, when Himmler put a temporary halt to recruitment into the SS, he used the interlude to weed out any undesirables that had managed to gain acceptance into the Black Order during the Kampfzeit. Aside from the chronic unemployed, alcoholics, and men of doubtful aryan background, men suspected of homosexuality were ruthlessly expelled. Himmler considered homosexuality a personal insult, and a crime punishable with death.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt, that the puritanical

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>The court made special mention of the last charge in its summation when it stated, "... dass die Beklagte dadurch, dass sie Selbstbefriedigung getrieben hat, sich besonders, schwer gegen die Pflichten einer Ehegattin verfehlt hat ..." Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Höhne, The Order, pp. 142-43.



attitude toward homosexuality in the SS was the result of Himmler's attitude toward this particular kind of sexual activity.<sup>1</sup> Even as a youth, Himmler found homosexuality particularly disturbing. He associated it with the degeneration and lack of morality which he saw everywhere around him in post-war Germany.<sup>2</sup> Not even alte Kämpfer like the SS Gruppenführer Kurt Wittje, the first head of the SS-Hauptamt, escaped prosecution and eviction from the SS.<sup>3</sup> In 1937 Himmler decreed that each homosexual be expelled, handed over to the courts, and that after he had served his sentence "... he will be sent on my instructions to a concentration camp and shot while trying to escape."<sup>4</sup> The extent of his merciless prosecution of men suspected of this sexual habit is illustrated by some case histories.

He demoted his nephew Obersturmführer Hans Himmler<sup>5</sup> and sentenced him to death for drunkenness. He then gave the unfortunate

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<sup>1</sup>Himmler had numerous conversations with Felix Kersten on the subject of homosexuality. In these talks it became apparent that Himmler considered homosexuality an inherited characteristic and, therefore, incurable. Felix Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs, 1940-1945, with an introduction by H. R. Trevor Roper, trans. from the German by C. Fitzgibbon and J. Oliver (New York 1956), pp. 56-64.

<sup>2</sup>After reading the book Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft in which the author Hans Blüher argued that physical attraction between males is a natural result of male companionship, Himmler commented in his diary "In any case the pure physical homosexuality is an error of degenerate individualists that is contrary to human nature." Bradley Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 1900-1926 (Stanford 1971), p. 115.

<sup>3</sup>Officially Wittje was released because of ill health, and the Schwarze Korps of 22 May 1935 expressed the hope that the alte Kämpfer would soon resume his duties.

<sup>4</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 143; see also, Knoebel, Racial Illusion and Military Necessity, p. 38. Hitler said in 1941, "... in one organization, namely the SS, every case of homosexuality must be punished with death. When it /the SS/ aspires to be the élite of the nation there cannot be any other punishment ...." Steiner, Power Politics and Social Change, p. 91.

<sup>5</sup>The personnel file of Hans Himmler was missing at the BDC.

man the opportunity to prove himself at the front with an airborne unit. When he survived this ordeal, and made some derogatory remarks about his uncle, Himmler had him imprisoned "... und liess ihn schliesslich als Homosexuellen im K. L. Dachau 'liquidieren'." <sup>1</sup>

In view of the treatment that his nephew received, it is not surprising that Himmler proceeded with utter ruthlessness against Standartenführer Hans Himpe. <sup>2</sup> It appears that Himpe, a one-time professional officer, had been introduced to homosexuality while he was a young student at a Kadettenanstalt where he had been sent at the age of ten. Although Himpe was lauded for his services to National Socialism prior to 1933, he was paraded in front of the Sturmbann, demoted and expelled from the SS because he was a homosexual. <sup>3</sup> Even the plea to Himmler "Mein Reichsführer, wer heute gezwungen ist den schwarzen Rock auszuziehen ist nur noch ein halber Mensch, und wird niemals wieder in Ehren im heutigen Staate arbeiten können," <sup>4</sup> did not save Himpe from a one year jail sentence and a 17-months stay at K. L. Sachsenhausen. <sup>5</sup>

Hauptsturmführer Dr. Rüdiger von Bodingen, <sup>6</sup> a young Dr.jur.

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<sup>1</sup>The above cited incident is related by Kogon, Der SS-Staat, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Standartenführer Hans Himpe, SS #26,854, born 18.11.1899, in Berlin. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>The official reason given was "Wegen widernatürlicher Unzucht zum SS-Mann degradiert und aus der SS ausgestossen," dated 10 April 1936. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Letter of Hans Himpe to "Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler," dated 30 April 1936. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Master Card. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Rüdiger von Bodungen, SS #241,798, born 28.6.1910, in Eichwerder b. Stettin. BDC.



and an early and enthusiastic adherent to National Socialism, committed this crime while serving as an instructor at the Junkerschule Tölz.

A member of the NSDAP since 1930, and a member of the SS since 1934, Bodungen was sent to K. L. Sachsenhausen. In January 1940 he was released from the concentration camp, sent to the "verlorene Haufen," the notorious SS penal unit.<sup>1</sup> During the French campaign he died while clearing a minefield.<sup>2</sup>

Untersturmführer Dr. Georg Hagen,<sup>3</sup> could consider himself fortunate that he did not share a similar fate after it was discovered that he had had a homosexual relationship in 1923. Hagen, who was Präsident der Reichspostdirektion in Breslau, requested an immediate release from the SS, which was granted since he had become "... untragbar für die SS."<sup>4</sup> No further action was taken against the Ministerialdirektor.

The mere suspicion of homosexuality was sufficient to bring about instant dismissal from the SS. Brigadeführer Hans Dietrich Grünewald,<sup>5</sup> a former regular army officer and senior police officer

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<sup>1</sup>Hoess wrote the following about the 'verlorene Haufen: "Im Laufe des Krieges, als selbst Himmler die Todesurteile zu viel wurden, ... errichtete man die SS Bewährungsabteilungen, - 'Himmelfahrtskommandos' genannt - die zu Minensuchen oder fast aussichtslosen Widerstandsunternehmen eingesetzt wurden. Nur wenige haben diese Bewährungseinsätze lebend überstanden." Steiner, Power Politics and Social Change, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Rüdiger von Bodungen. Personnel File: Rüdiger von Bodungen.

<sup>3</sup>Personnel File: SS Untersturmführer Dr. Georg Hagen, SS #36,191, born 16.3.1899, in Breslau. BDC.

<sup>4</sup>Release report of Georg Hagen, dated November 1933. Exact date unreadable. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Personnel File: SS Brigadeführer Hans Dietrich Grünewald, SS #309,502, born 14.12.1898, in Beuthen, Oberschlesien. BDC.



since 1928, was on an inspection trip of police schools in 1944, when he was suspected one night of having had a male companion in his room. A lot of drinking had gone on that night, everyone was intoxicated, and the charge against Grünewald, whose history included no homosexual tendencies, could not be proven. Yet Grünewald was released from the SS, on the grounds that he violated "... den Erlass des Führers zur Reinhaltung von SS und Polizei."<sup>1</sup>

That Himmler at times thought the SS court decisions too lenient and directed a more severe sentence is illustrated in the case of Hauptsturmführer Dr. Hennig Graf von Hardenberg.<sup>2</sup> Hardenberg was a young medical doctor attached to the Verfügungsddivision in 1940.<sup>3</sup> It was during a regimental party, celebrating the collapse of France, that Hardenberg was accused of having made homosexual approaches toward an N.C.O. That he was described by his company commander "... als weich und ohne Härte ..." <sup>4</sup> cannot lead one to assume that Hardenberg had any homosexual tendencies. Purely circumstantial evidence, and the facts "... dass unter einigen SS-Männern ein Gerede entstanden sei, v. Hardenberg habe gleichgeschlechtliche Anwandlungen" and "... dass zwei ebenfalls in Berlin wohnende Träger des Namens Graf von Hardenberg bereits in der Kartei der Reichszentrale zur Bekämpfung der Homosexualität als Homosexuelle bekannt sind, ..." <sup>5</sup> haben das Feldgericht auf eine latente

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<sup>1</sup>Proceedings against Hans Dietrich Grünewald, dated 1 April 1944. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Personnel File: SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Hennig Graf von Hardenberg, SS #220,823, born 18.10.1907, in Demmin, Pommern. BDC.

<sup>3</sup>The Verfügungsddivision was renamed "Deutschland" in late 1940, then renamed "Das Reich." Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup>"Gericht der SS-V.Division, Strafsache gegen den SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Hennig Graf von Hardenberg," dated 20 August 1940. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>The two Hardenbergs entered in the Reichszentrale were Hennig Hardenberg's brother and uncle. Ibid.

Erbanlage des v. Hardenberg in dieser Richtung schliessen lassen."<sup>1</sup>

While the SS Divisional Court granted that certain hereditary factors may have made Hardenberg a latent homosexual, the trained jurists found it necessary, on the basis of the evidence presented "...

v. Hardenberg im vollem Umfange mangels Beweises freizusprechen."<sup>2</sup>

Himmler, however, thought otherwise. When he received the divisional court's verdict he reversed it, and ordered "... wegen mangelnder

Eignung entlassen."<sup>3</sup> When Hardenberg appealed the sentence he was

informed that Himmler had reviewed the sentence "... und es abgelehnt

hat, die gegen Sie getroffene Entscheidung auf Entlassung aus der

Schutzstaffel und Waffen-SS aufzuheben."<sup>4</sup> In February 1941 Obergruppen-

führer Heissmeyer, who was personally acquainted with Hardenberg,

requested a renewed review of the case. He felt that Hardenberg

"... hat sich den Ausschluss aus der Schutzstaffel wegen mangelnder

Eignung so zu Herzen genommen, dass die Gefahr besteht, dass er

dieserhalb Selbstmord begeht." Heissmeyer reiterated that Hardenberg

had nothing to do with the two homosexual relatives, and that he was

happily married.<sup>5</sup> It was all to no avail. Himmler remained adamant

that Hardenberg was unfit to serve in his corps.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Gericht der SS-V.Division." Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>"Dienstlaufbahn" of Hennig Hardenberg. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from "Chef des Hauptamtes SS-Gericht" to the "ehem. SS Hauptsturmführer d.R. Dr. Hennig Graf von Hardenberg," dated 19 October 1940. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Letter of SS Obergruppenführer Heissmeyer to "Chef des SS Personalhauptamtes," dated 8 February 1941. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Master Card. Ibid.



From these case histories it can be seen that the SS Führerkorps was guided by a peculiar sense of values. They frequently carried the stamp of a "laughable Heinrich Himmler,"<sup>1</sup> of a pedantic, kleinbürgerlich, and prudish man who had become leader of the praetorian guard of National Socialism.<sup>2</sup> Yet the rules were capriciously enforced. While the alte Kämpfer and mechanic Hermann Müller could successfully conduct a fight against the powerful Rasse-und Siedlungshauptamt as well as Himmler, the war hero and Ritterkreuzträger Klingenberg was forbidden to marry the daughter of Gruppenführer Walter Krüger because on Frau Krüger's side there was a jewish ancestor in 1711.<sup>3</sup> It is surprising that so many well educated SS officers accepted the rulings from above, while some less well educated officers were less awed by the commands of the SS Führung. On the other hand, it appeared to be a relatively simple matter to obtain a divorce in the SS, provided one could twist a racial or hereditary factor in one's favour. Once suspected or charged with homosexuality, there was little escape for an officer. What made matters even worse was the fact that the SS moral code looked upon homosexuality as a hereditary sickness that had to be eradicated.

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<sup>1</sup>Kogon, Der SS-Staat, p. 359.

<sup>2</sup>An example of Himmler's kleinbürgerliche mentality is provided in the following incident. One day the book Freude - Sexualtherapie (Himmler meant to write Freud but misspelled the name) was found in the desk of Standartenführer Dilcher. Himmler ordered Dilcher immediately to come to his office so he could explain "Wie kommt dieses Buch in den Dienstschreibtisch?" and "Ist Dilcher der Bestzer des Buches?" The matter was of such importance that Dilcher was ordered "... Berlin nicht zu verlassen, bis ich es wieder genehmige." Steiner, Power Politics and Social Change, p. 353.

<sup>3</sup>Höhne, The Order, p. 144.



## CONCLUSION

The quantitative approach used in the investigation of the social composition of the SS Führerkorps has made it possible to trace in some detail the social changes that occurred within the corps between 1925 and 1939. While Hitler's seizure of power on 30 January 1933 led to some major changes in the social composition of the sampled Führerkorps, a more detailed breakdown of the pre- and post-Machtergreifung periods has shown that using January 1933 as the only dividing line for the analysis of the composition of the SS is unsatisfactory. The officer corps of the SS had undergone a number of social changes prior to January 1933. That is to say, the Führerkorps on the day that Hitler assumed power was different from what it had been during the early Kampfzeit. Similarly, after the Machtergreifung the social composition of the corps changed so that by September 1939 it again was different from what it had been in early 1933. This summary will look at the major social characteristics of the sampled Führerkorps for each of the three phases into which this study is divided. The social composition of the various branches of the SS will also be summarized.

### Phase I: 1925-1930

The quantitative analysis of the early joiners showed that the typical SS member who would eventually advance to the Führerkorps was born in southern Germany, was under the age of 30 when he joined, had only an elementary school education, and was either an ungelernter Arbeiter or had an occupation which placed him into the untere Mittelstand.

In the early literature on the SS the man who wore the black uniform was depicted as a social misfit, a man who was incapable of earning a decent living, and one who exemplified the anti-social Schlägertyp. The qualitative data, the detailed case histories, showed that this type of SS man did in fact exist, but that he could be found primarily among the very early adherents of the Schutzstaffel. This suggests that the stringent selection criteria advocated by Schreck in his Order No. 1 were not too stringently enforced during the Infancy Phase of the SS.

#### Phase II: 1931-1934

Because Hitler's seizure of power occurs in the middle of Phase II, this phase will be looked at in two parts. Quantitative results for the period 1931 to 1933 showed that the election breakthrough of the NSDAP in September 1930 exerted an influence on the social composition of the SS Führerkorps. While the gradual increase in northern-born officers was already noticeable toward the end of Phase I, it was in the first part of Phase II that the 2 to 1 predominance of northern-born officers over their southern-born compatriots was established for the first time. The trend toward an older officer corps, a trend which began at the end of Phase I, continued during the early part of Phase II. In this time period there was a noticeable decrease in the under-30 joiner, and an increase in the 30- to 39-year-old age group. The educational analysis for the 1931 to 1933 joiners showed fewer officers with only a Volksschulbildung and more with an Abitur or even some university education, While ungelernte Arbeiter were still promoted to commissioned rank, it was the untere Mittelstand that was most noticeably overrepresented in the Führerkorps. A perusal of the qualitative data, the Lebensläufe showed that the Schlägertyp

or the individual who had difficulty providing a stable home environment, even within the narrow definition of the untere Mittelstand, was no longer taken into the officer corps. In other words, the men who joined the SS during the final two years of the Weimar Republic, and who were promoted to commissioned rank, were from the more stable Bürgertum.

Hitler's seizure of power was associated with some of the major changes in the social composition of the Führerkorps. While the ratio of 2 to 1 in favour of northern-born officers, and the trend toward an older officer corps continued in the second part of Phase II, it was in the educational and occupational categories that the most pronounced changes occurred. After January 1933 there was a sharp drop in the non-Abitur officer category, and a corresponding rise for the university-educated group. This sudden influx of educated men into the SS was also reflected in the occupational distribution for those joining between 1933 and 1934. For the first time it was the obere Mittelstand that was overrepresented. The qualitative data showed that the educated segment which joined the SS at this time was productively employed and did not consist of disgruntled or unemployed intellectuals.

### Phase III: 1934-1939

Throughout Phase III the northern-born, educated, professional person continued to make up a significant part of the sampled Führerkorps. It was only in the second half of the phase, 1937 to 1939, with the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland that the geographic pattern was slightly altered. Among the professions of the obere Mittelstand it was noticed in the latter part of Phase II that the former professional officers and the senior civil servants did not join in the headlong



rush of the other educated Märzgefallene to don the black uniform. However, it was after June 1934 that these two groups began to join in greater numbers. As a result of the influx of these two professional groups, there was a marked increase in the above-50 age group.

### Branches of the SS

The study has shown that not only did major social changes take place in the composition of the SS Führerkorps over the years, but that also major variations existed in the social composition of the various branches of the SS. Thus it has been shown that the Allgemeine SS and the Sicherheitsdienst contained the largest percentage of university-educated officers, while the Totenkopfverbände had the highest percentage of elementary-school educated officers. Geographically, the Sicherheitsdienst had the largest percentage of northern-born officers, while the Totenkopfverbände had the largest percentage of southern-born officers. As far as the age distribution of each branch was concerned, the Allgemeine SS contained the highest percentage of officers over the age of 40, while the Totenkopfverbände tended to attract more of the 21- to 39-year-old men. The Sicherheitsdienst could claim a preponderance of applicants in their 20's, and the Verfügungstruppe was a predominantly young man's formation with two-thirds of its Führer joining the SS before they reached the age of 20.

### Socio-economic Background of the Officers

At least one further aspect of this study warrants some summary comment. In the investigation of the social background of the sampled Führerkorps it was discovered that the officers had experienced more social mobility than one might expect to find in post World War I German

society. While the Selbstrekrutierung factor of the untere and obere Mittelstand was high, as is to be expected, the upward mobility of the admittedly small sample of officers from Arbeiter background, and those from an untere Mittelstand milieu is interesting. The fact that a noticeable percentage of the sampled SS officers overcome the various social barriers of their home environment and advanced into a higher stratum of society suggests that once these men reached their professional goals they were determined to secure their newly-won social status by joining the élite formation of the new regime.

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# APPENDIX A

Table 1. Table of Frequencies Relating Phases of the Study to Rank Achieved by the Officers

		PHASES			
		I	II	III	TOTAL
RANK LEVELS	JUNIOR RANKS	383 (376)*	1724 (1797)	904 (838)	3011
	SENIOR RANKS	229 (222)	1032 (1017)	541 (563)	1802
	GENERAL RANKS	56 (70)	250 (192)	131 (175)	437
	TOTAL	668	3006	1576	5250

\*The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

$$1. \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2_4 = .13 + 3.09 + 4.82 + .21 + .22 + .89 + 3.5 + 13.46 + 14.78 \approx 41$$

$$2. \text{Cramér's } \phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}}$$

N = total number in sample  
k = the smaller of number of rows or columns

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{41}{5250(3-1)}} = .06$$



Table 2. Table of Frequencies Relating Phases of the Study to Officers' Birthplaces in Terms of Geographic North/South/Special Regions

REGIONS	PHASES				
		I	II	III	TOTAL
	NORTH	401 (317)*	1808 (1936)	949 (950)	3158
	SOUTH	198 (318)	891 (854)	468 (385)	1557
	SPECIAL	68 (33)	307 (216)	160 (286)	535
	TOTAL	667	3006	1577	5250

\*The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

$$1. \quad \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2_4 = 17.60 + 9.06 + 2.04 + 72.73 + 1.54 + 14.72 + 18.01 + 26.97 + 99.23 = 261.9$$

$$2. \quad \text{Cramér's } \phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}}$$

N = total number in sample  
k = the smaller of number of rows or columns

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{261.9}{5250(2)}} = .16$$

Table 3. Table of Frequencies Relating Phases of the Study to the Officers' Birthplaces in Terms of Population Centres

		PHASES			
		I	II	III	TOTAL
POPULATION CENTRES	CITY	214 (209)*	941 (956)	435 (425)	1590
	TOWN	158 (155)	695 (713)	322 (307)	1175
	RURAL	263 (271)	1154 (1121)	533 (558)	1950
	TOTAL	635	2790	1290	4715

\*The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

$$1. \quad \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2_4 = .117 + .239 + .230 + .056 + .466 + .699 + 2.43 + .944 + 1.173 \\ = 4.167$$

Table 4. Table of Frequencies Relating Branch of SS Joined to Officers' Birthplace in Terms of Geographic North/South/Special Regions

		BRANCHES			
REGIONS		TV	SD	VT	TOTAL
	NORTH	112 (89)*	637 (668)	137 (129)	886
	SOUTH	50 (81)	287 (259)	62 (59)	399
	SPECIAL	18 (10)	104 (101)	23 (34)	145
	TOTAL	180	1028	222	1430

\* The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

$$1. \quad \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2_4 = 4.72 + 1.51 + .47 + 19.22 + 2.73 + .15 + 3.56 + .09 + 5.26 = 37.71$$

$$2. \quad \text{Cramér's } \phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}}$$

N = total number in sample  
k = the smaller of number of rows or columns

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{37.71}{1430(2)}} = .11$$



Table 5. Table of Frequencies Relating Branch of SS Joined to Officers' Age at Time of Joining

		BRANCHES				
		A/SS	TV	SD	VT	TOTAL
AGE GROUPS	TO 29	2141 (2038)*	101 (90)	574 (617)	123 (194)	2939
	30-49	1558 (1650)	73 (88)	418 (384)	90 (17)	2139
	50+	126 (137)	6 (2)	34 (25)	6 (8)	172
	TOTAL	3825	180	1026	219	5250

\*The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

$$1. \quad \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2_6 = 4.96 + 1.2 + 3.22 + 40.98 + 5.43 + 3.08 + 2.77 + 59.21 + .96 + 2.67 + 2.38 + .67 = 127.52$$

$$2. \quad \text{Cramér's } \phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}}$$

N = total number in sample  
k = the smaller of number of rows or columns

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{127.52}{5250(2)}} = .11$$

Table 6. Table of Frequencies Relating Phases of the Study to the Officers' Age at Time of Joining

AGE GROUPS	PHASES				
		I	II	III	TOTAL
	TO 29	374 (454)*	1683 (1792)	882 (693)	2939
	30-49	272 (205)	1125 (1169)	642 (765)	2139
	50+	22 (9)	98 (45)	52 (118)	172
	TOTAL	668	3006	1576	5250

\* The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

$$1. \quad \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2_4 = 17.14 + 7.09 + 40.60 + 16.57 + 2.54 + 23.52 + 7.59 + 29.04 + 85.32 = 229.41$$

$$2. \quad \text{Cramér's } \phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}}$$

N = total number in sample  
k = the smaller of number of rows or columns

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{229.41}{5250(2)}} = .14$$

Table 7. Table of Frequencies Relating Phases of the Study to the Officers' Occupations in Terms of Social Structure

		PHASES				
		I	II(1)	II(2)	III	TOTAL
SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF OCCUPA- TIONS	ARBEITERSCHICHT	7.13 (20)*	15.55 (20)	16.51 (3)	16.81 (13)	56
	UNTERE MITTELSTAND	394.06 (556)	860.08 (1084)	913.17 (728)	929.69 (729)	3097
	OBERE MITTELSTAND	267.81 (92)	582.37 (354)	618.32 (817)	29.50 (834)	2097
	TOTAL	668	1458	1548)	1576	5250

\*The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

$$1. \quad \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2_6 = 23.32 + 1.27 + 11.06 + .86 + 66.55 + 58.30 + 37.55 + 43.32 + 114.53 + 89.55 + 63.84 + 66.43 = 576.49$$

$$2. \quad \text{Cramer's } \phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}} \quad \begin{array}{l} N = \text{total number in sample} \\ k = \text{the smaller of number of rows or columns} \end{array}$$

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{576.49}{5250(2)}} = .23$$



Table 8. Table of Frequencies Relating Officers' Socio-Economic Home Background to their Occupations in Terms of Class Structure

		HOME BACKGROUND			
SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF OCCUPA- TIONS		ARBEITER- SCHICHT	UNTERE MITTELSTAND	OBERE MITTELSTAND	TOTAL
	ARBEITERSCHICHT	2.15 (20)*	43.14 (34)	10.72 (2)	56
	UNTERE MITTELSTAND	119.58 (166)	2393.46 (2738)	594.96 (204)	3108
	OBERE MITTELSTAND	80.27 (16)	1606.41 (1271)	399.32 (799)	2086
	TOTAL	202	4043	1005	5250

\*The observed frequencies are given in parentheses.

$$1. \quad \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2_4 = 1.53 + 7.09 + 18.02 + 49.60 + 256.90 + 51.46 + 70.03 + 400.04 = 1002.87$$

$$2. \quad \text{Cramer's } \phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N(k-1)}}$$

N = total number in sample  
k = the smaller of number of rows or columns

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{1002.87}{5250(2)}} = .31$$

## APPENDIX B

### Comparative Table of SS and Commonwealth Army Ranks (Commissioned Ranks only)

SS-Untersturmführer	Second Lieutenant
SS-Obersturmführer	First Lieutenant
SS-Hauptsturmführer	Captain
SS-Sturmbannführer	Major
SS-Obersturmbannführer	Lieutenant-Colonel
SS-Standartenführer	Colonel
SS-Oberführer	-----
SS-Brigadeführer	Brigadier
SS-Gruppenführer	Major-General
SS-Obergruppenführer	Lieutenant-General
SS-Oberstgruppenführer	General
Reichsführer-SS	Field Marshal