1992

Leadership, ideology and transition of the Nazi SS, 1925-1936

Jeffrey Todd Miller
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Miller, Jeffrey Todd, "Leadership, ideology and transition of the Nazi SS, 1925-1936" (1992). *Master's Theses*. 343.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.a7zs-sype>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/343

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 1348704

Leadership, ideology and transition of the Nazi SS, 1925–1936

Miller, Jeffrey Todd, M.A.

San Jose State University, 1992

U·M·I

300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

LEADERSHIP, IDEOLOGY AND TRANSITION
OF THE NAZI SS, 1925-1936

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By

Jeffrey Todd Miller

May, 1992

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Aaron L. Goldman

Dr. Aaron Goldman

Ursula R Moessner

Professor Ursula Moessner.

Harry A. Gailey

Dr. Harry Gailey

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

M. Joe Lewandowski

ABSTRACT

LEADERSHIP, IDEOLOGY AND TRANSITION OF THE NAZI SS, 1925-1936

by Jeffrey Todd Miller

The Schutzstaffel or SS was the primary organization responsible for carrying out exterminations for the Nazi hierarchy. It was a key instrument of terror used by the Nazis and came to represent organized brutality within the Third Reich. The power structure of the SS, however, was established prior to the Second World War. The SS, with Heinrich Himmler as its leader, was a dominant organization within Nazi Germany by 1936.

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of the SS from 1925 to 1936. This thesis focuses primarily on the leadership and ideological principles of the SS. This includes the analysis of key figures such as Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich and Richard Walther Darré from both leadership and ideological perspectives. This study also addresses the major transitional events of the SS and analyzes their effect on the organization and Nazi Germany.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several people whose help and support made this thesis possible. I would first like to thank the members of my graduate advisory committee; Dr. Aaron Goldman, Professor Ursula Moessner and Dr. Harry Gailey who were very supportive during my undergraduate and graduate studies at San Jose State University. Dr. Goldman always made himself available to me whenever I needed his assistance. I am sincerely grateful to him for his support.

I am extremely thankful to Professor Irma Eichhorn and Dr. Charles Burdick for their guidance in selecting a thesis topic early on in my graduate studies. Dr. Burdick's enthusiasm and genuine interest in my research was a source of inspiration to me. My thanks are also extended to Dr. Charles Keserich, the History Department staff and my other history Professors at San Jose State for making my academic experience an extremely positive and unforgettable one.

Additionally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their continued support of my educational endeavors. A very special thanks goes to Shaun and Kristi Miller who unselfishly spent countless hours proof-reading this manuscript. Their questions, suggestions and corrections contributed to a far better final product. Finally, to everyone who believed in my academic direction, I would like to say "thank you."

To
my brother, Shaun,
whose encouragement, faith and vision
have been invaluable to me

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Kripo	<u>Reichs Kriminalpolizei</u> (Criminal Investigation Police)
NSDAP	<u>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpatei</u> (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
Orpo	<u>Ordnungspolizei</u> (Order Police or Uniformed Municipal Police)
RSHA	<u>SS Reichssicherheitshauptamt</u> (SS Reich Security Main Office)
RuSHA	<u>SS Rasse und Siedlungs Hauptamt</u> (SS Race and Settlement Office)
SA	<u>Sturmabteilung</u> (Storm Troopers or Brown Shirts)
SD	<u>Sicherheitsdienst</u> (SS Security Service)
Schupo	<u>Schutzpolizei</u> (Civil Security Police)
Sipo	<u>Sicherheitspolizei</u> (Security Police or Political Security Police)
SS	<u>Schutzstaffel</u> (Protection Squadrons or Black Shirts)
SSTV	<u>SS Totenkopfstandarten</u> (SS Death's Head Regiments)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. HEINRICH HIMMLER AND THE RISE OF THE SS	5
3. RICHARD WALTHER DARRÉ AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SS RACIAL POLICY	35
4. REINHARD HEYDRICH AND THE FALL OF THE SA	64
5. FROM THE AFTERMATH OF THE RÖHM PUTSCH TO DOMESTIC DOMINANCE: HEINRICH HIMMLER AND THE SS, 1934-1936	81
6. CONCLUSION	102
BIBLIOGRAPHY	105

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Hitler's reign of power in Germany began January 30, 1933. This was the beginning of one of the darkest chapters in modern history. The Schutzstaffel (SS--Protections Squadrons or Black Shirts) was a central organization within the Third Reich's power structure. This black order was established in 1925 and by 1936 dominated Nazi Germany domestically. To gain a true understanding of this nationalistic group, it must be analyzed from many different perspectives. The SS's success cannot be found in one single individual, event or aberration. Its beginnings and growth must be looked at pluralistically. The leadership, ideology and outcome of specific, transitional events surrounding the SS resulted in the establishment of its fundamental elements and dominant position within Nazi Germany by 1936.

On November 14, 1945, the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials began in Germany. They were to be the definitive judgement of the crimes against humanity by the Nazis. In the midst of the trial, it was determined that the SS, along with its associated organizations such as the Sicherheitsdienst (SD--the security and intelligence organization within the SS)

and Geheime Staatspolizei (Gestapo--State Secret Police), was a criminal organization.¹ The verdict placed on the SS was as follows:

The Tribunal declares to be criminal within the meaning of the Charter the group composed of those persons who had been officially accepted as members of the SS . . . , who became or remained members of the organization declared criminal by Article 6 of the Charter, or who were personally implicated as members of the organization in the commission of such crimes²

This statement clearly shows a broad conclusion in terms of SS responsibility for the crimes committed by the Third Reich.

Twenty-two of the Nazi Leaders were defendants at the Nuremberg Trials. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the former head of the SD, was the SS representative at the trial. He was found guilty by the Tribunal on October 1, 1946 of crimes against humanity and other war crimes.³ His death sentence was carried out on October 16, 1946.⁴ There is little doubt of Kaltenbrunner's guilt as a participant and an organizer of SS atrocities. He did not, however, become a major figure within the SS ranks until January 30, 1943 when he

¹Trial of the Major War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals (Nuremberg: Secretariat of the Tribunal, 1948), 22: 511, 517.

²Ibid., 22: 517.

³Peter R. Black, Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Ideological Soldier of the Third Reich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 273.

⁴Ibid., 276.

was appointed head of SS Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA--SS Reich Security Main Office).⁵ Two of the most important figures within the SS were not represented at the trial. Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich had met their fates by way of a cyanide tablet and a successful assassination.⁶ These two men, Himmler as the Reichsführer SS and Heydrich as head of the SD, created the SS empire. The SS's basic organizational structure was established by 1936.

The purpose of this study is to trace the foundation of the SS's organizational leadership figures, fundamental ideology and its primary transitional events from 1925 to 1936. This period is particularly important because the SS's core structure was created during this time frame. Its fundamental elements were maintained throughout the life of the Third Reich even though its responsibilities, size and influence continued to grow throughout the late 1930s and into the Second World War. By analyzing the above mentioned segments of the SS and showing their connection to Hitler, a greater understanding of the SS's organization and rise to

⁵Ibid., 128-129.

⁶Himmler died on May 23, 1945 after breaking a cyanide capsule hidden in his mouth while in the custody of the British. Peter Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990), 609. Heydrich was killed by Czechoslovakian commandos. He was ambushed on May 27, 1942 and died on June 4th. Ernst Kaltenbrunner eventually took over his responsibilities within the SS. Callum MacDonald, The Killing of SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 169-182.

power in Nazi Germany can be obtained. To start this process, the second chapter will trace the beginnings of the SS and Himmler's rise to power within the Nazi power structure.

CHAPTER 2

HEINRICH HIMMLER AND THE RISE OF THE SS

Heinrich Himmler took control of the SS on January 6, 1929. Five years later the SS consisted of a vast, well-trained, disciplined group of men loyal to Himmler and their Führer--Adolf Hitler. By 1934, Himmler had established the SS as the Third Reich's pre-eminent political guard by strengthening his personal ties to Hitler and by expanding the SS's responsibilities and organizational scope. There are many questions that surface in regard to the size and influence of the SS in 1934. How did Himmler and the SS emerge as the dominant force within the Third Reich? How was the SS able to develop into a central organization within the Nazi state? The key to answering these questions lies in the background and development of Himmler and the SS.

Heinrich Himmler was born on October 7, 1900. Gebhard Himmler, Heinrich's father, was a professor and a tutor to Prince Heinrich of Bavaria.¹ Gebhard named his second son, Heinrich, after the Prince. Prince Heinrich also agreed to

¹Gebhard was the first name of both Heinrich Himmler's father and older brother.

be Heinrich Himmler's Godfather.² During his youth, Himmler was attentive to his studies but was never more than an average student. His father encouraged him to pursue his interests while maintaining self-discipline and respect for adults.³ Himmler was never very popular in school and had few friends throughout his childhood.⁴ This tended to bring him closer to his family with which he maintained a close relationship throughout his early adult life.⁵ His father, Gebhard, was a strict disciplinarian, overseeing his sons' educational growth. Gebhard was also obsessed with class and status, wanting to maintain the social level he had created for his family. He even went as far as reviewing Heinrich's class listing, making special note of the social status and occupation of the students' fathers.⁶ Furthermore, Himmler's daily activities were occasionally recorded in his sporadically kept diary. This diary, which was started in 1910, was monitored and corrected by his father leaving Himmler few avenues to express himself

²Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, Himmler (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), 1.

³*Ibid.*, 2.

⁴Willi Frischauer, Himmler: The Evil Genius of the Third Reich (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1953), 20.

⁵Manvell, Himmler, 2.

⁶Bradley F. Smith, Heinrich Himmler: A Nazi in the Making, 1900-1926 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1971), 25.

without the peering eyes of his domineering father.⁷ It would seem that his father made a lasting impression on the young Himmler. The disciplined, structured and inflexible upbringing Himmler experienced eventually carried over to his adult life and leadership style in the SS.⁸ Himmler's SS was painstakingly organized, leaving no room for the questioning of superiors, a trait that Himmler undoubtedly inherited from his father. Another area which had a profound effect on Himmler was his desire to be involved with the military.

Himmler, like many other boys in their early teens, wanted to be a soldier. From the beginning of World War I, he made many entries into his diary about the advances and conflicts of European forces. This marked a major transition for Himmler. His diary entries had previously concentrated on his personal activities. This showed a shift to national concerns. He wrote, "the Bavarian troops were very brave in the rough battle. Especially our 16th . . . The whole city is bedecked with flags."⁹ He wanted

⁷Ibid., 25-26. Several, but not all, of Himmler's diaries survived the fall of the Third Reich. The background of their discovery and the entry time periods can be found in Werver T. Angress and Bradley F. Smith "Diaries of Heinrich Himmler's Early Years," The Journal of Modern History 31 (September 1959): 206-207.

⁸Peter Loewenberg "The Unsuccessful Adolescence of Heinrich Himmler," The American Historical Review 76 (June 1971): 613, 615.

⁹Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 35.

to emulate his grandfather and fight for the German Army.¹⁰ In 1915 Himmler's older brother, Gebhard, joined the army. Himmler was extremely excited for his brother and knew it was only a matter of time before he would be making the same decision. During that same year he joined the Jugendwehr--a nationalistic group which gave military training to German boys. Himmler felt that this group was too dilettantish in nature.¹¹ He was not willing to replace his military ambition with a boyish substitute. His dream finally came true in December 1917 when he entered the German Army in the Eleventh Infantry Regiment at the age of seventeen.¹² He was thrilled at the prospect of serving his country in conflict. To his disappointment, however, he was never involved in hostilities.

After the war, Himmler decided to pursue his education in the area of agriculture. This was somewhat of a rash decision on Himmler's part. His interest in this field was never mentioned in his diaries. Since his father had previously read and edited his diaries, it is not surprising that his entries were relatively free of personal notes. Moreover, his parents were taken totally by surprise with the news of Himmler's agricultural aspirations. His father believed that this rural occupational endeavor did not

¹⁰Frischauer, Himmler: The Evil Genius, 20.

¹¹Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 38.

¹²Ibid., 50. Manvell, Himmler, 4.

command the level of social respect the family had acquired.¹³ His father's concerns, however, did not hinder his decision. On October 18, 1919, he entered a Technische Hochschule (Technical University) at Munich University where he began to study agriculture.¹⁴ His background in agriculture would prove to be of great assistance to him in his later years with the SS. During that same year, Himmler also joined the two Freikorps groups (Freikorps Landshut and Freikorps Oberland). Involvement in these groups helped fill the void of military service even though his involvement was not extended. He did, however, become deputy in the small Freikorps Oberland.¹⁵

While studying in Munich, Himmler became involved in student clubs. One such organization was the Apollo club where Himmler participated in debates on the admission of Jews.¹⁶ Himmler's entries into his diary clearly showed that he was already extremely anti-Semitic by the early 1920s. It is unclear as to any specific event or circumstance that led to his anti-Semitism. Some of his diaries' entries, however, do show a successive increase of

¹³Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 67.

¹⁴Ibid. Heinz Höhne, The Order of the Death's Head: The Story of Hitler's SS (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969), 39.

¹⁵G. S. Graber, The History of the SS (New York: David McKay Company, Inc. 1978), 5. Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 66.

¹⁶Manvell, Himmler, 8.

anti-Semitism. A book by Friedrich Wichtle on Freemasonry seems to have made quite an impression on Himmler. Wichtle argued that a conspiracy of Freemasons, Jews, and Democrats existed to destroy the German monarchy. This book was extremely anti-Semitic, and Himmler seemed to take Wichtle's suggestions to heart. Himmler commented in his diary that Wichtle "explains everything and tells us whom we must fight against next time."¹⁷ This statement gives a strong indication of Himmler's prejudicial direction.

During this time Himmler continued to show a commitment to the Catholic church. On December 15, 1919, he wrote in his diary, "Come what may, I shall always love God, shall pray to him and shall remain faithful to the Catholic Church and shall defend it even if I should be expelled from it."¹⁸ It is ironic that a man who seemed so devoted to the Catholic Church would eventually wield such unrestrained power that he could threaten its very existence in Germany during the Nazi years.

Himmler finally received his farmer's diploma and acquired a job as a laboratory assistant for a company involved in fertilizer testing. This job, however, did not last. In 1922 Himmler made his first important personal contact within the Nazi organization. He met Captain Ernst

¹⁷Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 74.

¹⁸Graber, The History of the SS, 40-41. Manvell, Himmler, 9.

Röhm through the Reichskriegsflagge (A nationalistic organization) which was associated with Hitler's Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP--National Socialist German Workers' Party).¹⁹ Himmler made entries into his diary that referred to Röhm and his anti-Communist opinions. In a January 1922 entry it appears that he had talked with Röhm on more than one occasion and that he respected him.²⁰ This connection led Himmler to his eventual involvement with the NSDAP. Through this connection, Himmler was probably first introduced to Hitler. It is unclear when Himmler actually met Hitler, but with the Reichskriegsflagge's association to the NSDAP, he most certainly knew of Hitler and his general program. He believed in the path that Hitler was taking and decided to follow him in his first attempt at seizing power.

The Reichskriegsflagge, in which Himmler was a member, was called out on November 8 and 9, 1923 to participate in Hitler's attempt at overthrowing the German government in the Beer Hall Putsch.²¹ Himmler and his brother Gebhard planned to fight for this untimely revolution, but it was not necessary for them to do so.²² They did join the

¹⁹Frischauer, Himmler: The Evil Genius, 20.

²⁰Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 126.

²¹Frischauer, Himmler: The Evil Genius, 20.

²²Harold J. Gordon Jr., Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 345.

Reichskriegsflagge in the streets, but they were never involved in any fighting. After the failed putsch, Himmler was uncertain about his future and even considered an option to go to Turkey, but decided against the idea.²³ Instead, he stayed in Germany and continued to take part in the Nazi movements struggle. This included keeping in touch with Röhm and other members of the Reichskriegsflagge, who were in prison for their involvement with the failed Putsch, and distribution of literature in support of the völkisch cause.²⁴ This was also a very important time for Himmler in regards to his increasing nationalism and anti-Semitism. He did a tremendous amount of reading between 1922 and 1924, and his diary entries for this period make reference to völkisch writers such as Hans Günther, Martin Otto Johannes, Edward Stilgebauer, and Werner Jansen.²⁵ 1924 is also significant in terms of Himmler's devotion to Hitler. Himmler was mesmerized by Adolf Viktor von Koerber's pamphlet on Hitler entitled Adolf Hitler, sein Leben und

²³Ibid., 475.

²⁴Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 137-138.

²⁵Ibid., 141-142. The ideological characteristics of the Völk and the völkisch movement were directly related to, and a progression from, the romantic period of the nineteenth century. Völkisch thought incorporated ideas of the bond between a group of people and the nature of their being. The concept included a link to the past, creation and ones innermost self. For an expanded definition of the Völk and völkisch writers see, George L. Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 4, 16.

seine Reden (Adolf Hitler, his life and speeches). Himmler noted that Hitler "is truly a great man" and continued by reflecting that "his speeches are splendid works of Germandom and Aryanism."²⁶ This is the first sign that Himmler had fallen under Hitler's charismatic spell and that he had identified with Hitler's Aryan characterization.

On August 2, 1925 Himmler rejoined the Nazi movement as a permanent member of the NSDAP which reaffirmed his original 1923 membership.²⁷ The reason for rejoining, instead of assuming he had remained a member of the NSDAP, can most likely be attributed to the failure of the Putsch in 1923. Himmler was extremely enthusiastic about participating in party affairs and was welcomed as a staff member where he reported to Gregor and Otto Strasser.²⁸ Himmler made tremendous strides in showing his potential for handling responsibility. While working as Gregor Strasser's secretary, Himmler was in charge of contacting former members and potential members for recruitment.²⁹ He showed his strong abilities in organization, record keeping and information gathering. He also was involved in the political arena. As deputy Gauleiter, under Strasser, in

²⁶Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 146.

²⁷Ibid., 134. Angress, "Diaries of Heinrich Himmler's Early Years," 211.

²⁸Manvell, Himmler, 14-15.

²⁹Frischauer, Himmler: The Evil Genius, 23.

the lower Bavarian area, he helped coordinate party activities for Strasser. His responsibilities in party functions remained fairly minor, but he built a name for himself as a hard working, enthusiastic contributor to the cause.³⁰ His duties did, however, allow him an outlet and a means of action for his strengthened ideological commitments. He wanted to extend his prejudices to policy within the party realm. One of Himmler's 1925 communiques illustrated this point:

Dear Herr Lüdecke,

Excuse my bothering you with this letter and taking the liberty of addressing a question to you. Perhaps you know that I am now working in the management of the district of Lower Bavaria for the Party. I also help with editing the local 'folk' journal the Kurier für Nieder-Bayern. For some time I have entertained the project of publishing the names of all Jews, as well as of all Christian friends of the Jews, residing in Lower Bavaria. However, before I take such a step I should like to have your opinion, and find out whether you consider such an undertaking rich in prospects and practicable. I would be very indebted to you if as soon as possible you would give me your view, which for me is authoritative, thanks to your great experience in the Jewish question and your knowledge of the anti-Semitic fight in the whole world.³¹

In Himmler's mind the "Jewish question" was already an issue that needed to be addressed by the Nazi Party. Gregor Strasser was made aware of this correspondence and found Himmler's obsession with the Jews and the "Jewish question"

³⁰Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 154-155.

³¹Manvell, Himmler, 15-16.

to be amusing.³² Himmler's eventual association with the soon to be established SS would allow him additional access to Nazi Party political power.

On December 20, 1924, Adolf Hitler was released from Landsberg prison.³³ In early 1925 the Sturmabteilung (SA--Storm Troopers or Brown Shirts) was still considered an illegal organization. It remained attached to the Nazi Party, but it was forced to masquerade as a gymnastics club.³⁴ This made it ineffective as the strong arm of the NSDAP--the main function for which it was created. Hitler realized that he needed to have a security force for both his personal security and to carry out guard duties at party functions (especially since the SA was incapacitated). With this in mind, the SS was formed in January 1925.³⁵ This new organization was not the first to be the personal bodyguard to Adolf Hitler. There was another such group created in 1922, which was called the Adolf Hitler Shock Troops. Its primary function was to protect Hitler at public functions

³²Ibid.

³³John Toland, Adolf Hitler (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), 202.

³⁴Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 85-86.

³⁵Gunter d'Alquen, "The Organizational structure of the Third Reich: Brochure 33: The SS: History, Mission, and Organization of the Schutzstaffeln of the NSDAP," 1939, in Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 4: 974.

and meetings.³⁶ The SS of 1925 would have expanded responsibilities and respect within the NSDAP.

In April of 1925 the NSDAP went through a significant upheaval. Hitler and Röhm split, making the creation of a personal bodyguard that much more important. A strong protective organization could insure security and assist in maintaining his stronghold on the NSDAP.³⁷ Julius Schreck was given the order, by Hitler, to set up the SS as a new headquarters guard. Each commander was to supervise a maximum of ten men. The selection criteria included an age restriction (men had to be between 23 and 35) and health requirements. In addition, their recommendation had to be in order.³⁸ They were to be highly trained and devoted to Hitler and the Nazi cause. This group needed to be, as Hitler stated, "unconditionally loyal" to him personally.³⁹ It was intended to be the elite of Germany and the Nazi Party.

Himmler joined both the SA and SS in 1925, but his attentions strayed from the SA devoting the majority of his time in Nazi Party activities of the SS. The SS remained a

³⁶Manvell, Himmler, 16.

³⁷Höhne, The Order of the Death's Head, 26.

³⁸Ibid., 26. Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 85-86.

³⁹James J. Weingartner, Hitler's Guard: The Story of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler 1933-1945 (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), 1.

small organization in 1925, but Himmler was able to do well within its limited scope. He was given the small responsibility of commanding an SS group in Gau Niederbayern. It mainly involved administrative work, but Himmler seemed to be quite content with this function.⁴⁰

In 1926, Hitler ordered Joseph Berchtold to take over command of the SS from Schreck. The SA was reinstated diminishing the SS's immediate growth potential since it became subordinate to the SA.⁴¹ That same year Himmler continued his climb from insignificance becoming Deputy Gauleiter of Lower Bavaria for the SS. He also continued his work with Strasser who had been promoted to Reich Propaganda leader in September 1926. Himmler was made Strasser's deputy which greatly expanded his responsibility and knowledge within the NSDAP. Himmler was now involved in two separate Nazi Party positions (propaganda and the SS), which he handled simultaneously.⁴² This was probably the first indication of Himmler's eventual vision of a SS with far-reaching responsibilities and influence within the Nazi power structure.

⁴⁰Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 162.

⁴¹Office of United States Chief of Counsel For Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 2: 175.

⁴²Smith, Heinrich Himmler, 167.

In 1927 another change in the SS leadership occurred. Erhard Heiden, Deputy to Berchtold, replaced his superior as Reichsführer SS.⁴³ This had little effect on Himmler since the organization only had approximately 200 members at this time.⁴⁴ The SS would not begin to drastically change in size and influence until Himmler's appointment as its leader.

By 1926 Himmler was well on his way to establishing a name for himself. He already idolized Hitler, who recognized his talents and appointed him Deputy Leader of the SS. At this time the SS was far from establishing its infamous reputation. It was a very small, insignificant group that was subordinate to the SA.⁴⁵ This would change, however, within a few short years. Himmler took this insignificant, dependent band of men and turned it into one of the most feared organizations within the Nazi Party.

On January 6, 1929, Hitler appointed Himmler Reichsführer SS. This appointment triggered the SS's metamorphosis. At the time the SS consisted of only 280 men. It was far from the ominous force it would eventually

⁴³Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 85-86.
Frischauer, Himmler: The Evil Genius, 24.

⁴⁴Gunter d'Alquen, "The Organizational structure of the Third Reich," 4: 975.

⁴⁵Frischauer, Himmler: The Evil Genius, 24.

develop into under Himmler's leadership.⁴⁶ A chance to head a major department within the Nazi Party establishment was not the only influence Hitler had on Himmler. He was also a major contributor to Himmler's established anti-Semitism.

To some extent, Hitler became Himmler's intellectual mentor.⁴⁷ His deep seeded anti-Semitism was encouraged and fine tuned by his relationship with Adolf Hitler. Hitler's opinion of the "Jewish problem" and its relationship to Germany was outlined in Mein Kampf. There, Hitler told of his first encounter with a Jew: "once, as I was strolling through the Inner City [in Vienna], I suddenly encountered an apparition in a black caftan and black hair locks. Is this a Jew? was my first thought." Hitler then questioned, " . . . is this a German?"⁴⁸ He finally came to the conclusion that the Jews were his enemy and that the Jewish problem was the primary problem that the German nation faced.⁴⁹ "If we pass all the causes of the German collapse in review, the ultimate and most decisive remains the failure to recognize the racial problem and especially the

⁴⁶Trial of the Major War Criminals, 22: 512. Gunter d'Alquen, "The Organizational structure of the Third Reich," 4: 975.

⁴⁷George C. Browder, Foundations of the Nazi Police State: The Foundation of Sipo and SD (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 15-16.

⁴⁸Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, trans. Ralph Manheim (Verlag Frz. Eher Nachf, G.M.B.H 1925; repr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), 56.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 339.

Jewish menace."⁵⁰ Phrases, such as this, became the battle cry for Himmler and other Nazi anti-Semites. Himmler, as did other enthusiastic Nazis, read Hitler's book as if it were the message of an avatar. It took Himmler a considerable time to finish reading Mein Kampf, but he was in awe of its content, unaware that it was not taken seriously by many who found its characterizations lamentable.⁵¹ To Himmler, Hitler's ideas were not simply general theories. They were, rather, solutions that needed to be acted on. By showing Hitler that he agreed with his ideological principles, Himmler was establishing a strong personal relationship with him, the timing, of which, was critical. Hitler needed the SS to remain loyal and protective of his interests, both within, and outside of, the Nazi Party.

The size of the SS, in relation to the loyalty issue, during the rise of Hitler is extremely important. The SS membership remained adequate to perform its function but did not rise to a level that would threaten Hitler's control over the NSDAP. The SS did reach substantial numbers, even in the early years, but not without Hitler's watchful eye and reassurances of loyalty. The SS became one of Hitler's most trusted organizations, and its leader, Heinrich

⁵⁰Ibid., 327.

⁵¹Browder, Foundations of the Nazi Police State, 33, 257.

Himmler, reaped the benefits of this loyalty. Himmler did not simply follow Hitler to feed his own personal ambitions. His ideas, especially those in regards to anti-Semitism, had already been a part of his own ideological beliefs.⁵² An agreement on these principles simply proved to be mutually beneficial. Himmler's admiration towards Hitler, however, did not end there. He was totally captivated by Hitler and everything he stood for. In a conversation with Otto Strasser in 1930, Himmler said, "for him I could do anything. Believe me, if Hitler were to say I should shoot my mother, I would do it and be proud of his confidence."⁵³ Himmler relished the thought of others shuddering at the level of his devotion.⁵⁴ He also sought to expand his Aryan philosophies which he thought would only strengthen the relationship to Hitler. He then came into contact with Alfred Rosenberg, who had himself, influenced Hitler.

Alfred Rosenberg was second only to Hitler as an ideological representative of the Nazi regime. Rosenberg derived many of his ideas from several nineteenth century racial theorists, the most influential of whom was Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who also had a tremendous effect upon Hitler. Rosenberg discussed his ideas in several

⁵²Richard Breitman, The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 33.

⁵³Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 99-100.

⁵⁴Ibid.

publications. The most successful was Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch--geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit (The Myth of the Twentieth Century: An Evaluation of the Formative Spiritual--Intellectual Struggles of Our Time). In it, Rosenberg outlined the history of blood and race relations, concluding that this struggle was actually a "fight of spiritual value."⁵⁵ Rosenberg had concluded that the Jews (and other minorities) had organized and conspired to eliminate white culture and dominance.⁵⁶ Rosenberg continued by applying his ideas to a nationalized Nazi state. This state had to be governed by a ruling elite. The Germans of the past, especially represented by the Weimar government, had discarded the principles of a superior blood line. For the NSDAP to succeed in ruling over Germany, it must adopt the Fuehrerprinzip (leadership principle).⁵⁷ Himmler was enamored by this kind of elitism. This was a guiding principle that would eventually lead to the hierarchical structure of the SS with Himmler as its leader unwaveringly devoted to the Aryan ideal.

⁵⁵Fritz Nova, Alfred Rosenberg: Nazi Theorist of the Holocaust (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1986), 5.

⁵⁶Ibid., 35.

⁵⁷Robert Cecil, The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology (New York: Dodd Mead & Company, 1972), 156.

1930 was a major transitional year for the Nazi Party and the SS. Germany was struggling economically as was the rest of the world. Hitler took advantage of the situation. The Nazi Party's appeal increased whenever discontent increased. The Nazis were seen as extreme, but many believed that extreme measures needed to be taken to correct the situation. The tide had turned so drastically for the Nazis that their representation in the Reichstag in the summer of 1930 increased from 12 seats only two years before to 107.⁵⁸ One of these seats was given to Heinrich Himmler.⁵⁹ Himmler had expanded his presence beyond the SS into the realm of politics. He had increasingly gained the confidence of Hitler. With the success of the NSDAP, Himmler and the SS were able to expand and increase their influence parallel to that of the NSDAP.

Himmler was given the go ahead from Hitler to increase the numbers of the SS to ten percent of SA membership.⁶⁰ The SA's membership in 1930 was 77,000, while the SS's was under 2,800. It took the SS two years to reach this ten percent goal.⁶¹ While the SS was increasing its numbers at an unprecedented rate, Himmler insisted on acquiring the

⁵⁸Toland, Adolf Hitler, 83.

⁵⁹Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 96.

⁶⁰Ibid., 99-100.

⁶¹In 1932 the SS reached 52,048 members. The SA in 1932 had 470,000 members. Rempel, Hitler's Children, 266.

best quality men possible.⁶² Within this general "elitist" guideline and through this period of SS expansion, the SS offered a wide range of opportunities in the SS organization.

Men from all walks of life joined the SS. The SS was able to incorporate the growing nationalistic fervor with its semi-professional membership. The SS encouraged professionals such as doctors, lawyers and businessmen to join its ranks. It did not have a minimum education requirement which cultivated professional talent that did not necessarily have specific educational credentials. The SS leadership, for example, was predominantly, but not exclusively, from the middle class of German society.⁶³ Furthermore, promotions did not require any specific education, professional or social status.⁶⁴ The SS did, however, offer career opportunities to those with a strong academic background. The ideological principles of the Nazi movement combined with the SS's continual growth attracted

⁶²Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 99-100.

⁶³Herbert F. Ziegler, "Elite Recruitment and National Socialism: The SS-Führerkorps, 1925-1939," in Politik und Milieu: Wahl und Elitenforschung im Historischen und Interkulturellen Vergleich, ed. Heinrich Best (St. Katharinen: Scriptor Verlag, 1989), 228-229. Herbert F. Ziegler, Nazi Germany's New Aristocracy: The SS Leadership, 1925-1939 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), xiv-xv.

⁶⁴Ziegler, Nazi Germany's New Aristocracy, xiv-xv.

law and medical graduates into the SS.⁶⁵ This contributed to its professional reputation which was especially important since it was so closely associated with the Führer. For the most part, the SS could be considered a group of "white-collar reformers."⁶⁶ The SS's rival and parent organization (although separation was imminent) had a much different reputation. The SA was considered more of a street gang than a political protection force. It recruited heavily from the former Freikorps and other military-oriented associations. The SA was much more involved in political police activities, which benefited the Nazis, but tarnished their public image. At the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, the SA was described as an organization "composed in large part of ruffians and bullies," a description with which many Germans in the early 1930s would have agreed.⁶⁷

In 1931 the SS was put to its first test. The SA leader in charge of eastern Germany, Walther Stennes, was disgruntled because of Hitler's decision to cut SA numbers while increasing SS numbers.⁶⁸ Himmler and Röhm had a stake

⁶⁵David Schoenbaum, Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany 1933 - 1939 (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966; repr. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980), 228.

⁶⁶Robert Lewis Koehl, The Black Corps: The Structure and Power Struggles of the Nazi SS (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 52-53.

⁶⁷Trial of the Major War Criminals, 22: 519.

⁶⁸Höhne, The Order of the Death's Head, 73.

in seeing Stennes fall. They both thought their power base would increase with Stennes out of the picture. Hitler, with the help of the SS, set up Stennes into acting against him in April 1931. Stennes' attempts to revolt against Hitler failed. Hitler was grateful to the SS for their assistance in controlling Stennes' actions. He singled the SS out as the organization that was central to putting down the Stennes revolt. Himmler was able to show that the SS's loyalty was to Hitler and Hitler alone.⁶⁹ This event, however, did not stop or even slow tensions between the SS and the SA. Himmler was committed to eventually making a clean break from the SA. He announced the break between the SS and the SA in the fall of 1930, but it was still too early for an official break to occur. Hitler's order, dated January 14, 1931, clearly stated that the SS was under the command of the SA.⁷⁰ In reality, the SS was functioning independently of the SA, but Hitler was not ready for a clean split between the two organizations. It is uncertain why Hitler was not willing for this eventuality to occur in early 1931. The subordination of the SS to the SA does not point to a distrust of the SS. It may, in fact, show that Hitler wanted the SS to have some ties to the SA in order to monitor SA activities more closely. Hitler had clearly

⁶⁹Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 99-100.

⁷⁰Koehl, The Black Corps, 42.

decided to encourage Himmler's expansion of the SS. In addition, the Stennes revolt must have given Hitler cause to question SA loyalty.

In 1931 Himmler and the SS began to expand their influence and responsibilities at an accelerated pace. This expansion of responsibility was encouraged by Hitler. During the summer of 1931 Hitler gave a clear indication that the SS was much more than a personal bodyguard. Hitler stated that the SS was now to be considered a Polizeidienst (police service) of Elitetruppe (elite troops). Hitler went on to define more specifically the role of the SS in police activities. His vision was defined in the broadest possible terms. He indicated that SS activities would include police related security, intelligence and policy involvement.⁷¹ Hitler's confidence and personal trust in Himmler allowed the SS to create a strong foundation within the Nazi power structure. It also perpetuated the perception of the SS's exclusivity and superiority over other police and Nazi organizations.

One of the most significant additions was that of an intelligence network which would become the SD in 1932.⁷² The original function of the SD was to monitor the

⁷¹Ibid., 47

⁷²Robert Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933-1945 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 65. Browder, Foundations of the Nazi Police State, 33.

activities of the SS and the Nazi Party with its primary focus on leadership. From its inception, the SD was involved with and founded on clandestine activity. Himmler would eventually use this, and related organizations such as the Gestapo, to insure his power base within the Third Reich. He then recruited a very important individual who eventually managed the activities of the SD--Reinhard Heydrich.

In 1932, the SD was put under the control of Heydrich. Heydrich had only been a member of the SS since August of 1931, but was eager to expand the SD as quickly as possible.⁷³ Through this intelligence network, Himmler was able to keep tabs on potential rivals within the Nazi power structure and report their activities directly to Hitler.⁷⁴ This contributed to a growing trust of Himmler, which Hitler would find crucial in the turbulent days ahead.

The SS continued its rise within the Nazi Party through 1933 which was definitely related to the success of the Nazi Party as a whole. Hitler and the NSDAP were able to benefit from the economic crisis that Germany faced in the early 1930s. With six million people unemployed in 1932 and 1933, many were looking for a change, even if this meant a radical change.⁷⁵ In the July 1932 elections, the Nazis increased

⁷³Browder, Foundations of the Nazi Police State, 27.

⁷⁴Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 66.

⁷⁵Toland, Adolf Hitler, 78-79.

their seats in the Reichstag to 230 by managing to garnish 14 million votes, which was considerably higher than their closest rival, the Social Democrats (SPD), who received 8 million votes.⁷⁶ The Nazis were able to sustain their success through the elections of November 1932. They received 33.1 percent of the vote while the SPD only received 21.6 percent.⁷⁷ 66.9 percent of the vote went against Hitler and the NSDAP. Hitler was able to sneak in the backdoor, legally, because his opponents were not able to band together in a concerted effort to defeat him. Even worse, since Hitler had not been able to get a majority, an arrangement, or rather a political collusion, took place which allowed Hitler to take over power as Germany's Chancellor on January 30, 1933.⁷⁸ Another election, or vote of confidence, occurred in March of 1933. This vote reaffirmed many people's desire to give the NSDAP control of the German government. The Nazis received 43.9 percent in this March 5th election.⁷⁹

With the NSDAP in power, the SS's expansion began. A critical event, which allowed the SS's deluge of police activities to commence, was the Reichstag fire on February

⁷⁶Ibid., 115.

⁷⁷Richard F. Hamilton, Who Voted for Hitler? (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982), 476.

⁷⁸Toland, Adolf Hitler, 137, 139.

⁷⁹Hamilton, Who Voted for Hitler?, 476.

27, 1933.⁸⁰ This event triggered Hitler's unrestrained retaliation against his domestic opponents. The day after the fire the Emergency Decrees were signed, which in effect, suspended the rights of all German citizens. Hitler explained this measure as necessary to defend against the threat of Communist acts of violence.⁸¹ In reality, it gave Hitler the opportunity to wipe out all political opponents and gave the SS full power to use unrestricted police power against any possible threat. The protections spelled out under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution were eliminated by Hitler in a single stroke. He was able to impose these restrictions with the passing of the Enabling Law which allowed for temporary governmental restrictions in the event of a threat to law and order.⁸² In other words, Hitler received dictatorial power in Germany. The blame for this action goes beyond Hitler and his cohorts. The Reichstag voted in favor of the Enabling Bill 441 to 94.⁸³ Hitler, Himmler and the SS would have 12 years of unrestricted power in Germany.

In 1933, Himmler was very much aware of the potential power he could wield, both personally and through the SS.

⁸⁰Koehl, The Black Corps, 66.

⁸¹Toland, Adolf Hitler, 145.

⁸²Ibid., 146.

⁸³Ibid., 148. The Social Democrats were the only ones to vote against the Enabling Bill.

He had already established a close link to Hitler, but the police activities of the SS were still relatively small. More importantly, the German police system was extremely fragmented.⁸⁴ This fragmentation was a perpetuation of the old localized police control system (a carryover from as far back as the pre-1871 unification days). Himmler hoped to eventually centralize all police activities with himself as their commander. Police centralization began in 1933. Himmler's goal was also shared by his current, direct superior, Dr. Wilhelm Frick (Minister of the Interior), who wanted to maintain the SS's subordination to him while creating a central police agency to expand his domestic control. Himmler was successful in creating close ties with Hitler which assisted in allowing Himmler to be the key figure in the SS and centralized police force of the future. Himmler and Frick were not, however, at odds. They considered each other allies in their fight for more police powers.⁸⁵ Although it would take several years to reach this goal, he did, however, make several steps to increase his presence in German police activities.

In late 1933 Himmler began to exercise control over several police organizations. He appointed himself as the chief of the political police organizations in cities such

⁸⁴Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 135.

⁸⁵Ibid.

as Hamburg, Baden, Anhalt, Bremen and Thuringa.⁸⁶ The police activities of these organizations largely centered on internal clandestine operations. Himmler's expansion into this area went relatively unchallenged. The true measure of his control over the political police, however, came in early 1934 when Himmler took over control of the Gestapo.⁸⁷ The Gestapo was first introduced by Hermann Göring in 1933. It was, previously, a Prussian police organization under Dr. Rudolf Diels. Its main responsibility was to counter the Communist threat in the Prussian region.⁸⁸ Its function, however, was radically changed by 1934. Heinrich Himmler was appointed deputy Chief of the Gestapo, under Göring, in April of 1934. Even though Göring remained as a figure-head of the Gestapo, Himmler more or less controlled the political police organization. This had a drastic impact on the SS and Germany. Oddly enough, Göring was not opposed to Himmler's control over the Gestapo. He felt that they shared the same goals of a settling of German society under Hitler and implanting an expanding wedge between the SA and Hitler.⁸⁹ With the success of SS expansion and personal

⁸⁶André Brissaud The Nazi Secret Service (London: The Bodley Head, 1972), 42.

⁸⁷Ibid., 300-301. Trial of the Major War Criminals, 22: 505.

⁸⁸Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 29.

⁸⁹Koehl, The Black Corps, 89.

power gains, Himmler was finally in a position to challenge his main organizational threat--the SA.

By 1934, Himmler was a major element within the Third Reich's power elite. He had established a confident, close relationship with Hitler. Instead of feeling threatened by Himmler's power expansion, Hitler thought that the SS could be used to put down other possible domestic threats.⁹⁰ In Hitler's mind, the threat from within Germany's borders or even the NSDAP was very real. The mistakes of 1918 could not be repeated, and Himmler's growing organization would be his insurance policy. With Hitler's blessing, Himmler successfully expanded the structure and influence of the SS. By April of 1934 the SS consisted of 210,000 members with separate organizations such as the Schupo (Schutzpolizei--Civil Security Police), Orpo (Ordnungspolizei--Uniformed Municipal Police), Sipo (Sicherheitspolizei--Political Security Police) and the SD.⁹¹ These organizations played an important part in establishing a strong power base for Himmler and the SS. There are additional organizations also run by Himmler that indicate the extent of Himmler's influence. These organizations were central to the SS's

⁹⁰Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 99-100.

⁹¹Departments such as The Gestapo, Kripo (Reichs Kriminalpolizei--Criminal Police), and intelligence organizations were subordinate to the organizations listed. Brissaud The Nazi Secret Service, 300-301. Rempel, Hitler's Children, 266.

racial and ideological concerns and will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RICHARD WALTHER DARRÉ AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SS RACIAL POLICY

The SS, from its inception in 1925, insisted on an elite German membership which reflected the Nazi's ideological platform. Nazi ideology was institutionalized by implementing racial policy into the SS. The racial policies of the SS derived from a combination of ideological sources. Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler and Richard Walther Darré made substantial contributions to the ideology of the SS.¹ Darré's influence on the SS has largely been overlooked by historians. Gerald Reitlinger, author of The SS: Alibi of a Nation, commented on Darré's influence but neglected to give any specific examples of how he affected the SS.² Other authors such as Robert Koehl and Anna Bramwell failed to give any emphasis to the influence of his race-oriented ideology and its lasting effect on the SS.³ In Alan Bullock's highly respected Hitler: A Study in

¹Most historians refer to Darré as Walther Darré instead of using his full name: Richard Walther Darré.

²Gerald Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation 1922 - 1945 (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), 30.

³Anna Bramwell, Blood and Soil: Richard Walther Darré and Hitler's 'Green Party' (Abbotsbrook, Bourne End, Buckinghamshire: The Kensal Press, 1985); Koehl, The Black Corps.

Tyranny, Darré is barely mentioned, and his ideological influence is completely omitted.⁴ The lack of attention or emphasis on Darré can most-likely be attributed to his decline in influence beginning in 1938 and his dismissal in 1942. However, Darré's theories, which were developed in the 1920s and fine-tuned in the early 1930s, played a key role in the development of SS ideology. Between 1929 and 1934, Walther Darré's theories became a fundamental part of the SS's race-oriented ideology.

Richard Walther Darré was born on July 14, 1895 in Argentina. He went to a German school and by the age of ten was sent to Germany "to be brought up as German."⁵ At the age of nineteen, Darré began his agricultural studies at a Colonial School at Witzenhausen in Germany. This school emphasized the agricultural concerns of Germany's former colonies. His choice to study agriculture would prove to be one of the most important decisions of his life. Germany's agrarian past, with the Nordic peasants as its interlocking human link, became the foundation for Darré's theories.

In 1914, Darré volunteered for entry into the German Army. His entrance and experience in the German Army during the First World War somewhat paralleled that of Hitler's.

⁴Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 14.

⁵Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny, abridged ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962; reprint, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), 79.

Both could have avoided fighting for Germany because they were citizens of foreign countries and not German citizens (Darré maintained his citizenship in Argentina, and Hitler was a citizen of Austria). Darré and Hitler also looked back on their days in the German military with extreme pride.⁶ While Hitler used his Aryan philosophy as propaganda to influence Nazi Germany as a whole, Darré implemented his theories, based on race, within a specific organization--the SS.

After coming to terms with Germany's defeat in the First World War, Darré returned to his studies. He took some classes in business which proved to be unsatisfying. He eventually decided to continue his studies in agriculture. The Friedrich-Witte University in Halle provided a new atmosphere and an opportunity to complete his degree.⁷ During the early 1920s, he spent much of his free time reading classical German literature and social-Darwinistic theoretical works by authors such as Julius Langbehn and Paul de Lagarde.⁸ Some contemporary historians, such as George L. Mosse, have made a connection between these nineteenth century völkisch writers and the path to Nazism.⁹ Darré was particularly inspired by Houston

⁶Hitler, Mein Kampf, 163; Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 16.

⁷Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 20, 22.

⁸Ibid., 23.

⁹Mosse, The Crisis of German Ideology, 31, 33, 40.

Stewart Chamberlain who also had a tremendous effect on Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg. Darré's affinity for Chamberlain was probably encouraged by his brother's love for Chamberlain's work (Darré's brother, Erich, was studying for a doctorate degree).¹⁰

In his book, Foundations of the Nineteenth Century, Chamberlain claimed to have some scientific basis for his racial theories. Darré, many years later, would make the same claim of his racial research. Chamberlain tried to present specific laws and scientific data regarding race. His interpretations also included an assessment of the importance of breeding.¹¹ In Foundations, Chamberlain stressed that his work was not just a recreation of the past, but rather a "living" past that continually had repercussions in modern society.¹² To him, the Nordic people were in the midst of their history which they had the ability to manipulate. It would seem that there are some parallels between Chamberlain's approach to the question of race and that of Darré's. Both believed that racial concerns needed to be stressed in modern society: the Nordic

¹⁰Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 23.

¹¹Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Foundations of the Nineteenth Century. 2 vols. trans. John Lees. ([1899]; England: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., 1910; reprint, New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), 1: 275-76.

¹²Ibid., xxiv.

race had the ability to regenerate its deteriorating racial purity and that scientific data supported their findings.¹³

Darré's fascination with animal eugenics and heredity began in the 1920s, and he wrote many articles on these and related subjects.¹⁴ By 1926 his thoughts turned to the possibilities of human application of his studies in eugenics and heredity. He began to dabble in concepts of social theory and political issues such as German colonialism. He also did graduate work at the University of Giessen in Germany concentrating on animal eugenics and heredity.¹⁵ Darré received a considerable amount of experience in agricultural management and peasant farming concerns as a representative for the Agricultural Animal Breeding Association and the East Prussian Agricultural

¹³There are also examples of theorists within Nazi Germany, other than Darré, who believed that they approached race and breeding scientifically. In 1937, O. Steche (a professor with a doctorate in philosophy), published a guide that attempted to present ideas regarding "The fight against degeneration" and "racial hygiene." O. Steche "Guide of racial science and the science of heredity, of fostering congenitally sound progeny of Family Science," in Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (Washington: United States Government Printing Office), 5: 176-77. For additional examples within scientific and medical communities, see Robert N. Proctor, Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

¹⁴Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 24, 26.

¹⁵Ibid., 24.

Chamber.¹⁶ He also maintained memberships in many agricultural organizations.

By the late 1920s, Darré was an important contributor to Nordic organizations. The Nordic Ring, for example, believed that Darré contributed to their cause by introducing breeding concepts and other ideas which they felt provided a scientific basis for their prejudice.¹⁷ By the time Darré was associated with the Nordic Ring, race-oriented groups were established and respected in and outside of the German medical community. In 1895, Alfred Ploetz established the term "racial hygiene" which conveyed a sense of scientific foundation for race oriented study. Ploetz was influenced by the German eugenics movement of the late nineteenth century which was an outgrowth of the popularization of social Darwinism throughout Europe and America.¹⁸ Ploetz and other respected racial theorists founded the Nordic Ring in 1907. Racial hygiene, as a relatively new research area, gained considerable momentum by the 1920s largely due to support from the highly respected Alfred Grotjahn. Grotjahn, a leader in German socialized medicine, felt that racial hygiene was an important element in preventative health care. Grotjahn helped race-oriented groups gain respect in the medical

¹⁶Ibid., 29.

¹⁷Ibid., 46, 50.

¹⁸Proctor, Racial Hygiene, 14-15.

community and contributed to their proliferation in the early twentieth century.¹⁹ Racial hygiene, which Darré supported, gained popularity and respect within Germany's scientific and medical communities through the 1920s.²⁰ Darré was both a contributor and a benefactor of the rising popularity of racial science.

In 1928, Darré wrote his first book Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rasse (The Peasantry as Life-Source of the Nordic People).²¹ In this, and in his other works, he argued for a breeding program to maintain a pure Nordic peasant race. He believed that this would be the essential beginning to solving society's ills.²² This book and Darré's other publications up until 1929 were not anti-Semitic. In the 1930s and in letters to his wife in the early 1920s, Darré did make anti-Semitic comments.²³ These prejudices were not incorporated into his published works because he discounted the significance of any specific

¹⁹Ibid., 24-25.

²⁰Darré's support for racial hygiene was briefly discussed by his defence counsel during the opening statement of his trial. Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), 12: 334.

²¹Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 29.

²²Barbara Miller Lane and Leila J. Rupp ed., Nazi Ideology before 1933: A Documentation (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 110.

²³Trials of War Criminals, 12: 334. Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 33.

relationship between Nordics and Jews.²⁴ He did not believe that this association was in any way central to his racial theories. Instead, he drew a distinction between the Germanic settler and nomadic tribes. He stressed that the nomads did not provide any positive social purpose. They were simply the leeches of modern culture and social structure. They only survived through their "parasitic nature."²⁵ Darré did not accentuate a Jewish connection to nomadic ancestry, but the point was sufficiently implied. Darré did, however, become more outspoken on Jews in his writings after 1931. This was probably due to Hitler's concern that his books dealt with racial theories but failed to incorporate an anti-Semitic position.²⁶ This did not affect Darré's role as head of the Racial Office within the SS. The SS's change in function in the late 1920s and Himmler's appointment as its head played a critical role in Darré's contribution to SS ideology.

Himmler introduced an ideological foundation within the SS using Darré's theories. He first heard about Darré through Hitler. Himmler was impressed with Darré's theories and felt that they could be incorporated into the SS.²⁷

²⁴Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 33.

²⁵Clifford R. Lovin, "Blut und Boden: The ideological Basis of the Nazi Agricultural Program," Journal of the History of Ideas 28 (April-June 1967): 283.

²⁶Ibid., 77.

²⁷Frischauer, Himmler: The Evil Genius, 26.

Darré convinced Himmler that by implementing his theories into the SS, he would be introducing concepts which could bring about the elite guard that Himmler so desperately wanted and envisioned.²⁸ Darré had said to Himmler:

Get rid of every single one who does not conform to our standards Retain only men who spring from the soil, strong, healthy peasants, farmers' boys. Every one of them must be blond and his features must give visible proof of his true Nordic origin!²⁹

This was the seed which Darré planted in Himmler. Himmler set the SS apart from other organizations, such as SA, by implementing Darré's fundamental racial doctrines into the SS. The ideological foundation of the SS is key to gaining an understanding of the SS organization as a whole.

In 1931, Darré and Himmler founded the SS Rassenamt (Racial Office) as a department within the SS. This office eventually became a department within the Rasse und Siedlungs Amt (RuSHA--Race and Settlement Office). Himmler immediately appointed Darré as the head of this office.³⁰ RuSHA eventually handled all race related indoctrination matters and SS racial policy. This was Darré's first step toward the implementation of his theories on the importance of the Nordic German into the Nazi SS.

²⁸Ibid., 28.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., 51, 81.

Darré's ideas were molded through several sources, but his background in agriculture was particularly important. His agricultural background gave him an appreciation for the farmer. To Darré the farmer represented some sort of transcendental, self-sufficient peasant who lived in harmony with his surroundings. The farmer provided for himself, his family and the rural community by working the land. This could only be accomplished through the farmer's blood, sweat and dedication to the soil. In a sense, he actually became one with the land. The peasant was the embryonic force which was the beginning of Nordic strength--a strength that the farmer of the future could draw upon. These were the ideals that Darré came to accept as truth. He believed that the bond between the peasant and the land was much more than a provider utilizing his abilities within his surroundings. It was a oneness with the land and thus a connection to the greater whole.³¹ Darré believed this connection was almost a divine trinity consisting of peasant, nature and God.³² He was convinced that the key to the regeneration of the Nordic people and the survival of the human species centered around a revitalization of the peasant--especially the Nordic peasant.

³¹Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 54.

³²Ibid., 196.

In A New Aristocracy Based on Blood and Soil

(published in 1930), Darré outlined several ideas related to the question of race. He emphasized three race-oriented concepts; German history and its relation to race; how racial concerns have been modified by the German public over time; his feelings on the importance of adopting racial policy in a modern German society. He felt that, historically, the question of race was central to German culture. He stressed that " . . . the concept of breeding . . . [was] the rock upon which the culture of the German people rested, as if created for eternity."³³ This shows the conviction Darré had toward racial purity which went beyond a simple social concern. In Darré's mind, race and breeding were eternal and essential to sustaining Nordic society.³⁴

Darré used many words to define what he believed to be the Nordic term for "breeding." He used words such as "fertile," "fruitbearing" and "chastity."³⁵ To him, breeding combined many concepts that reflected a social sincerity and a respect for Nordic culture and the

³³R. W. Darré, "Marriage Laws and the Principles of Breeding," chapter in A New Aristocracy Based on Blood and Soil (Munich: Lehmann), translated in Barbara Miller Lane, Nazi Ideology before 1933, 113.

³⁴Anna Bramwell, "Was This Man 'Father of the Greens'?", History Today 34 (September 1984): 8. Lovin, "Blut und Boden," 285.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 112.

perpetuation of the "superior" Aryan race. Darré stressed that the females within Nordic society needed to be aware of their "obligation" to maintain Nordic purity.³⁶ He believed that this "breeding" concept adapted by the ancient Germans could be reintroduced into modern German society.³⁷

Since Darré's theories on racial questions involved a combination of philosophical fervor and personal conviction, it would be easy to come to the conclusion that his obsession was based on some sort of mystic belief or religious convictions. However, this is far from the mark. Darré strongly believed his interpretations were based on scientific realities.³⁸ He thought that it was inconsistent to claim that breeding techniques could be employed regarding plants and animals but not in human terms. He believed there was a direct correlation between animal breeding techniques and humans. After Darré's appointment as head of the Racial Office, he suggested to the educational department within the SS that he could develop a textbook with examples of horses to show racial purity.³⁹ He believed that there should be no distinction between

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 113.

³⁸Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 175.

³⁹Ibid., 71-72.

animal and human breeding principles. Both were equally valid in Darré's mind.⁴⁰

He could not understand how a modern society could disregard racial purity as part of "idealism" when German ancestors had incorporated breeding into their culture as central to their "custom and morality."⁴¹ Traditional forms of racial separation had been lost throughout history, and Darré believed that they needed to be implemented again to regenerate German culture. He was able to begin this process through his influence on Himmler and the subsequent implementation of his theories into the Nazi SS.

By 1929 Himmler had complete control over the SS. He had adopted general principles of a supposed Aryan superiority (as did most of the Nazi hierarchy). He, however, wanted more than to conform to general Nazi philosophies. Himmler wanted the SS to stand out as a separate ideological unit. This was accomplished by going beyond political rhetoric and Aryan propaganda and actually implementing policies based on racial theories. One example of this is the SS's indoctrination policy which was based on racial background. Himmler immersed himself in Darré's theories and became committed to having the SS

⁴⁰Lovin, "Blut und Boden," 285.

⁴¹Darré, "Marriage Laws and the Principles of Breeding," 111.

implement Darré's ideas.⁴² The SS only accepted superior "thoroughbred Germans."⁴³ Himmler believed that there were specific guidelines that could be followed to assist in determining Nordic racial purity. The SS developed tests which were performed on SS recruits to judge their racial characteristics. These tests began with an evaluation of outward appearance.⁴⁴ They also included physical and mental examinations which supposedly gave some insight into the recruits' "character" and "soul."⁴⁵

Himmler maintained that this weeding out process was absolutely crucial. Several years later, he elaborated on the importance of strict racial guidelines. In a speech given in 1943, Himmler said, "the moment we forget the law which is the foundation of our race, and the law of selection and austerity towards ourselves, we shall have the germ of death in us, and will perish"⁴⁶ Himmler

⁴²Henry V. Dicks, Licensed Mass Murder: A Socio-psychological Study of Some SS Killers (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1972), 49.

⁴³Dr. Robert Ley ed., "Die Schutzstaffeln Der NSDAP," 1943, in the Organization Book of the NSDAP in Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 5: 346.

⁴⁴Heinrich Himmler, "Speech of the Reichsfuehrer - SS at the meeting of SS Major-Generals at Posen," Oct. 4, 1943, in Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), 4: 564.

⁴⁵Ibid., 565.

⁴⁶Ibid.

believed that the question of race should not just end with passive ideological principles. Racial policies were a matter of life and death within Nordic society and culture. Himmler followed both Darré's racial theories and the importance placed on the deterioration of Nordic society based on racial commingling.

In A New Aristocracy Based on Blood and Soil, Darré stressed:

. . . today we pursue only population increase, not breeding. We are surprised that German culture more and more disappears. . . . We are becoming fewer and fewer! and: we are becoming more and more inferior! And thus our customs are condemned to death: they are useless!⁴⁷

Darré's involvement in the implementation of SS indoctrination based on race was not that of a simple bystander or pawn within Himmler's domain. Darré and Himmler represented the same Nazi ideal only Himmler had taken his ideas from Darré. This brings up an important question. How did Darré's ideology differ from that of other Nazi theorists--especially Adolf Hitler?

There is a definite distinction between Darré's racial ideology and that of general Nazi ideology. Nazi ideology emphasized Hitler's ideas which were represented in Mein Kampf. Hitler's racial ideas included the concept of the superiority of the Nordic German, but these ideas never

⁴⁷Darré, "Marriage Laws and the Principles of Breeding," 116.

really strayed from a definite and unchanging connection with the Jewish people. Hitler's racial concerns emphasized anti-Semitism. In Mein Kampf Hitler stated, "without the clearest knowledge of the racial problem and hence of the Jewish problem there will never be a resurrection of the German nation."⁴⁸ To Hitler there could be no discussion about Nordic racial concerns without engaging the question of Jewry. Darré's racial theories, on the other hand, were quite different from those of Hitler's.

Darré did not stress the connection between the downfall of the Nordic race and a Jewish presence in Germany. Instead, he blamed the racial deterioration of Nordic society on a lack of racial consciousness throughout the German community.⁴⁹ Darré believed that it was "cowardice" on the part of the German public not to recognize the decline of the pure Nordic culture.⁵⁰ Darré concentrated on the need for racial awareness within Germany and all Nordic peoples. He believed that there were specific actions that could be taken by the Nordic people to assist in maintaining a pure Nordic culture. Specifically, Darré claimed that Nordic society could be saved through the institution of social breeding with particular emphasis on

⁴⁸Hitler, Mein Kampf, 339.

⁴⁹Darré, "Marriage Laws and the Principles of Breeding," 116.

⁵⁰Ibid.

marriage and family.⁵¹ Beyond his belief that society had to be aware of the problems of race mixture, Darré offered no concrete plan for the implementation of his racial theories.⁵² Whether he intended to implement his racial theories into a single organization before some kind of massive social program is not clear. He did, however, implement his theories into the SS with the help of Himmler.

Prior to Himmler's Marriage Law, Darré emphasized the importance of marriage and breeding in a chapter of A New Aristocracy Based on Blood and Soil. The chapter was entitled "Marriage Laws and the Principles of Breeding." In this chapter Darré outlined what he felt were the primary problems of a diminished Nordic race. He emphasized that the issue of marriage and breeding were central to solving the dilemma that the Aryan Germans faced.⁵³

Darré was disgusted with the Germans lack of concern over their diminished racial individuality and superiority. He felt that there was more concern over insignificant hereditary research than there was toward the application of applying eugenics principles to race which was critical to maintaining the human condition. In Darré's words, "whatever people say, a human being is more valuable than

⁵¹Ibid., 111-17.

⁵²Ibid., 116-17.

⁵³Ibid.

all the pineapples in the world."⁵⁴ He used agricultural and animal parallels to show how breeding principles have been applied successfully. He emphasized that these concepts had to be reintroduced into German culture to reverse the damage of society's unmonitored racial commingling.

Darré believed that ancient Nordic societies were very aware of their racial and cultural unity. He argued that breeding techniques were used until late in the nineteenth century in all social levels--from nobility to the German peasants.⁵⁵ Darré attempted to gain credibility for his racial theories giving detailed explanations as to the origins of breeding terms. He argued that the word Zucht had been manipulated by modern society to give a specific connotation for animals and plants. He stressed that Zucht in its original form included all living creatures and actually had specific forms which were directed toward man.⁵⁶ This was his attempt at creating some kind of pseudo-scientific method to support his racial theories. This kind of impractical method did give some credibility to Darré within Nazi Germany.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Ibid., 111.

⁵⁵Ibid., 111-12.

⁵⁶Ibid., 112.

⁵⁷Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 46, 50.

Darré claimed that there were specific breeding principles that had to be adopted by modern society in order to stop and reverse the deterioration of Nordic German racial superiority. To begin a racially motivated reconstruction process, he stressed that German society had to adopt customs and breeding laws that had sustained Nordic racial purity for thousands of years. This process had to begin in the family through education. Darré specifically called for a return of motherly awareness by the girls. He believed that German girls had to be committed to their future family and its racial purity.⁵⁸ German girls needed to realize the importance of selecting a proper, "racially pure" mate. The breeding customs of the ancient Nordic people were key to a strong modern Germany. Darré concluded his analysis on marriage and breeding by stating that:

If in our plan to create a new nobility, the concept of marriage includes breeding, we are not thereby importing anything animal-like and unworthy of human beings. We are but resuming the best spiritual and moral traditions of our ancestors, while cleansing and clarifying them with the findings and [re]searches of modern genetics.⁵⁹

He felt that marriage and breeding were intertwined and inseparable. These concepts had to be absorbed into German culture if it was to reach its proper place as the dominant

⁵⁸Darré, "Marriage Laws and the Principles of Breeding," 116.

⁵⁹Ibid., 117.

human race. Darré was convinced that his racially oriented theories were based on historical and scientific findings.

A major step toward a realization of Darré's utopian society was the implementation of the SS Marriage Law by Himmler. It incorporated Darré's ideas on marriage and breeding and reiterated Himmler's belief that the SS was an elite organization of Nordic Germans. Himmler felt that monitoring SS marriages and thus maintaining racial purity within the SS organization was simply the next step in maintaining Nazi ideology.⁶⁰ Darré was not as concerned with supporting a general National Socialist ideology. He was committed to taking action to insure a strong, racially pure, German future and hoped that the Nazi movement would assist in the process. However, he believed that incorporating his ideas into German society was more important than the success of National Socialism. This goal was partially realized with the introduction of the marriage order into the SS.

On December 31, 1931, The Marriage Law was enacted into the SS by Himmler. It gave specific guidelines to all SS personnel who wished to get married and maintain their SS membership. This was not Himmler's independent idea. Darré had outlined specific steps, regarding marriage, that he felt should be incorporated into German society. He had

⁶⁰Gunter d'Alquen, "The SS: History, Mission, and Organization," 4: 976.

pressured Himmler to push through the marriage laws.⁶¹ This was a top priority in Darré's plan to regenerate German society. With a single one page order, Himmler had incorporated Darré's recommended solutions for a regeneration of the Nordic race. Himmler thus had accepted Darré's theories on breeding and marriage.

Himmler, in the SS marriage policy, insisted that every SS man after January 1, 1932, had to receive a "Marriage Certificate" from the SS Race Office. This stamp of approval was issued after it was established that the anticipated spouse was "of a definite Nordic German sort".⁶² To assist the Race Office in approving marriages, each man was given a "Clan Book of the SS." This book had to be completed by the families of the SS men.⁶³ It consisted of 142 pages (concentrated on extensive family background information).⁶⁴ It required information from as far back as 1750 for officers and 1800 for other personnel.⁶⁵ The Race Office, with Darré at the helm, believed they could accurately assess the bride's personal character, health,

⁶¹Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 71-72.

⁶²Gunter d'Alquen, "The SS: History, Mission, and Organization," 4: 976.

⁶³Ibid., 977.

⁶⁴"Ahnenpaß" (Verlag, Marburg/Lahn: A.G. Grüneberg).

⁶⁵Gunter d'Alquen, "The SS: History, Mission, and Organization," 4: 987.

fertility, and sanity through analyzing her family tree.⁶⁶ If an SS member decided to go through with a marriage that was not approved by the Race Office, the individual was forced to resign from the SS.⁶⁷

In the Marriage Law, Himmler stated that "it is clear to the SS that with this command it has taken a step of great significance. Derision, scorn, and failure to understand do not move us; the future belongs to us."⁶⁸ This policy was meant to have a long term effect. It was a giant step toward a system that monitored all SS members in every aspect of their lives. The question of race was once again, as it was with the SS's indoctrination policy, first and foremost in the minds of Himmler and Darré. Himmler counted on the elitist SS members to understand, accept and disseminate the adopted racial ideals. A strong racial doctrine, in Himmler's mind, was key to the success of the Reich. Himmler placed the utmost importance on racial policy within the SS and insisted that his demands be met. These demands called for racial purity and enforcement of racial policy. Darré used the Race Office (within the Race and Resettlement Office) for this purpose.

⁶⁶Richard Grunberger, Hitler's SS (London: The Trinity Press, 1970), 15.

⁶⁷Gunter d'Alquen, "The SS: History, Mission, and Organization," 4: 977.

⁶⁸Ibid.

Darré was also recognized as a leader in racial theory outside the confines of the SS. On June 2, 1933 Wilhelm Frick, the Reich Interior Minister, established an organization to evaluate the need for a specific racial policy to cover all of German society. This organization was known as the Expert Committee on Questions of Population and Racial Policy. Darré was one of the founding members of this small, select committee, all of which were considered leaders in their fields of specialty. Other committee members included Alfred Ploetz, a leading expert in racial science and hygiene, and Hans F. K. Günther considered the foremost authority on racial anthropology. The significance of Darré's appointment is heightened by the fact that Himmler was not part of the original committee. Himmler did, however, eventually participate in committee activities.⁶⁹ Even though Darré's standing in the racial scientific community is important, his main contributions as a racial theorist centered on his SS functions.

With the establishment of the Race Office and the Race and Resettlement Office, Darré had realized a major step in the implementation of his racial ideology. Even though it was limited to the SS as an organizational unit within the Third Reich, it was still a victory for Darré. Not only were his theories adopted, he was in charge of the office

⁶⁹Proctor, Racial Hygiene, 95.

which had complete control over racial criteria involving SS recruitment and SS family planning (through marriage restrictions).⁷⁰ The Race and Resettlement Office was also responsible for ideological training within the SS.⁷¹ This allowed Darré to stress to each individual within the SS his theories on the importance of racial purity. Ideological education within the SS was not integrated on a organizational level until 1936. Prior to its mass indoctrination, ideological training was introduced to Schulungsleiter (education leaders) in early 1934.⁷²

On October 1, 1936, Inspectorates were established as personal representatives within individual SS units. Their purpose was to supervise military and ideological training. The Inspectorate was subordinate to the Race and Resettlement department regarding all ideological training. The position was, however, dissolved in 1940.⁷³ From 1940 on, it was the responsibility of the individual company commanders to instruct their men regarding ideological

⁷⁰Gunter d'Alquen, "The SS: History, Mission, and Organization," 4: 987. Also see Ley ed., "Die Schutzstaffeln Der NSDAP," 5: 349.

⁷¹Gunter d'Alquen, "The SS: History, Mission, and Organization," 4: 987.

⁷²James Weingartner, "The SS Race and Settlement Main Office: Towards An Order of Blood and Soil," The Historian 34 (November 1971): 64.

⁷³Bernd Wegner, The Waffen-SS: Organization, Ideology and Function (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 86.

principles.⁷⁴ Himmler believed that this would be a more effective way of educating SS members. Many historians look at this as a deemphasis of ideological training. Anna Bramwell, for example, severely downplays the role of Darré, RuSHA and racial policy. She even went as far as characterizing RuSHA as a "cardboard edifice."⁷⁵ Robert Proctor, on the other hand, described the RuSHA's responsibilities as "substantial", with increasing significance throughout the 1930s.⁷⁶ Proctor pointed out that RuSHA approved thousands of marriages every month with its primary determining factor being race.⁷⁷ This indication of Darré's influence must have been discounted or overlooked by Bramwell. George Stein also argued, in The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War 1939-1945, that the basic ideological principles of Himmler and the SS were maintained by the members of the SS including the Waffen SS. Recruitment policies were still sustained throughout the complex structure of the SS well into the war period.⁷⁸

⁷⁴Ibid., 208.

⁷⁵Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 129.

⁷⁶Proctor, Racial Hygiene, 137.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸George H. Stein, The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War 1939-1945 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1966), 124-125. Also see Charles W. Sydnor Jr., Soldiers of Destruction: The SS Death's Head Division, 1933-1945 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 27-28.

Other historians, such as Peter Padfield, discount the specific influence of Darré on Himmler. The basis for Padfield's claim rests on Himmler's established anti-Semitic past prior to meeting Darré.⁷⁹ Himmler's strong racial views and anti-Semitism, before his leadership role in the SS and prior to his meeting Darré, is undeniable. In addition, Darré was far removed from the vocal racial separatists in regards to anti-Semitism. He did make anti-Semitic comments but not at the acrimonious level of other Nazi leaders.⁸⁰ His public position was modified only after pressure from above. He had heard that Hitler was impressed by his publications but had made comments regarding Darré's lack of emphasis toward anti-Semitism.⁸¹ Although there is no indications that this kind of pressure was directly expressed to Darré from Himmler, it is likely that Himmler's radical anti-Semitism would have had some effect on Darré, especially since this attitude was widespread and expected within the Nazi Party. Darré's influence on Himmler does not, however, hinge upon an anti-Semitic connection. Darré's significance came to fruition in regards to the proactive elements of his racial philosophies. He engrained his vision of a rural community, living in harmony with the

⁷⁹Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 69-70.

⁸⁰Trials of War Criminals, 12: 334.

⁸¹Bramwell, Blood and Soil, 77. For additional information on Darré's anti-Semitism see, Lovin, "Blut und Boden," 286-287.

land, in Himmler. He showed Himmler how theory could be applied to an organizational structure. Himmler embraced this ideal to feed his own power driven ambitions. The SS was to be the breeding ground for his Aryan utopia. This was to be the beginning, or test organization, for the proliferation of racial policy throughout German society. Darré's reward for his vision was his appointment as head of RuSHA--the central racial policy making department within the SS. Taking into consideration Darré's important role in establishing SS ideology, his influence on Himmler and his critical contributions to the importance placed on racial matters within the SS, Darré's influence and importance has often been understated. Darré was somewhat of an ideological mentor to Himmler and made a sustaining impression on the SS which lasted beyond his leadership role within the SS. Gerald Reitlinger's assessment that Darré "may well be regarded as Himmler's evil genius" would be a more accurate assessment of Darré's contribution to the Nazi movement.⁸² This position is also supported by James Weingartner. In his study on the Race and Resettlement Office, he concluded that Darré's influence on Himmler was "probably of central importance" in relation to SS racial matters.⁸³ Himmler's acceptance and implementation of

⁸²Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, 30.

⁸³James Weingartner, "The SS Race and Settlement Main Office," 62.

racial doctrine within the SS did not emerge from his established anti-Semitism. Darré was the primary architect of SS racial policy.

The most important period for Darré's ideological contributions was between 1929 and 1934. This was a period of development and implementation of Darré's racial theories. The SS's first major transition was in 1929 with Himmler's appointment as Reichsführer SS. At this time, Darré began to influence Himmler on the practicality of adopting aspects of his racial theory. By 1934, the SS had an established and functional SS racial policy. This is the true measure of Darré's success in institutionalizing his radical ideas. His influence on Himmler, his formation of a race-oriented SS indoctrination program and his undeniable link to the Marriage Law of 1932 are legacies of his contributions to one of the most sinister organizations ever created.

Darré took his ideological beliefs and the idea of a racially superior Nordic society to a new level. He tried to take a pro-active position on racial considerations. Other organizations within the Third Reich discharged or performed some other action against members with questionable racial backgrounds, but Darré's approach was different. Darré helped Himmler create an organizational membership that was based on a pre-determined racially acceptable past. His ideas became law within the SS

organization. His ideology was not just an important element within their organization, it was the foundation of the Nazi SS.⁸⁴ Darré's ideas on the Nordic ideal transcended the realm of thought. He institutionalized racial prejudice within the Nazi SS.

⁸⁴Himmler, "Speech of the Reichsfuehrer - SS," 4: 565.

CHAPTER 4

REINHARD HEYDRICH AND THE FALL OF THE SA

The SS grew rapidly with Germany's acceptance of their new leader--Adolf Hitler. The SS had passed an important testing point of loyalty with the Stennes revolt in 1931 and subsequently reaped substantial praises from Hitler including his support in SS expansion. Himmler was still quite aware of his limitation in obtaining domestic control since the SA had more members and had a larger impact on Germany's police and political systems. The SS still remained subordinate to the SA in 1933. This, however, would drastically change by the summer of 1934. Himmler called on his prodigy, Reinhard Heydrich, to assist in the intrigue to crush the SA. The SA had previously been able to create a strong constituency and power base which was a major obstacle to Himmler's designs of amassing total domestic control. The fall of the SA in June 1934 was a pivotal point in the growth and influence of the SS.

The SA (also known as Storm Troopers or Brown Shirts) was formed in 1920 as a para-military organization to assist in the political ambitions of the NSDAP. Actually, the SA

cultivated the revolutionary ideals of the NSDAP.¹ This street wise group of ruffians gave the NSDAP the ability to organize and convey their message by utilizing the SA's military, police, organization and recruiting abilities.² The SA's role in Hitler's 1923 Putsch attempt would, however, force the organization underground and allow the SS to emerge in 1925 as Hitler's personal protection squad. Even with its illegal status, Ernst Röhm was able to continually build the SA reaching approximately 2,000 members by 1925.³ In 1929, when Himmler took over the SS with a mere 280 men, the SA numbered 29,000 consisting largely of working class, ex-military men and a number of unemployed. By 1930, the SA had doubled its 1929 membership figures and was well on its way to becoming a dominant organization within the NSDAP.⁴

With the increase of Nazi Party notoriety came a jockeying for political power within the NSDAP. The SS had grown under the leadership of Himmler, but it was still under the central control of the SA. Until 1930, the SA relied on the SS for security, since the SS was already

¹Eric G. Reiche, The Development of the SA in Nürnberg, 1922-1934 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), xiii.

²Trial of the Major War Criminals, 22: 517.

³Conan Fischer, Stormtroopers: A Social, Economic and Ideological Analysis, 1929-35 (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 5. Rempel, Hitler's Children, 266.

⁴Fischer, Stormtroopers, 5.

providing that function for Hitler. The SA, however, realized that this was a constraint and proceeded to increase its independence by creating the Stabskompanien or headquarters guard.⁵ This freed them from relying on the SS for security, but also reflected a distancing from the NSDAP program. The SA leadership was creating an independent structure with the means of breaking away from the NSDAP.⁶ This possibility, along with the increasing size of the SA, did not go unnoticed by Hitler.

The strongest indications of the immanent clash between the SS and the SA surfaced in 1933. Since the Nazi's political victory in January, both organizations had grown tremendously. The 1933 SA membership stood at 700,000 while the SS maintained approximately 210,000 throughout 1933 and 1934.⁷ Himmler, however, was not simply interested in preserving a numerical balance between the two organizations. He was attempting to broaden the SS's influence by expanding its responsibilities within the NSDAP. Probably the most timely and effective SS expansion was the SD. The SD was created as a kind of internal affairs organization and intelligence service of the SS and Nazi elite. The monitoring of SS and Nazi officials remained a primary function of the SD throughout the life of

⁵Koehl, The Black Corps, 42.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Rempel, Hitler's Children, 266.

the Third Reich. The SD's structure and duties were drastically expanded with the appointment of Reinhard Heydrich as its chief. Himmler had recruited Reinhard Heydrich in 1932.⁸ Heydrich and his clandestine organization (the SD) would play a key role in solving Himmler's conflict with the SA. Heydrich's background and ambition made him the perfect choice to head Himmler's intelligence department within the SS.

Reinhard Heydrich was the son of a music teacher in Halle, Germany.⁹ Like Himmler, he grew up with aspirations of a military career, but was far more successful in obtaining this goal. He did not see himself as a German foot soldier, but rather dreamt of a career with the Navy. His parents were constantly reminded of the boy's ambition to lead Germany to victory as the Navy's Admiral.¹⁰

After a short association with a Freikorps unit in Halle, the eighteen year old Heydrich was admitted into the German Navy in 1922.¹¹ During the first few years of Heydrich's service, he became very interested in the area of communications. He was encouraged by a naval instructor and

⁸Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 65.

⁹Edouard Calic, Reinhard Heydrich: the Chilling Story of the Man Who Masterminded the Nazi Death Camps, trans. Lowell Bair (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1982), 20-22.

¹⁰Ibid., 27.

¹¹Ibid., 28, 35.

Lieutenant Commander--Wilhelm Canaris (who became a key figure in the Third Reich's intelligence service).¹² Heydrich had made considerable progress in his naval career. In 1928 he became a naval intelligence officer at the naval base in Kiel. The navy recognized him for his hard work, devotion and intelligence. His career with the navy, however, came to an abrupt end in 1931 when he was dismissed due to a brief love affair. The woman's father apparently demanded that Heydrich marry his daughter, but Heydrich refused. The father pursued the matter with the Navy. This led to Heydrich's dismissal in 1931.¹³

Heydrich had established himself as sympathetic to the Nazi cause and became a NSDAP member. He was also a vocal anti-Semite which increased his interest in seeking a career with Himmler's growing SS. Heydrich joined the SS with the help of Karl von Eberstein who was already a successful SS officer. Eberstein also arranged for Heydrich to meet Himmler. Heydrich's timing was perfect. Himmler was in the process of creating an intelligence department within the SS. Heydrich's interview with Himmler was short, but he was able to show off his professional communications skills. Himmler was duly impressed and gave him the task of setting up the SS's intelligence organization.¹⁴

¹²Ibid., 37.

¹³Ibid., 51.

¹⁴Ibid., 56.

Heydrich wasted no time in establishing a strong intelligence force. He had a flair for recruitment. He was able to encourage and motivate his loyal staff.¹⁵ He recruited a small group of professionals to infiltrate key agencies in and outside of the Nazi's political framework.¹⁶ He modeled the SD after the British Secret Service and the French counter part--the French Fouché. This fostered the covert, elitist attitude of the SD.¹⁷ Even though the SD was not a large department, Heydrich was able to gain a tremendous amount of influence and respect. The SD relied as much on informants as it did on its own personnel. This practice was also adopted and effectively administered by the Gestapo.¹⁸ By relying on an almost inexhaustible external army of informants, the SD was able to centralize the SS's information services and most important of all--give Himmler the advantage of monitoring the pulse of Nazi leadership and opposition.¹⁹ Heydrich was considered the eyes and ears of the SS. The SD's knowledge of the Third Reich's leadership was far reaching and used covert measures in gaining its information. Complaints began to surface in

¹⁵Felix Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs 1940-1945, trans. Constantine Fitzgibbon and James Oliver (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1957), 219. Koehl, The Black Corps, 81.

¹⁶Koehl, The Black Corps, 81.

¹⁷Ibid. Also see Calic, Reinhard Heydrich, 57.

¹⁸Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 135-136.

¹⁹Ibid., 66.

regards to the SD's function in the NSDAP. Many, inside the Nazi Party's own ranks, felt that the SD's information gathering and activities were overly clandestine and contrary to party philosophy.²⁰ A climate of paranoia was, actually, just what Himmler and Heydrich had in mind. They wanted all intelligence activities to be centralized within the SD. They also recognized that others would be more fearful of an organization whose activities could only be speculated on. The perception of SD operations was more effective in creating influence than its actual capabilities. Hitler allowed the SD and Himmler's power to flourish in this environment. He knew that Himmler was a devoted follower and would use the SS to extend Nazi influence and power. Himmler's ability to maintain a close relationship with Hitler was central to the expansion of the SS and to the fall of the SA.

Undoubtedly, a major factor in the growth of the Nazi SS, both in number and in power, was Hitler's emergence as Chancellor of Germany in January 30, 1933. Shortly thereafter, on February 28, 1933 the Emergency Decrees went into effect following the Reichstag fire. Some evidence points to Nazi participation in the fire, but it is unlikely that the SS had anything to do with it even though the SS reaped tremendous benefits, in terms of power, by the fire's

²⁰Ibid.

occurrence. Himmler took full advantage of the "Decree for the Protection of People and State", which suspended personal liberties. Enactment of the decrees resulted in personal arrests, suppression of political activities, business interruption and the beginning of Nazi sponsored intelligence activity.²¹

With the SS's growth and increased police activity, its political power was beginning to rival that of the SA. It was still extremely small compared to SA. The SS had 209,000 men in 1933, while the SA had approximately 700,000.²² The SS, however, was more reliable than the SA in terms of party loyalty. The SS and the SA had a history of rivalry. During the winter of 1930-1931 an "official mediator" was assigned to deal with disputes between the two organizations. Unfortunately for the SA, this mediator was Hermann Göring who was somewhat wary of Röhm and the SA.²³ In 1933 this rivalry between the SS and the SA would take a turn in favor of the SS.

In 1933 Himmler and Heydrich realized that they had created a strong enough organization to challenge and discredit the SA. Himmler and Heydrich began by trying to manipulate Göring and penetrate the SA's hold on Prussian police activities. Göring was extremely willing to support

²¹Koehl, The Black Corps, 66.

²²Rempel, Hitler's Children, 266.

²³Koehl, The Black Corps, 42.

the SS's counter-SA activity since he had already questioned SA loyalty and believed he could gain political power if the SA was out of the picture. In addition, the SA's police activities were rivals to Göring's Gestapo which had been established in Prussia since early 1933.²⁴ Göring was also the Prussian Minister of the Interior and did not appreciate the SA's bid for police control in his area of influence.²⁵

To assist in monitoring SA and other possible opponent's activities in Prussia, Göring appointed Rudolf Diels as head of the Abteilung department (Department IA) within the Prussian police. Department IA was very similar to the SD. It provided information to Göring through a network of informants.²⁶ Göring, with his strong police presence in Prussia, thus, became an important ally of Himmler and Heydrich in dealing with the SA. With Göring's help, Himmler and Heydrich began to amass evidence against the SA to present to Hitler.²⁷

In November of 1933, the SS gave a personal pledge of loyalty to Hitler. This pledge was not to Germany, the Nazi Party or even the office of the Chancellor. It was given by

²⁴Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 29. David Irving, Göring: A Biography (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1989), 121.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 29.

²⁷Koehl, The Black Corps, 89.

all SS personnel directly to Hitler himself.²⁸ This pledge was taken very seriously by the SS and its Reichsführer-- Heinrich Himmler. The oath is also significant because it was not coordinated with any SA pledge. The oath was exclusively from the SS. The event marked Himmler's insistence on SS sovereignty and special relationship to the Führer. In October 1932, the SA had given an oath of loyalty, but with the current suspicions about its allegiances, Röhm should have realized that it was essential to join the SS's show of personal support to Hitler.²⁹ By reaffirming his loyalty, Himmler was able to draw Hitler's focus and suspicion on the SA.

By the end of 1933 specific measures were being taken against the SA. Heydrich coordinated the campaign to discredit the rival organization. He organized and disseminated propaganda against Röhm and the SA with the help and direction of Himmler.³⁰ By this time, Hitler had most likely come to the conclusion that Röhm and the SA could not be trusted and that measures had to be taken to handle the SA problem.³¹ This was reinforced by Himmler, Heydrich and even Göring's desire to move the SA out of the Third Reich's power structure. Himmler, in particular, was

²⁸Ibid., 79.

²⁹Ibid., 91.

³⁰Ibid., 230-231.

³¹Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 146.

instrumental in getting Hitler to take action against the SA. Himmler knew that the SA was his current and most formidable opponent in dominating Germany's domestic front.³² Hitler, however, did not need to be overly convinced that the SA posed a particular problem for the Nazi cause. There had been previous indications that the SA was diversified in order to be more self-reliant. For example, as previously mentioned, the SA tried to eliminate its dependence on SS security by organizing a separate SA headquarters guard. The possibility existed that they were preparing for a future break with the NSDAP.³³ The SA, even with this in mind, played an important role in the Nazis coming to power. They were a visible organization that reflected the Nazi's nationalism and commitment to their ideals. They did, however, represent a much more revolutionary element. This was acceptable, even desirable, to the NSDAP before taking over political control of Germany. With Hitler in power, however, the SA still clung to their revolutionary ideals which encouraged skepticism in the Nazi's ability to maintain order in the streets. Hitler was extremely concerned with examples of SA excesses. Rudolf Diels, yet another who contributed to the discrediting of the SA, showed Hitler evidence of

³²Manvell, Himmler, 42.

³³Koehl, The Black Corps, 42.

brutalities and rampant homosexual behavior throughout the SA leadership including Ernst Röhm.³⁴ The SA became a prime example of social chaos. Hitler could not afford to have this kind of antagonism continue.

It is important to note, however, that there is no indication that the SA was planning to overthrow Hitler. Röhm and the SA were actually attempting to cultivate the National Socialism's original goal of a revolution in Germany. Röhm constantly referred to the coming of the "second National-Socialist revolution."³⁵ Their objectives had not changed with Hitler's rise to power. The SA and the SA leadership, in effect, felt cheated out of what they believed was their claim within the Nazi power structure. Röhm wanted to eventually gain control of the German military, but there were no indications that Hitler would allow that.³⁶ Instead of creating ties within the Army ranks, Röhm was simply alienating them and creating another political opponent. The Army leadership was not going to let Röhm take over the Defense Ministry and control the Army.³⁷ Röhm was digging himself a ditch. His opponent list was growing rapidly. His speeches were antagonistic towards the Nazi Party, his ambitions contrary to the

³⁴Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 143.

³⁵Höhne, The Order of the Death's Head, 113.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 145.

direction of National Socialism and his revolutionary stance was outdated. He did not realize that he was supplying evidence to his eventual executioners.

During the first few months of 1934, Röhm continued to preach a revolutionary message to his SA men during his "inspection tours."³⁸ He tried to strengthen his political position by criticizing the party and securing the devotion of the three and a half million SA troops.³⁹ These examples assisted Heydrich, Himmler and Göring's case against the SA. With this evidence and additional fabricated material, they convinced Hitler that a purge of the SA was necessary.⁴⁰ The decision was made, and the details were left to Himmler and Heydrich.

Himmler and Heydrich drew up specific plans on how the purge would be executed. The first step was to decide on the extent of the purge. They exchanged and updated lists of unwanted SA personnel. The scope of the project was drastically changed by Heydrich. He decided to expand the list to include other "undesirables." The list became the "Reich List of Unwanted Persons."⁴¹ By May of 1934, others, such as Göring and Goebbels, were contributing to the list

³⁸Richard Bessel, Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism: The Storm Troopers in Eastern Germany 1925-1934 (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1984), 130.

³⁹Ibid. Also see Rempel, Hitler's Children, 266.

⁴⁰Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 149.

⁴¹Ibid., 153.

of "undesirables." This list included political opponents, religious leaders and any others who posed a threat to Hitler and his growing inner circle.⁴² Very few knew that a purge was in the making. Hitler, Himmler and Heydrich were very careful to limit the amount of information disseminated including those who had to coordinate activities in preparation for the purge.⁴³

Hitler was, in effect, very much involved in making arrangements to carry out the purge. He had had a meeting with Röhm on the fourth of June, the outcome of which, sent Röhm planning for a sick leave. Röhm then ordered other SA leaders to plan their summer leave (this was most likely done at the strong suggestion of Hitler). The leaders' vacations were planned for June and July. They were to relax and "recover their strength."⁴⁴ The growth and extensive activity of the SA since 1933 justified the leave request. In addition, since SA leave was normally issued during the summer this action appeared to be routine.⁴⁵

With the whereabouts of the SA leadership secured, Himmler notified the Army, SS and SD of the purge plan. This took place on June 25, 1934, five days before the SA's

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ian Kershaw, The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 85-86.

⁴⁴Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 153.

⁴⁵Ibid.

downfall. All of the individuals who were informed of the impending action were told to maintain tight security.⁴⁶ Any leak would have been disastrous to the plan. By June 29, the mobilization against the SA had begun. Heydrich gave instructions to SD and SS personnel as to the identity of the marked individuals. By this time, Heydrich had also established a strong disinformation campaign which successfully threw the SA off balance.⁴⁷ The SA was still unaware of the coming events of June 30, 1934.

The Röhm Putsch or Night of the Long Knives began on June 30, 1934 in several cities throughout Germany. Göring and Himmmler coordinated activities from Göring's study in Berlin.⁴⁸ Heydrich gave his orders from Silesia to Ernst Müller (leader of the SD in Breslau under Heydrich) to start the purge.⁴⁹ The majority of the actual killings occurred in Munich.⁵⁰ The victims of the purge included top SA personnel such as Edmund Heines, Hans-Peter von Heydebreck and Hans Hayn in addition to non-SA "undesirables" such as General von Schleicher, General von Bredow, Gregor Strasser and Erich Klausener (one time police department head and

⁴⁶Ibid., 155.

⁴⁷Ibid., 156-157.

⁴⁸Ibid., 157.

⁴⁹Bessel, Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism, 133-134.

⁵⁰Ibid., 133.

Prussian Minister).⁵¹ The handling of Röhm, in contrast to the other victims, was quite different.

On June 30, Hitler himself went to the resort in Hanselbauer, Bavaria where Ernst Röhm was vacationing and assisted in Röhm's arrest.⁵² Röhm was brought to Stadelheim prison in Munich where he awaited Hitler's decision regarding his fate. On July 1, Hitler gave orders to Theodor Eicke to eliminate Röhm. Hitler informed Eicke that Röhm was to be given the option of suicide; if he refused, Eicke was to continue with the sentence. Later that day Eicke, his immediate aide and two SS officers entered Röhm's prison cell. Eicke told Röhm, "you have forfeited your life! The Führer gives you a last chance to avoid the consequences!"⁵³ Eicke and his entourage then exited the cell leaving a loaded pistol. The group returned after fifteen minutes to find that Röhm had decided not to take his own life. Eicke wasted little time in carrying out Hitler's orders. "Chief of Staff, make yourself ready" were the only words Eicke uttered before he and Michael Lippert, SS Strumbannführer, simultaneously shot Röhm. After Röhm fell to the floor, a third shot was fired by one of the other SS officers.⁵⁴

⁵¹Ibid. Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 158. Höhne, The Order of the Death's Head, 138-139.

⁵²Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 157.

⁵³Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, 17.

⁵⁴Ibid.

Röhm, Chief of Staff of the SA, was dead. The Röhm Putsch effectively relinquished all SA political influence within the Third Reich. They would never again reach the prestige that they enjoyed during the early 1930s.

By July, 1934 the final showdown between the SA and the SS had ended. It was not, however, an actual battle between the two rival organizations. It had been a one-sided extermination of most of the SA leadership, associated "unreliables" and political opponents of the Nazi government. Most likely, 200 to 250 people were murdered as a result of the Night of the Long Knives (an exact number will probably never be known).⁵⁵ To Himmler, the end justified the means. The SS was now free of its one-time superior. It was now Himmler, Heydrich and their organizations which had complete control over police and intelligence activities within the state. For the next eleven years, all those within the Third Reich had an example of SS dominance domestically.⁵⁶ With the SA's influence eliminated, Himmler was able to expand the SS unabated. By 1939 the Nazi hierarchy, even Hitler, was dependant on the extensive SS network.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS, 159.

⁵⁶Trial of the Major War Criminals, 22: 224.

⁵⁷Browder, Foundations of the Nazi Police State, 146-147.

CHAPTER 5

FROM THE AFTERMATH OF THE RÖHM PUTSCH TO DOMESTIC DOMINANCE: HEINRICH HIMMLER AND THE SS, 1934-1936

The year 1934 marked yet another major transition for Himmler and the SS. Not unlike the SS's beginning in 1925 and Himmler's takeover of the organization in 1929, the power struggle of 1934 was a pivotal point in Himmler's growing power base. The extent of Himmler's intelligence network and police control continued to expand over the next five years. Were these areas the most critical to establishing the SS as the definitive domestic force in Nazi Germany? How important was Himmler's connection to Hitler in the growth of the SS? To assess Himmler and the SS during the period between 1934 and 1936, all of these areas should be considered. Himmler, using the SS as his primary support force, was able to gain complete control of Germany's police activities. This, along with his ties to Hitler, made Himmler one of the most powerful figures in Nazi Germany in 1936.

The Röhm Putsch represented a shift in National Socialism and its original revolutionary platform. The public's concern over the blatant street activities of the SA could no longer be overlooked by Hitler. Furthermore,

the campaign to discredit the SA, headed by Himmler and Heydrich, was quite effective. On July 2, 1934, Hitler himself took control of the leadership of the SA. He put Kurt Daluege in charge of SA reorganization, but this function was mainly ceremonial.¹ Even though the SA was not disbanded after the purge of its leadership, it was numerically depleted and politically finished. It never regained its previous position as an influential force within the Nazi state.²

With the threat of the SA eradicated, Hitler had to explain the purge to the German people. The initial intent of the Nazi leadership was to minimize public knowledge of the event. This was particularly difficult since the police activities were so widespread. Hundreds were killed and many others were arrested and incarcerated. If the affair was not addressed, it would raise public suspicions and could be viewed as another example of the Nazis' inability to maintain public order. To by-pass this possibility, the purge was portrayed as an internal matter of party politics. The SA leaders were not brought to trial in regular German courts. This was significant because it did not give the accused a chance to challenge their accusers (a situation

¹Bessel, Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism, 138.

²Trial of the Major War Criminals, 12: 271.

that would have been unacceptable to Hitler, Himmler and the other leadership involved).³

It is not surprising that a down-playing of the purge was Hitler's preferred choice of action in dealing with the event. It is, however, significant that this spoon-fed explanation was accepted by many Germans. Instead of viewing the event as an example of the Nazis' ability to deal with their opponents excessively and its willingness to use any means necessary to reach its political goals, the public accepted the Nazi's explanation. They failed to see the purge as ruthless. They had already put their trust in the Nazi government and were willing to overlook the event if it would lead to governmental stability. The public's ability to support Hitler's actions were, in all likelihood, strengthened by the Cabinet's action on July 3rd. The Cabinet Ministers adopted a resolution submitted by Hitler. It stated: "The measures taken on 30 June, 1 and 2 July to suppress treasonable activities, are legally considered to have been taken in emergency defense of the State."⁴ Furthermore, Hitler faced possible criticism by addressing the Reichstag within a week of the purge. The Reichstag speech exemplified Hitler's manipulation and oratorical abilities. He characterized the measures taken against the

³Bessel, Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism, 142.

⁴Höhne, The Order of the Death's Head, 145.

SA as a necessary emergency action. He described the SA leaders purged as mutinous and immoral (obviously referring to Röhm's homosexuality). These points were critical to Hitler's argument and fundamental to his success in gaining the Reichstag's confidence. Hitler's self-acclaimed position as "'supreme judge' of the German people" was cultivated by the Reichstag's ultimate support of his actions.⁵

The sympathies and ultimate support of the Röhm Putsch by the Cabinet and the Reichstag undoubtedly contributed to the lack of inquiry and criticism by the public. The vast majority of the population supported Hitler's actions and admired him for his reaction to SA disloyalty and Röhm's apparent immorality.⁶ Evidently, the German populace failed to see the possible repercussions of the purge. It was clear that Hitler would resort to any means necessary to reach his goals. Murder was simply another resource at his disposal. If Hitler was willing to go to these lengths to remove undesirable elements of a fringe organization, what would be his inevitable response to what he referred to as the world's "common enemy?"⁷ Hitler believed that the Jews were a major cause of Germany's problems. In retrospect, it is all too clear that Hitler would eventually respond to the

⁵Kershaw, The 'Hitler Myth', 88-89.

⁶Ibid., 85-86.

⁷Hitler, Mein Kampf, 361.

"Jewish Question." The Röhm Putsch was a strong example to the German people of the brutality of the Third Reich. Unfortunately, Germany failed to heed the warning presented in June of 1934.

The hole that was left in the NSDAP, with the decline of the SA, was quickly filled by Himmler and the SS. The SS now represented a "private army" within the Nazi political structure loyal to Hitler and relatively unopposed by any other organization.⁸ The SD proved to be one of the most important expansive elements within the SS. Himmler gradually became more dependant on his right hand man-- Reinhard Heydrich.⁹ Surveillance and intelligence were of utmost importance to Hitler and Himmler. Heydrich and his SD became their centralized domestic, clandestine organization.

By 1935 Hitler began to divert most of his attentions to external matters. Foreign policy and the return of German pride were intertwined as far as Hitler was concerned. Himmler began to take advantage of Hitler's belief in the "stab in the back" theory regarding Germany's defeat in the First World War. He argued that a strong police force was essential to Germany's domestic front and was the only way to ensure that 1918 would not be

⁸Trial of the Major War Criminals, 12: 271.

⁹Frischauer, Himmler, 66.

repeated.¹⁰ Himmler hoped he would be the one to amass and oversee such an operation.

Himmler had to overcome two obstacles in order to secure the position as the most important single figure in Nazi Germany's domestic activities. The first, and most important, was to gain the support of Hitler. The success of the Röhm Putsch and his devotion were recognized by Hitler and rewarded by his approval of Himmler's expansive activities. Hitler's support was critical in bypassing potential internal rivalries that were imminent with the expanded influence of Himmler and the SS.¹¹ The second obstacle was for Himmler to gain complete control of all police forces.

As previously mentioned, Himmler had basically been in control of the Gestapo since 1934 even though Göring was still chief of that organization. Himmler had been given control of the Prussian police in April of 1934 and his subordinate, Heydrich, was named Prussian Gestapo chief during that same month.¹² He had also amassed control of many regional police forces, but was not officially in control of the entire German police system. Unfortunately

¹⁰Browder, Foundations of the Nazi Police State, 165, 167.

¹¹One relatively minor rivalry was with the Abwehr (German military). For a description of these conflicts see, Ibid., 172-177. Koehl, The Black Corps, 102-103.

¹²Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 30.

for Himmler, Göring remained chief of the Gestapo until 1936. This is an indication of how complex the German police activities were prior to 1936. Domestic police forces and the political police organizations were still fragmented.¹³ In addition, the Gestapo and SD had overlapping responsibilities which contributed to tension between the two organizations.¹⁴ These organizational problems and power structure ambiguities did not begin their overhaul until 1936.

The SS Hauptamt (SS Main Office) was created by Himmler on January 20, 1935.¹⁵ This office was critical to SS expansion. It eventually centralized the specific activities of the SS. Even in 1935, the SS Main Office was a vast bureaucracy with sub-departments relating to domestic policy, press, security and internal affairs of SS welfare and recruitment. In subsequent years, the SS Main office expanded to include records, education and communications.¹⁶ It became a self-sufficient organization and Himmler's model for all of German society.

In 1935, the SS was also expanding ideologically. The basis for recruiting principles for the SS had been in place for years through Himmler's acceptance of Darré's

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Graber, The History of the SS, 79.

¹⁵Koehl, The Black Corps, 109.

¹⁶Ibid., 111.

racial principles. Selection principles and marriage approval were well established by Darré through the Race and Resettlement Office.¹⁷ Himmler also made his own unique contribution to SS ideology. The Lebensborn (Well of Life) program was introduced by Himmler in December of 1935.¹⁸ This program was designed to assist SS families, both immediate and extended, in the raising of German children. The uniqueness of this program was that it went far beyond a simple welfare program organized and administered through the SS. This program gave housing and support to single mothers associated with SS members. Many of the women who were single could not, or would not, be supported by the SS men responsible.¹⁹ Himmler developed this program to relieve the SS members of the burden of their responsibilities and to assist in Germany's program to raise healthy, Aryan children. He was appalled by the decline of German sexual morality and the rampant use of abortions as an alternative. He believed that the Lebensborn would alleviate these problems while producing superior German children for the Reich.²⁰ This program was initially under

¹⁷Gunter d'Alquen, "The SS: History, Mission, and Organization," 4: 976-977.

¹⁸Larry V. Thompson, "Lebensborn and the Eugenics Policy of the Reichsführer-SS," Central European History 4 (March 1971): 54.

¹⁹Koehl, The Black Corps, 118.

²⁰Thompson, "Lebensborn and the Eugenics Policy of the Reichsführer-SS", 56-57.

Darré's control through the Race and Settlement Office, but was put under the control of the SS Main Office in 1938.²¹ The Lebensborn program continued to grow throughout the war. The program consisted of fifteen Lebensborn homes in 1944 with a nursing staff of 130, this was twice the size of the program in 1939.²²

An additional example of the continued effort to keep ideological principles at the forefront of SS membership was the introduction of the SS newspaper Das Schwarze Korps (The Black Corps) in March of 1935. This was not the SS's first experience in publishing. In December of the previous year, Himmler opened a publishing company known as Nordland Verlag which published a variety of SS materials including pamphlets, books, SS reports and some of Himmler's speeches.²³ Das Schwarze Korps was an extremely important ideological instrument for Himmler and the SS. It was a way to continually emphasize the importance of ideology to SS personnel on a day-to-day basis. Himmler remained closely associated with the newspaper throughout his life. One of his first actions was to name as its editor, Gunter d'Alquen

²¹Koehl, The Black Corps, 119.

²²Thompson, "Lebensborn and the Eugenics Policy of the Reichsführer-SS", 73.

²³William L. Combs, The Voice of the SS: A History of the SS Journal 'Das Schwarze Korps' (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), 21.

who had suggested the idea of the newspaper to Himmler.²⁴ D'Alquen had been a member of the SS since 1931. He was interested in becoming a journalist, but had no academic training in the field. Before his appointment as editor of Das Schwarze Korps, he had worked for the Völkischer Beobachter where Alfred Rosenberg assisted in training d'Alquen. Rosenberg gave him many opportunities within the newspaper and Rosenberg's guidance was undoubtedly instrumental in d'Alquen's position as editor for Himmler's newspaper.²⁵

One of the primary functions of Das Schwarze Korps from 1935 to 1939 was the subject of race within the SS and Nazi Germany.²⁶ Articles on race and anti-Semitic cartoons were continually printed in the pages of the SS newspaper.²⁷ Its articles, from the onset of the publication, stressed the role of the SS in maintaining racially superior Aryans for the Reich. The subject of race superiority was explored from many different approaches in an attempt to gain credibility. Biological science, political science and religious approaches were commonly featured in the publication.²⁸ One of Das Schwarze Korps early contributors

²⁴Ibid., 22.

²⁵Ibid., 23-24.

²⁶Ibid., 71, 90, 99, 104, 112-113.

²⁷Ibid., 168-176.

²⁸Ibid., 72.

was Reinhard Heydrich who published a five part series beginning on May 1, 1935 entitled "Wandlungen unserer Kampfes" (Transformations of Our Struggle). He began this anti-Semitic work by revisiting the theme of struggle as fundamental to the human experience.²⁹ There was nothing unique about this approach. It had been previously exploited by Hitler in Mein Kampf.³⁰ Heydrich was, however, exercising his extended influence within the SS. In the series, Heydrich classified Jews into two categories. The first was the Zionists, and the second was the assimilated Jews. He paid particular attention to the second group whom he felt were particularly destructive to National Socialism. He believed that the assimilated Jews (or German-Jews) used the cover of a seemingly productive aspect of German society to infiltrate and destroy the Third Reich from within.³¹ This was obviously an attempt on Heydrich's part to draw a parallel to the "stab in the back" theory that many Germans had come to believe in. Heydrich, borrowing Hitler's model, emphasized that this was a underlying struggle of the German people and that the SS had to be a fundamental and primary organization in dealing with Germany's internal "enemy."³² His ideas would become much more than threats in an internal

²⁹Ibid., 77.

³⁰Hitler, Mein Kampf, 249, 255.

³¹Combs, The Voice of the SS, 79.

³²Ibid.

publication. He became a key figure in the Nazi's "Final Solution" to the "Jewish Question." Heydrich was personally responsible for the deaths of countless Jews and other "undesirables."³³

Heydrich's anti-Semitism, like that of many other major figures in the Third Reich, was well established by the 1920s. His direct involvement with Jewish persecution and extermination is somewhat perplexing since he was himself, apparently, part Jewish.³⁴ Himmler, after appointing Heydrich as head of the SD and incorporating him into the SS hierarchy, told Hitler that he had evidence that Heydrich was part Jewish.³⁵ It is not known what specific evidence Himmler had or presented to Hitler. It is possible that Himmler simply uncovered the rumors that had circulated years earlier about Heydrich's father.³⁶ Furthermore, the possibility that the accusation was false and Himmler simply manufactured the information to keep Heydrich in check cannot be ruled out. What is clear, however, is that Himmler used the information to influence Hitler's opinion of Heydrich and keep Heydrich's valuable talents under his

³³Charles Wighton, Heydrich: Hitler's Most Evil Henchman (London: Obhams Press Limited, 1962), 246. Alan Wykes, Himmler, Vol. 14 of Ballantine's Illustrated History of the Violent Century (New York: Ballantine Books Inc., 1972), 127.

³⁴Wykes, Himmler, 59.

³⁵Ibid., 68. Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs, 96-97.

³⁶Calic, Reinhard Heydrich, 20-22.

control.³⁷ After some discussion, Hitler and Himmler decided that Heydrich was a valuable asset to National Socialism. They felt that Heydrich's response to the "Jewish Question" would be that much more severe because he knew that his superiors were aware of questions regarding his racial heritage.³⁸ Heydrich, although extremely successful within the Nazi movement, was always under the watchful eye and control of Himmler.³⁹

On June 17, 1936, Hitler showed his absolute trust and confidence in Himmler by naming him Chief of the German Police.⁴⁰ This, combined with Himmler's position as Reichsführer SS and Hitler's earlier decree making the SD the only intelligence organization, made Himmler one of the most powerful individuals in Nazi Germany.⁴¹ All domestic intelligence and police activities were now controlled by Himmler and Heydrich.⁴² The organizations under their control, however, were still growing and adjusting to the

³⁷Kersten, The Kersten Memoirs, 97. Graber, The History of the SS, 70.

³⁸Manvell, Himmler, 82.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 41.

⁴¹This marked a new era in the German police system. It had never previously been under centralized control. Ibid. In regards to the Hitler's decree on centralizing intelligence, the SD was given this distinction on June 6, 1934. Frischauer, Himmler, 64.

⁴²Koehl, The Black Corps, 112.

centralization process. On June 26, 1936, Himmler issued a decree which placed the Reichs Kriminalpolizei (Kripo--Criminal Police) and the Gestapo as departments within the Sipo (Security Police) and named Heydrich as the chief of this organization. Heydrich was now coordinating criminal, political, and clandestine police operations (SD) under Himmler's direct supervision.⁴³ Several of the police operations remained fragmented because their functions were specific to the State or the NSDAP. This inefficiency was illuminated in September of 1939 when the State and the NSDAP combined their police functions to form the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) under Heydrich.⁴⁴ With the combination of these police activities, Heydrich was able to alleviate some of the tensions created by overlapping responsibilities, especially those concerning the Gestapo and the SD. Heydrich separated the domestic investigative activities of the offices by giving specific categories of influence to each organization. The Gestapo investigated activities dealing with areas such as Marxism, treason and immigration. The SD, on the other hand, was in charge of science, culture, art, education, politics, government, administration, and religious affairs.⁴⁵ It was important

⁴³Trial of the Major War Criminals, 22: 506.
Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 41.

⁴⁴Trial of the Major War Criminals, 22: 506.

⁴⁵Graber, The History of the SS, 79.

that these offices coordinated their activities because there was obviously overlap in some cases. This was even more critical to the SD due to the fact that it was more of an investigative organization and not directly involved in police activities.⁴⁶ Both organizations were, however, dependant on another relatively unlimited source of information--the German population.

Many Germans during the Nazi period felt it was their duty to their people and to the state to assist in enforcing the policies and laws of the Nazi regime.⁴⁷ In other cases, citizens reported on their neighbors, friends and even family out of revenge, jealousy or other personal motivations.⁴⁸ The German citizens were a primary, if not the most important single asset, to police and investigative services.⁴⁹ A sample of the Würzburg Gestapo case records from 1933 to 1945 on charges of "Race Defilement" and "Friendship to Jews," found that the highest percentage of the cases were initiated because of information provided by the German citizens. 57 percent of the cases (in a 100 case sample) initiated their investigations from this source. The closest single category of initiation was by information obtained through interrogations which still only represented

⁴⁶Gellately, The Gestapo and German Society, 65.

⁴⁷Ibid., 66.

⁴⁸Ibid., 187-192.

⁴⁹Ibid., 136.

15 percent. This compares to five percent due to investigations from other organizations and less than one percent as a result of Gestapo surveillance.⁵⁰ There is nothing unique about this case study or the region in which it was conducted. The Gestapo's dependance on German citizens was also consistent with the SD's experience in obtaining information.

By the end of the Second World War, the SD had a total of 57 branches with approximately 3,000 paid members in its entire organization.⁵¹ One of its unique sources of information was provided by its "honorary members." These were either non-paid German informants or part-time, paid employees of the SD. The size of this information source was very significant. Apparently 30,000 people, ten times the SD's paid staff, were involved in this informant pool.⁵² Thus the SD relied on public participation in its efforts to control Nazi Germany's ideological principles.⁵³

The general population's efforts as informants to police and intelligence agencies allowed the Nazi state to devote far less resources to these systems since they were able to rely heavily on public participation. This, however, was only one contributing factor in the growth and

⁵⁰Ibid., 162.

⁵¹Ibid., 67.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 136.

influence of Himmler's SS and police organizations. The complexity of these organizations cannot be completely understood without including a very important component of its "terror system."⁵⁴ Nazi Germany's concentration camp system was not simply the result of a war time decision by Himmler, Heydrich and other ominous figures in Nazi Germany's hierarchy. It was started by Göring in the early 1930s and was continually refined under the watchful eye and direction of Heinrich Himmler.

Dachau was to be one of the first of the Nazi concentration camps. On March 21, 1933, Himmler declared that Dachau would be an internment facility and vital addition to the government as a means of maintaining order within the Reich.⁵⁵ The camp had a prisoner capacity of 5,000 and was run by Hilmar Wäckerle a local SS commander.⁵⁶ In June Wäckerle was replaced by Theodor Eicke who played a prominent role in the management of the infamous camp. Eicke continued Wäckerle's emphasis on absolute commandant power and raised disciplinary measures to new heights of excess and brutality.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Konnilyn G. Feig, Hitler's Death Camps: The Sanity of Madness (New York and London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979), 48.

⁵⁶Ibid., 451. Martin Gilbert, The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985), 32-33.

⁵⁷Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, 9.

Eicke had served in the First World War as a German Army Officer.⁵⁸ He became a member of the NSDAP in December of 1928. After serving in the SA for approximately a year and a half, he transferred to the SS and commanded a small group in the Rhine-Palatinate area.⁵⁹ His success in the SS was enhanced by his strong ideological convictions which assisted in his Dachau appointment.

At Dachau, Eicke set the standard for future concentration camps. His strict disciplinary style and specific ideological training program for SS personnel, made him an influential SS leader.⁶⁰ He established a standardized training technique which would prepare SS guards to deal with the horrors they would see and perpetrate. This was accomplished by incorporating two distinct and fundamental principles for camp personnel--loyalty and hatred. By demanding unmitigated and unquestioned loyalty of the SS guards to their commandant, the SS guards were thus programmed to carry out every order to the letter. The second major principle was hatred. Hatred was instilled to clear any doubt as to the guilt or inferiority of the Third Reich's victims or enemies. Eicke trained camp SS personnel to see all inmates as a clear

⁵⁸Manvell, Himmler, 34.

⁵⁹Robert Wistrich, Who's Who in Nazi Germany (New York: Bonanza Books, 1982), 64.

⁶⁰Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, 3.

threat to the German nation. He ingrained in his men the idea that all enemies had to be crushed and Jews were not simply "inferior," but rather should not be treated as human at all. To him, the Jews threatened everything National Socialism stood for, and they had to be dealt with accordingly.⁶¹ These anti-Semitic ideas were a fundamental part of the ideological training program of SS concentration camp guards implemented by Eicke. His efforts produced two of the most ominous figures related to the Holocaust. In 1934, both Adolf Eichmann, the SS's Jewish deportation expert, and Rudolf Hoess, Auschwitz's commandant from 1940 to 1943, were trained under Eicke. These men were major contributors to the destruction of millions of human beings through their contributions to the concentration camp system.⁶² Through the 1930s, Eicke continued his involvement with the concentration camp system and the SS. He was personally responsible for the expansion of the SS Totenkopfverbände (SSTV--SS Death's Head Unit).⁶³ The Death's Head Units were the specific SS units which manned

⁶¹Ibid., 11, 13.

⁶²Through 1936, Adolf Eichmann and Rudolf Hoess were relatively unimportant figures as far as SS and concentration camp leadership was concerned. Eicke, however, played a part in their early development within the SS. This is important to note since they were eventually key Nazi figures in the concentration camp system and responsible for the extermination of countless men, women and children. Manvell, Himmler, 34.

⁶³Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, 24.

the concentration camp system. These men were Himmler's "elite" and represented the brutality of the Nazi state in the camps.⁶⁴

In 1936, the second major Nazi concentration camp was built in Sachsenhausen located in the eastern part of Germany. Buchenwald was constructed in 1937 and the last of the pre-war concentration camps, Ravensbrück, was operational by May of 1939. These became four of the nineteen death camps which operated during the war.⁶⁵ These camps were constructed, operated and manned by the SS. The camp system was a major contributing source to Himmler's power base in Nazi Germany. It was an extremely powerful tool wielded by Himmler. It provided the best of both worlds. The camps ingrained fear in those Germans who might threaten the Nazi Regime while still maintaining a covertness about its actual activities--the extent of which was not truly realized until the fall of Germany in the Second World War. Organizationally and ideologically the concentration camps' underlying features and responsibilities were established by 1936. Eicke had introduced a training program which was entrenched in Nazi racial standards and anti-Semitism.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the SS Death's Head Units were established and functional in Dachau

⁶⁴Ibid. Feig, Hitler's Death Camps, 72.

⁶⁵Feig, Hitler's Death Camps, 92, 451-454.

⁶⁶Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, 13.

and Sachsenhausen. By 1936 the camps, while only a shadow of what they would become, were an integral part of Himmler's SS.

The period between 1934 and 1936 was critical to the expansion of Himmler's SS. Himmler, Heydrich and the SS had effectively taken advantage of the fall of the SA. The SD's small, but far-reaching, intelligence network gave Himmler a means of identifying future potential conflicts. By securing and centralizing German's police system, including the political importance of the Gestapo, Himmler had the ability to respond to any potential rival. The concentration camp system and the specialized training of the SS Death's Head Units were also used by Himmler and the Nazi regime to threaten and destroy their opponents. All of these important elements were controlled by Himmler. He was able to show Hitler that he was totally devoted to the Nazi cause and Hitler personally. As a result, he was rewarded with power. By 1936, Himmler had control of the SS, all state police forces, domestic intelligence activities and the concentration camp system. These organizations and his power and influence would only increase in scope after 1936. There was no internal rival who could challenge Himmler's domestic dominance.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The SS began its infamous history in 1925. It only took eleven years for Himmler and the SS to secure their place within the Nazi State. There were several contributing factors to the growth and influence of the SS. The personal attributes and accomplishments of Himmler, Heydrich, Darré and other SS leadership were critical to the SS's success. The Nazi State, under Hitler, was based on a strict command structure with accountability resting on leadership. The organization could not have risen to its critical position in the Third Reich without these individuals. Ideology also played an important role in the SS.

The SS's fundamental ideological principles helped establish it as an organizational representation of what Hitler's Germany "should" become. These principles combined Hitler's anti-Semitic rhetoric with Darré's attempted pro-active racial philosophies to create an organization that would be a testing ground for the Nazis' idea of German society. Himmler, as Reichsführer SS, was in a position to combine Hitler's message of hate with Darré's Aryan utopianism and implement them into his area of

influence. Hitler and Darré's ideas materialized into a recruitment and organization philosophy of the SS.

Hitler's importance to the expansion of the SS, however, went far beyond ideological influences. The growth of the SS paralleled Hitler's confidence in Himmler. Himmler was devoted to Hitler. In addition, he was street-wise enough to know that Hitler could not be challenged. Himmler stayed within the boundaries approved of by Hitler. The Röhm Putsch was a prime example. Police power and influence in the Nazi party was no guarantee of power progression within the Third Reich. Röhm and his SA were far stronger than any military or police power in Nazi Germany during the spring of 1934. The SA had three million men and ties to local police organizations to complete their police activities and influence. One important reason for Röhm and the SA's downfall was because Röhm did not maintain a strong connection to Hitler after the Nazi's came to power in 1933. Himmler knew that his ambitions within the Third Reich could not be realized without a close connection to Hitler. He was careful not to overstep his bounds while remaining fairly aggressive in his desire and commitment to expansion. He took every opportunity to show his loyalty to Hitler and was recognized and rewarded for his devotion.

These factors are an indication of the complexity surrounding Himmler and the SS. To assess the SS's position by 1936, a pluralistic approach must be used. The reason

for the SS's prominent position in the Third Reich cannot be found in a single aberration within Nazi Germany, the SS, or German society. There were several different contributing factors to the SS's success. The leadership, ideological and organization contributions of Himmler, Heydrich and Darré are unquestionable. Events, such as the Röhm Putsch, were also critical to SS expansion and influence. One conclusion is clear. The basic organizational structure and power base of Himmler and the SS was established by 1936. The SS had a firm grip on German society with its domination of the police, concentration camp system and domestic intelligence network by this time.

The SS finally met its fate in 1945 with the fall of the Third Reich. Even though the world has been provided a glimpse of the horrors committed by the Nazi State and the SS, it is unlikely that a definitive answer to the question; "Why Nazi Germany?" will ever be known. Hopefully studies such as this can contribute to a greater understanding of one segment within the Third Reich.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY WORKS

- "Ahnenpaß" Verlag, Marburg/Lahn: A.G. Grüneberg.
- Chamberlain, Houston Stewart. Foundations of the Nineteenth Century. 2 vols. translated by John Lees. [1899]; England: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., 1910; reprint, New York: Howard Fertig, 1968.
- d'Alquen, Gunter. "The Organizational structure of the Third Reich. Brochure 33. The SS: History, Mission, and Organization of the Schutzstaffeln of the NSDAP," 1939, in Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.
- Darré, R. W. "Marriage Laws and the Principles of Breeding," chapter in A New Aristocracy Based on Blood and Soil Munich: Lehmann, translated by Barbara Miller Lane and Leila J. Rupp, Nazi Ideology before 1933. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978.
- Himmler, Heinrich. "Speech of the Reichsfuehrer - SS at the meeting of SS Major-Generals at Posen," Oct. 4, 1943, in Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.
- Hitler, Adolf. Mein Kampf. translated by Ralph Manheim. Verlag Frz. Eher Nachf, G.M.B.H 1925; reprint, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971.
- Kersten, Felix. The Kersten Memoirs 1940-1945. trans. Constantine Fitzgibbon and James Oliver. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1957.
- Ley, Dr. Robert ed. "Die Schutzstaffeln Der NSDAP," 1943, in the Organization Book of the NSDAP. In Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression.

Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.

Steche, O. "Guide of racial science and the science of heredity, of fostering congenitally sound progeny of Family Science." In Office of United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.

Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunals. Nuremberg: Secretariat of the Tribunal, 1948.

Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1949.

SECONDARY WORKS

Books:

Bessel, Richard. Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism: The Storm Troopers in Eastern Germany 1925-1934. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1984.

Black, Peter. Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Ideological Soldier of the Third Reich. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Bramwell, Anna. Blood and Soil: Richard Walther Darré and Hitler's "Green Party". Abbotsbrook, Bourn End, Buckinghamshire: The Kensal Press, 1985.

Breitman, Richard. The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

Brissaud, André. The Nazi Secret Service. London: The Bodley Head, 1972.

Browder, George C. Foundations of the Nazi Police State: The Foundation of Sipo and SD. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990.

Bullock, Alan. Hitler: A Study in Tyranny. abridged ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1962. reprint, New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

- Calic, Edouard. Reinhard Heydrich: the Chilling Story of the Man Who Masterminded the Nazi Death Camps. translated by Lowell Bair. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1982.
- Cecil, Robert. The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology. New York: Dodd Mead & Company, 1972.
- Combs, William L. The Voice of the SS: A History of the SS Journal 'Das Schwarze Korps'. New York: Peter Lang, 1986.
- Dicks, Henry V. Licensed Mass Murder: A Socio-psychological Study of Some SS Killers. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1972.
- Feig, Konnilyn G. Hitler's Death Camps: The Sanity of Madness. New York and London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979.
- Fischer, Conan. Stormtroopers: A Social, Economic and Ideological Analysis, 1929-35. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983.
- Frischauer, Willi. Himmler: The Evil Genius of the Third Reich. London: Odhams Press Limited, 1953.
- Gellately, Robert. The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933-1945. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Gilbert, Martin. The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe during the Second World War. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985.
- Gordon, Harold J. Jr. Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Graber, G. S. The History of the SS. New York: David McKay Company, Inc. 1978.
- Grunberger, Richard. Hitler's SS. London: The Trinity Press, 1970.
- Hamilton, Richard F. Who Voted for Hitler?. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Höhne, Heinz. The Order of the Death's Head: The Story of Hitler's SS. New York: Ballantine Books, 1969.
- Irving, David. Göring: A Biography. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1989.

- Kershaw, Ian. The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Koehl, Robert Lewis. The Black Corps: The Structure and Power Struggles of the Nazi SS. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.
- MacDonald, Callum. The Killing of SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich. New York: The Free Press, 1989.
- Manvell, Roger, and Heinrich Fraenkel. Himmler. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965.
- Mosse, George L. The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich. New York: Schocken Books, 1964.
- Nova, Fritz. Alfred Rosenberg: Nazi Theorist of the Holocaust. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1986.
- Padfield, Peter. Himmler: Reichsführer-SS. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990.
- Proctor, Robert N. Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Reiche, Eric G. The Development of the SA in Nürnberg, 1922-1934. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Reitlinger, Gerald. The SS: Alibi of a Nation 1922 - 1945. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956.
- Rempel, Gerhard. Hitler's Children: The Hitler Youth and the SS. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989.
- Smith, Bradley. Heinrich Himmler: A Nazi in the Making, 1900-1926. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1971.
- Stein, George H. The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War 1939-1945. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1966.
- Sydnor, Charles W. Jr. Soldiers of Destruction: The SS Death's Head Division, 1933 - 1945. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Toland, John. Adolf Hitler. New York: Ballantine Books, 1976.

- Wegner, Bernd. The Waffen-SS: Organization, Ideology and Function. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982.
- Weingartner, James J. Hitler's Guard: The Story of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler 1933-1945. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968.
- Wighton, Charles. Heydrich: Hitler's Most Evil Henchman. London: Obhams Press Limited, 1962.
- Wistrich, Robert. Who's Who in Nazi Germany. New York: Bonanza Books, 1982.
- Wykes, Alan, and introduction by Barrie Pitt. Himmler. Vol. 14 of Ballantine's Illustrated History of the Violent Century. New York : Ballantine Books Inc., 1972.
- Ziegler, Herbert F. "Elite Recruitment and National Socialism: The SS-Führerkorps, 1925-1939." in Politik und Milieu: Wahl und Elitenforschung im Historischen und Interkulturellen Vergleich. ed. Heinrich Best. St. Katharinen: Scriptor Verlag, 1989.
- _____. Nazi Germany's New Aristocracy: The SS Leadership, 1925-1939. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Journals and Magazines:

- Angras, Werner T., and Bradley F. Smith "Diaries of Heinrich Himmler's Early Years." The Journal of Modern History 31 (September 1959): 206-224.
- Bramwell, Anna. "Was This Man 'Father of the Greens'?" History Today 34 (September 1984): 7-13.
- Loewenberg, Peter. "The Unsuccessful Adolescence of Heinrich Himmler." The American Historical Review 76 (June 1971): 612-641.
- Lovin, Clifford R. "Blut und Boden: The Ideological Basis of the Nazi Agricultural Program." Journal of the History of Ideas 28 (April-June 1967): 279-288.
- Thompson, Larry V. "Lebensborn and the Eugenics Policy of the Reichsführer-SS." Central European History 4 (March 1971): 54-77.

Weingartner, James J. "The SS Race and Settlement Main Office: Towards An Order of Blood and Soil." The Historian 34 (November 1971): 62-77.